#1 of 10: 12-month change in the county unemployment rate (September 2026)

Roane County leads TN in unemployment decline

Source: ALEX Intelligence, November 24, 2026

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THE DATA

-0.4%

12-month change in the county unemployment rate (September 2026)

Roane County recorded the steepest year-over-year decline in unemployment among all Tennessee counties in the Knoxville metro area.

This -0.4% drop marks the most significant improvement in labor market health across the region over the past year. Roane County's performance outpaces even Loudon and Anderson, both of which saw similar declines, suggesting a structural shift in workforce dynamics. The data signals that job creation is not just concentrated in Knox County but spreading to adjacent, historically less-urbanized areas.



Photo: w_lemay · CC BY-SA 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, September 2026 (county, seasonally unadjusted) · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-24-knoxville-lab-bls-unemp-rate-chg-12m-county

01

The quiet rise of Roane County

Unlike Nashville or Memphis, where growth is often tied to central business districts, Knoxville’s recovery is distributed, with smaller counties driving labor market gains. This decentralization strengthens the entire metro’s economic foundation, reducing vulnerability to localized downturns.

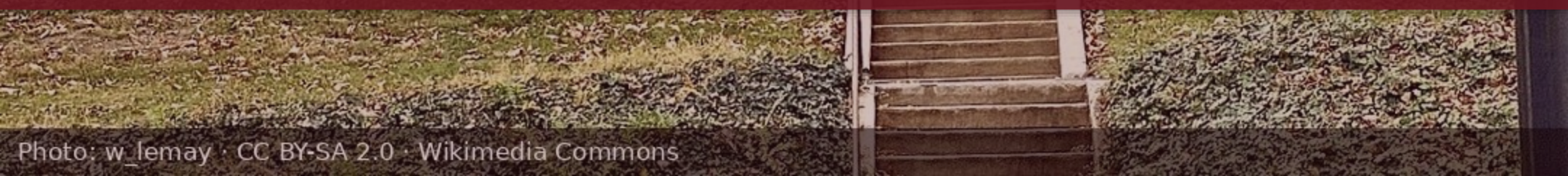


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02

A new labor market equilibrium

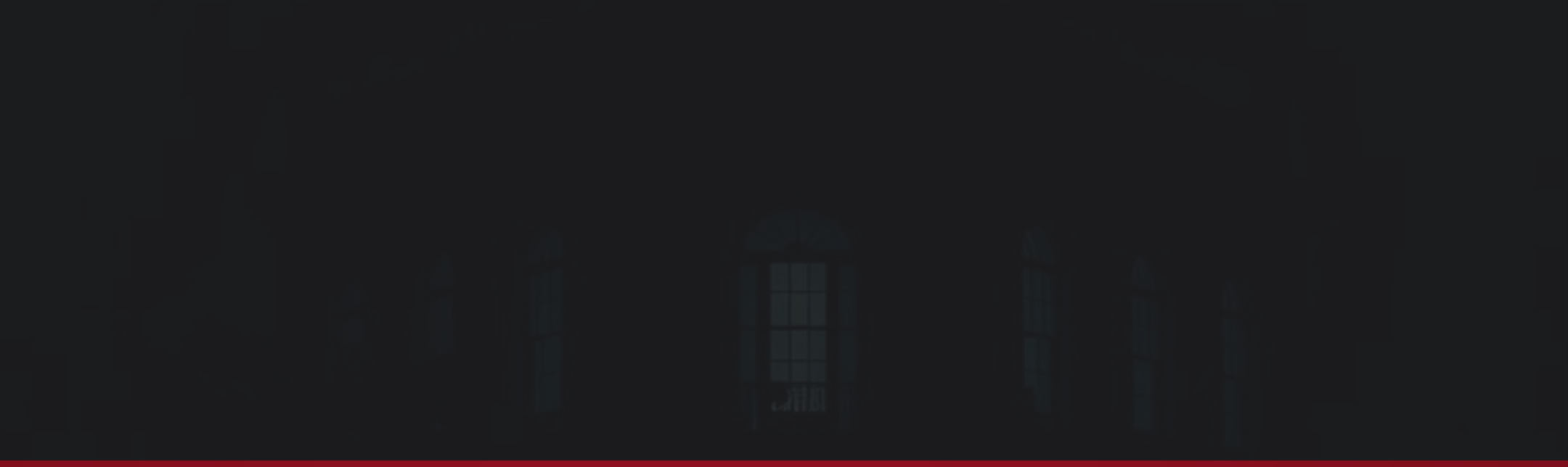
This shift aligns with broader trends in East Tennessee: remote work adoption, federal R&D investment in nearby institutions, and rising infrastructure quality. The data implies that future real estate value appreciation may be driven less by proximity to downtown and more by access to stable employment, quality schools, and sustainable living conditions.

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