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Bounce back: editorial

State among leaders in economic recovery

Two years ago, some people assumed — with plenty to back up this belief — that Ohio's best days were behind it. The state lost 329,019 jobs between January 2000 and January 2010. The last legislature was a model of inaction. And Gov. Ted Strickland left office with a looming $8 billion budget deficit.

But anyone who's written off this state's resilience should take another look. According to state figures released last week, its jobs picture is now one of the best in the nation. Last year, only three states saw larger improvements than Ohio in their unemployment rates.

Ohio has created more jobs than almost any other state, trailing just Texas, California and New York. Altogether, according to state figures, Ohio has added 122,400 jobs since Gov. John Kasich took office in January 2011.

The data show a steady, though slow, recovery. For the first time in 11 straight months, Ohio's unemployment rate didn't fall last month. However, just by holding our ground at 7.2 percent in July, we're doing better than much of the county. The overall U.S. jobless rate inched up to 8.3 percent last month. And 44 states had worse unemployment rates in July than the month before, according to federal labor statistics.

While President Barack Obama boasts that his auto bailout salvaged jobs in Ohio, the Kasich administration says the numbers prove otherwise. From January 2011 through this past July, federal labor statistics show that vehicle- and parts-manufacturing jobs actually went down by 3,200.

So if Ohio lost jobs in the auto industry but now stands fourth in the nation in job creation, who's to say the state wouldn't have been better off without the bailout? Clearly, the nation would have been better off with the kind of intelligent, businesslike management that been responsible for the turnaround in the fortunes of the Buckeye State.

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