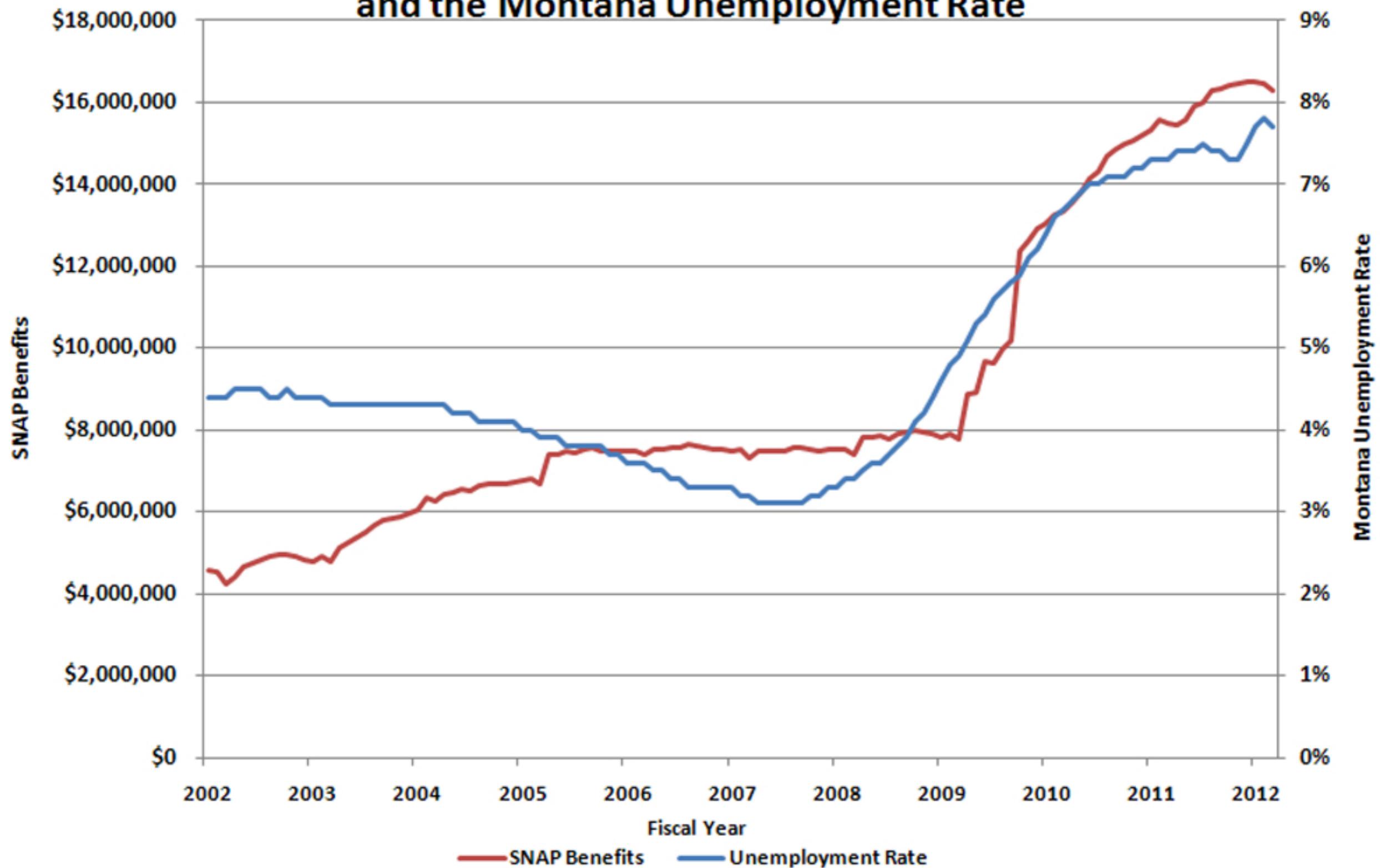


Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits and the Montana Unemployment Rate



The chart reflects the changes from 2002 through September 2011. Caseloads associated with the benefits based on September data were 26,315 in FY 2002, 31,761 in FY 2004, 34,514 in FY 2005, and grew to 35,780 by September 2008. In September of 2009 the caseload was 45,823 and reached 58,266 by September of 2011.

In addition to unemployment, the increase in caseload and benefits includes an increased federal emphasis on outreach and enrollment, the switch from paper coupons to Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) in 2002, and the 2003-2004 post-9/11 economic slowdown. From 2002 until 2009 benefit increases were annually tied to the Consumer Price Index. In 2009 the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) established a benefit increase of 13.6%. (For a family of three, benefits increased from \$250 a month to \$313 per month.) There have been no additional increases to date. Sources: Unemployment data: U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SNAP data: Montana Department of Health and Human Services.