

## THE RACE: Jobs news may help Obama regain footing

Contributed by TOM RAUM  
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Finally, positive news on the jobs front. At least things are headed the right way.

And the 7.8 percent September unemployment rate, down from 8.1 percent in August, was clearly welcome to President Barack Obama. It could help him regain footing after a shaky first debate.

There's still far to go. But in politics, direction and momentum can count for plenty. That was so for both Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan.

Roosevelt was re-elected when the jobless rate was a sky-high 15 percent. But it was deep in the Great Depression, and the rate was on its way down from near 25 percent.

For Reagan, unemployment peaked at 10.8 percent in November and December 1982. His party suffered heavy midterm losses in Congress. But by Election Day 1984, the rate had dropped to 7.2 percent, and Reagan swamped Democrat Walter Mondale to win a second term.

The current jobless rate, announced Friday, is back to where it was when Obama took office after remaining above 8 percent for 43 straight months and peaking at 10 percent in October 2010.

Roughly half the jobs lost in the worst recession since the Great Depression have now come back.

Obama hailed the new government numbers, telling supporters at a

rally in Fairfax, Va., ``This country has come too far to turn back now." He warned Republicans not to ``talk down the economy to score a political point."

Not surprisingly, Republicans had a different view.

``This is not what a real recovery looks like," argued Romney as he campaigned in western Virginia coal country.

One more jobs report comes out before the Nov. 6 election.

Later Friday, Romney was heading to St. Petersburg, Fla., and Obama to Ohio and then to California for a series of fundraisers.