

# *National Week In Review*

## *Week Ending December 1, 2006*

**M**etropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment Levels . . . Unemployment rates were lower in October than a year earlier in 288 of the 367 metropolitan areas, higher in 68 areas, and unchanged in 11 areas across the United States. The areas with the highest unemployment rates were recorded in El Centro, Calif. (16.1%) and Yuma, Arizona (14.1%), two adjacent highly agricultural areas with extreme weather. Analyzing metropolitan area nonfarm employment, 297 recorded over-the-year increases, 67 reported decreases, and 3 had no change. The largest over-the-year percentage increases in employment were recorded in New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, La. (+12.6%) and Pascagoula, Miss. (+9.2%). These gains reflect the partial recovery of the Gulf Coast economy since Hurricane Katrina hit the area in August 2005. Employment returned to its pre-hurricane level in Pascagoula, Mississippi in August 2006. While New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, La., and Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss., have added jobs in the past year, employment in both metropolitan areas remains substantially below its pre-hurricane levels. The metropolitan area data lags behind the national data by one month.

**Source:**

□ Bureau of Labor Statistics

**By Mike Daniels**