

U.S. job openings rise to 7.3 million as labor market sturdy

BY PAUL WISEMAN
AP ECONOMICS WRITER

WASHINGTON — Employers posted slightly more job openings in July but the American labor market remained sturdy in the face of higher costs that are squeezing household budgets.

U.S. job openings ticked up to 7.27 million in July from a revised 7.18 million in June, the Labor Department reported Tuesday.

The department's Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

also showed that layoffs fell. But so did the number of people quitting their jobs — a sign of confidence in their prospects. The report showed that gross hiring — before subtracting those who lost or quit their jobs — dipped to 5.1 million in July from 5.3 million in June.

The American job market is hardly booming, but it is ambling along despite an energy shock caused by the fighting with Iran that has squeezed family budgets.

So far this year, U.S.

employers — companies, nonprofits and government agencies — added an average of 61,000 net jobs a month. The figure — which was dragged down by job losses in February and July — is unimpressive. But it's an improvement on 2025 when job growth came in below 10,000 a month — weakest hiring outside a recession since 2002 — as the lingering effect of high interest rates and uncertainty caused by Trump's tariffs discouraged firms from hiring.

BOE

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time we could reasonably assemble a quorum in order to meet the mandatory advertising and adoption requirements and take action to keep the district's tax-rate process on schedule with the county courthouse."

All five members of the board attended the meeting.

The board discussed the tax rate options, and later voted unanimously to approve a 4% increase, setting the tax rate at 56.6 cents per \$100 of value on real estate and tangible

property.

Director of Finance Brandi Burnett presented the tax rates and considerations for the board at the August work session. Even then, they concurred that the 4% increase was the best option. Burnett explained that last year's rate was 57.0.

Burnett explained the math behind the numbers stating, "The assessments increased by 6.24%, allowing rates to decrease slightly."

The proposed tax rates are expected to increase the revenue stream by \$237,895. However, this is not "extra money" but funds already in the bud-

get. The board voted on the budget based upon a 4% increase back in May. That \$27 million budget included a curriculum allocation, the SBDM allocations the board set in April, the salary schedule, and operating budgets for transportation and maintenance.

"If we adopt the 4% increase, we can adopt the higher amount of revenue and still lower the rate by 0.4 (cents) from the prior year," Burnett highlighted in her August presentation.

The new rates will be effective after the second reading scheduled for later this month.

KENTUCKY

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vision to continue strengthening Kentucky Soy's leadership in the state and at the national level," said Fred Sipes, chairman of the Kentucky Soybean Promotion Board. "Niki brings that combination. She understands agriculture, has experience working with producer-led boards and brings a strong record of leadership and collaboration. We are excited about what she will bring to Kentucky Soy while building on the strong foundation already in place."

Ellis currently serves as chief executive officer of the Kentucky Pork Producers Association, where she oversees strategy, governance, finance, communications, advocacy and operations.

Her experience includes representing Kentucky agriculture before the Kentucky General Assembly, Congress and federal agencies; guiding board strategy and producer-funded investments; and building partnerships among commodity organizations, universities, agribusinesses and government agencies.

A fourth-generation Kentucky farmer, Ellis has spent her career working with producer-led agricultural organizations. Before joining the

Kentucky Pork Producers Association, she served as director of education for the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association.

She also has held leadership roles at the national and regional levels, including founding the Southeastern Pork Alliance, a six-state collaboration designed to strengthen organizational capacity while maintaining each state organization's autonomy.

"I am honored by the opportunity to serve Kentucky soybean farmers and work alongside the farmer leaders and staff who have built such a strong organization," Ellis said. "Agriculture has always been more than a career for me; it is something I care deeply about. I am excited to build on the strong foundation of the soybean checkoff and continue putting farmers' investments to work in meaningful ways.

"I look forward to listening, learning and serving while working alongside our farmer leaders to create measurable value through research, market development, education and partnerships that strengthen demand and improve opportunities for Kentucky farm families. Together, we will ensure every checkoff dollar is focused on moving Kentucky soybeans and Kentucky agriculture forward."

Ellis earned a Bachelor of Science degree in career and technical education from the University of Kentucky.

PSC

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A coalition of groups advocating for the environment, renewable energy and consumers had called on the regulator in June to launch such

an affordability investigation that would include examining the potential costs of fossil fuels and data centers.

The regulator plans to host a "technical conference" next year examining the issues brought to light in the investigation. The regulator is asking

utilities and other interested groups to submit initial comments in the investigation by the end of September.

Kentuckians can submit a public comment in the case by searching for the specific case number for the investigation, which is 2026-00185.

Webster County Devotional Page

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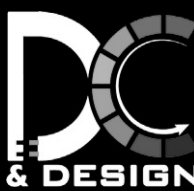
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