



EMBARGOED until 2:00 p.m.
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Media contact:
Michael Healey (401) 462-8090

Rhode Island-Based Jobs Up 1,100 from November; December Unemployment Rate Drops to 5.1 Percent

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state’s **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for December 2015 dropped to 5.1 percent, down one-tenth of a percentage point from the November 2015 rate of 5.2 percent. Over the year, the unemployment rate is down one and seven-tenths percentage points from the December 2014 rate. This is the lowest unemployment rate since June 2007.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.0 percent in December 2015, unchanged from the previous month and down six-tenths of a percentage point over the year.

The number of **unemployed RI residents**—those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment—was 28,400, down 400 from the November figure of 28,800. This represents the lowest unemployment level since May 2007. Over the year, the number of unemployed dropped by 8,800.

A total of 9,921 individuals collected Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in December 2015,* down from 11,851 a year ago. This month, UI claimants accounted for 37.1 percent of the total unemployed.

The number of **employed RI residents** was 526,500, down 400 from the November figure of 526,900. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was up 14,900 from December 2014.

The RI labor force totaled 554,900 in December 2015, down 800 from November 2015 but up 6,100 from December 2014.

JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND: Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 487,700 in December, reflecting a gain of 1,100 jobs from the revised November estimate of 486,600. The December jobs report marks the third consecutive month of job gains totaling 4,300 jobs, and an average of 1,400 jobs per month. The December nonfarm employment level represents the highest employment level since January 2008 (488,000).

In 2015, 8,400 jobs were added to the local economy, the highest annual gain since 9,500 jobs were added during the year 2000. On average, 700 jobs per month were added in 2015, compared to the 800 jobs per month averaged in 2000. A total of 5,900 jobs were added in 2014, or 500 jobs per month.

The Construction sector reported a surge in employment during the fourth quarter of 2015. During this three month period, the sector cumulated a total of 1,700 jobs, 1,000 of which came in December. Through the first three quarters of 2015, construction employment had been down by 1,800. The end of the year momentum held the annual job loss to 100 in 2015.

The Professional & Business Services sector also posted a strong fourth quarter in 2015, adding 500 jobs in

(Continued)

	<u>Dec 15</u>	<u>Nov 15</u>	<u>Dec 14</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	5.1%	5.2%	6.8%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.0%	5.0%	5.6%
RI Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	487.7	486.6	479.3
Highlights:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RI unemployment rate declined to 5.1%, its lowest level since June 2007. • The number of RI-based jobs is up 1,100 from November and up 8,400 from a year ago. • The number of employed RI residents decreased by 400 over the month. • There were 9,921 individuals collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits in December.* 			

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December, preceded by a gain of 500 jobs in October and 300 jobs in November. The sector employed 64,800 workers in December, the highest employment level on record. Professional & Business Services jobs were up 4,200 over the year.

Employment in Transportation & Utilities was up 400 over the month, propelling the employment level above the twelve-thousand mark for the first time ever. This sector averaged a gain of 300 jobs over the past three months and is up 700 jobs from December 2014.

Smaller December job gains were reported in the Financial Activities (+200), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100) and Health Care & Social Assistance (+100) sectors, while employment in the Government, Information, Mining & Logging and Other Services sectors remained even.

The Educational Services sector reported a loss of 700 jobs from November, the first jobs loss reported in this sector since August. Despite the sharp December downfall, employment in Educational Services is up 900 from a year ago.

Small job declines were reported within the Accommodation & Food Services (-200), Retail Trade (-100), Manufacturing (-100) and Wholesale Trade (-100) sectors. Both the Accommodation & Food Services (+1,900) and Manufacturing sectors (+600) posted positive annual gains, while Retail Trade (-100) and Wholesale Trade (-700) both fell short of their December 2014 employment levels.

MANUFACTURING: In December 2015, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$17.47 per hour, down 34 cents from November 2015 and down 59 cents from December 2014. Manufacturing production employees worked an average of 39.5 hours per week in December, up an hour and three-tenths from November but down an hour and seven-tenths over the year.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND (in thousands)					
	Dec-15	Nov-15	Dec-14	Net Change From Nov-15 Dec-14	
Total Nonfarm	487.7	486.6 *	479.3	1.1	8.4
Total Private	428.4	427.3	419.2	1.1	9.2
Mining & Logging	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	16.5	15.5 *	16.6	1.0	-0.1
Manufacturing	42.0	42.1	41.4	-0.1	0.6
Wholesale Trade	16.3	16.4	17.0	-0.1	-0.7
Retail Trade	46.9	47.0 *	47.0	-0.1	-0.1
Transportation & Utilities	12.1	11.7	11.4	0.4	0.7
Information	8.5	8.5 *	8.8	0.0	-0.3
Financial Activities	32.8	32.6	32.5	0.2	0.3
Professional & Business Services	64.8	64.3 *	60.6	0.5	4.2
Educational Services	25.1	25.8 *	24.2	-0.7	0.9
Health Care & Social Assistance	80.6	80.5 *	80.7	0.1	-0.1
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	9.7	9.6 *	8.6	0.1	1.1
Accommodation & Food Services	48.9	49.1 *	47.0	-0.2	1.9
Other Services	24.0	24.0 *	23.2	0.0	0.8
Government	59.3	59.3 *	60.1	0.0	-0.8

Note: December data is preliminary and subject to revision.
**Indicates a revised estimate*

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 of employment figures is 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. Additional information on procedures for producing Current Employment Statistics (CES) estimates is available on the BLS web site at www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm. BLS will be releasing all states' December labor force data and job counts on January 26, 2016. DLT is scheduled to release the January 2016 labor force figures and job counts on Thursday, March 10, 2016, at 2:00 p.m.

ABOUT DLT: The RI Department of Labor and Training offers employment services, educational services and economic opportunities 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.

*Refers to the number of new and reopened claims filed by UI beneficiaries and claims filed by those already collecting UI in the week that includes the 12th of the month.