



**EMBARGOED until
Friday, January 20, 2012**

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	<u>Dec 11</u>	<u>Nov 11</u>	<u>Dec 10</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	10.8%	10.5%	11.5%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	8.5%	8.7%	9.4%
RI Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	458.7	459.3	458.2

Highlights:

- The RI unemployment rate increased three-tenths of a percentage point over the month.
- The RI labor force grew for the third consecutive month.
- RI-based jobs dropped 600 over the month—the fifth consecutive over-the-month decrease.

Unemployment Rate Rises to 10.8 Percent

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state’s **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for December 2011 was 10.8 percent, up three-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month. This marks the second consecutive monthly increase in the unemployment rate. However, the December 2011 rate was down seven-tenths of a percentage point from the previous December, representing the 15th consecutive month of year-over-year decreases in the state’s unemployment rate.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 8.5 percent in December, down two-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month and down nine-tenths of a percentage point from December 2010.

The number of **unemployed RI residents**—those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment—increased by 1,600 over the November figures, rising to 60,800 in December, the highest level since July 2011. Over the year, the number of unemployed RI residents dropped by 5,400.

Due to numerous eligibility requirements, the number of unemployed RI residents differs from the number of **RI Unemployment Insurance recipients**. The average weekly claim load for RI Unemployment Insurance benefits in December was 32,682, up 2,466 (+8.2%) from the November average of 30,215 but down 4,459 (-12.0%) from the December 2010 average of 37,141.

The number of **employed RI residents** was unchanged over the November figures, remaining at 503,400 in December. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was down 7,700 from December 2010.

The RI labor force totaled 564,200 in December 2011, up 1,500 from November but down 13,100 from December 2010 estimates. The labor force increase was due entirely to the increase in the number of unemployed residents. This is the third consecutive month that the RI labor force has increased, following nine consecutive months of decreases.

JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND: Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 458,700 in December, reflecting a loss of 600 jobs from the revised November employment estimate of 459,300 (revised upward by 1,100) and marking five consecutive months of job declines.

The Retail Trade sector reported a loss of 1,000 jobs in December as retail establishments added fewer workers than in previous Decembers. Construction sector employment declined by 500, due to reported cutbacks in specialty trade contractors and heavy and civil engineering construction workers.

Also in December, widespread losses in the Other Services sector resulted in a loss of 400 jobs. Health Care & Social Assistance employment decreased by 300 as payroll declines were reported among ambulatory health care services and hospitals. Smaller jobs declines were reported in the Educational Services (-200) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-100) sectors. Employment in Information, Government and Natural Resources & Mining remained unchanged.

(continued)

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Employment in the Accommodation & Food Services sector increased by 600 over the month, due to better than expected employment in local restaurants and hotels. The Manufacturing sector added 400 jobs over the month as both the durable goods and non-durable goods components of manufacturing added jobs.

Positive job gains in December were also reported in the Financial Activities (+300), Professional & Business Services (+300), Wholesale Trade (+200) and Transportation & Utilities (+100) sectors.

Over the year, total non-farm employment was up 500 from December 2010. Job gains were reported in six economic sectors over the year, including Professional & Business Services (+1,400), Construction (+900), Educational Services (+700), Wholesale Trade (+400), Transportation & Utilities (+200) and Accommodation & Food Services (+100).

Government employment posted the largest over-the-year decline in December, with a decrease of 1,400 jobs, followed by Other Services (-800), Manufacturing (-300), Health Care & Social Assistance (-300), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-200), Financial Activities (-100) and Information (-100). Retail Trade and Natural Resources & Mining employment remained even over the year.

MANUFACTURING: In December 2011, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$17.59 per hour. The average hourly production wage was up 17 cents from November 2011 and up \$2.66 from December 2010. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 40.5 hours per week in December, up eight-tenths of an hour over the month and up an hour and three-tenths over the year.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND <i>(in thousands)</i>					
	Dec-11	Nov-11	Dec-10	Net Change From	
				Nov-11	Dec-10
Total Nonfarm	458.7	459.3	458.2	-0.6	0.5
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	16.0	16.5	15.1	-0.5	0.9
Manufacturing	40.2	39.8	40.5	0.4	-0.3
Wholesale Trade	16.8	16.6	16.4	-0.2	0.4
Retail Trade	47.5	48.5	47.5	-1.0	0.0
Transportation & Utilities	10.4	10.3	10.2	0.1	0.2
Information	10.4	10.4	10.5	0.0	-0.1
Financial Activities	30.0	29.7	30.1	0.3	-0.1
Professional & Business Services	54.3	54.0	52.9	0.3	1.4
Educational Services	24.0	24.2	23.3	-0.2	0.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	78.0	78.3	78.3	-0.3	-0.3
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	6.9	7.0	7.1	-0.1	-0.2
Accommodation & Food Services	43.0	42.4	42.9	0.6	0.1
Other Services	21.4	21.8	22.2	-0.4	-0.8
Government	59.6	59.6	61.0	0.0	-1.4

METHODOLOGY: The unemployment figures are based largely on a survey of households in Rhode Island and measure the unemployment status of people who live in the state. Unemployment rates prior to 1976 are not recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as official since the methodology used at that time is not comparable to today's methods. The establishment employment figures are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state. Rhode Island labor market information is available at www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi. The January labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, March 2, 2012.

Beginning with the release of the March 2011 employment estimates, the production of state and metropolitan area estimates transferred from individual State Workforce Agencies to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Additional information on procedures for producing CES estimates is available on the BLS web site at <http://www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm>.

ABOUT DLT: The RI Department of Labor and Training offers employment services, educational services and economic opportunity to both individuals and employers. DLT protects Rhode Island's workforce by enforcing labor laws, prevailing wage rates and workplace health and safety standards. The department also provides temporary income support to unemployed and temporarily disabled workers. For more information, please call the RI Department of Labor and Training at (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at www.dlt.ri.gov.