Local Families Struggle as Unemployment Benefits End



Published: 11/22 11:20 pm

Updated: 8:46 am

Lima, N.Y. - Bruce Himes tries to stay positive for his family but admits, he worries. A lot.

"I checked on Monday," he said. "My unemployment is scheduled to run out on December 5th."

To make things worse, his wife Cheryl was laid off last week. It adds even more pressure to Himes' job search, which isn't going well, he says. Not that he hasn't tried.

"I've taken all the workshops they've offered, along with resume tips and job interviewing skills," Himes said. "I've got over 400 resumes out since I was laid off, and I've only had one interview."

There are a lot of people in the same situation, according to Pete Pecor, Executive Director of Rochester Works. That's why he'd like to see unemployment benefits extended.

"If unemployment was lower and economic activity was improved, then that would be a different story," Pecor said. "These are still difficult times, so I think those benefits are still necessary."

Bruce Himes agrees. Without unemployment benefits, he's not sure what he would have done.

"I have three kids," Himes said. "Without that money, I probably wouldn't be able to feed them. I would be forced into asking the county for help, maybe for food stamps, or to help me pay my rent. I've heard a lot of people say, 'oh, everyone goes out and uses the benefits for extra things, they're lazy. But I want to work. My full time job during the day is looking for work."