

**EMBARGOED until 2:00 p.m.
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Unemployment Rate Drops to 6.8 Percent in December 2014 — Jobs up 7,700 in 2014

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state’s **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for December 2014 dropped to 6.8 percent, down three-tenths of a percentage point from the November 2014 rate and down two and a half percentage points from the December 2013 rate. This is the lowest unemployment rate since March 2008.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.6 percent in December 2014, down two-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month and down one and one-tenth percentage points over the year.

The number of **unemployed RI residents**—those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment—was 37,300, down 2,000 from the November figure of 39,300. This represents the 17th consecutive over-the-month decrease and the lowest unemployment level since February 2008. Over the year, the number of unemployed dropped by 13,800.

A total of 11,851 individuals collected Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in December 2014,* down from 13,325 a year ago. This month, UI claimants accounted for 35.7 percent of the total unemployed.

The number of **employed RI residents** was 515,300, up 1,200 from the November figure of 514,100. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was up 16,200 from December 2013.

The RI labor force totaled 552,600 in December 2014, down 700 from November 2014 but up 2,500 from December 2013.

JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND: Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 478,900 in December, reflecting a loss of 100 jobs from the revised November estimate of 479,000. In all, 7,700 jobs were added in Rhode Island in 2014, the largest annual gain since 2000 when 9,500 jobs were added to the economy.

The Professional and Business Services sector lost 1,100 jobs in December, negating the addition of 1,000 jobs reported in November. The loss is attributed to reported declines among companies offering administrative and waste services.

Local retailers withheld from adding employment to their payrolls in December leading to a decrease of 400 jobs in the Retail Trade sector. In addition, job declines were also noted in Health Care & Social Assistance (-200), Government (-100), Financial Activities (-100) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-100).

	<u>Dec 14</u>	<u>Nov 14</u>	<u>Dec 13</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	6.8%	7.1%	9.3%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.6%	5.8%	6.7%
RI Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	478.9	479.0	471.2

Highlights:

- The RI unemployment rate declined to 6.8%, its lowest level since March 2008.
- The number of RI-based jobs is down 100 from November 2014 as government jobs declined by 100 and private sector jobs were unchanged.
- The number of unemployed RI residents decreased by 2,000 over the month.
- There were 11,851 individuals collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits in December.*

(Continued)

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Accommodation & Food Services employment continued to rise in December, adding 600 jobs over the month. Employment within this sector has increased in four of the last five months resulting in a gain of 1,900 jobs since July.

A gain of 400 jobs was reported in the Manufacturing sector stemming from a boost in the non-durable goods component. Employment in the state's Manufacturing sector has increased in six of the last eight months.

The Other Services sector also added 400 jobs over the month with smaller gains reported in Educational Services (+300), Construction (+100) and Transportation & Utilities (+100). Employment in the Wholesale Trade, Information and Mining & Logging sectors remained unchanged over the month.

As mentioned earlier, total nonfarm employment increased by 7,700 over the year, as job gains appeared in ten economic sectors, including Educational Services (+1,800), Accommodation & Food Services (+1,300), Manufacturing (+1,100), Financial Activities (+1,000), Construction (+900), Other Services (+800), Professional & Business Services (+700), Transportation & Utilities (+500), Health Care & Social Assistance (+400) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100).

Employment in four sectors — Retail Trade (-400), Government (-300), Wholesale Trade (-100) and Information (-100) — was down over the year. Employment in Mining & Logging remained unchanged since December 2013.

MANUFACTURING: In December 2014, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$18.08 per hour, down 14 cents from November 2014 and down one-dollar and twenty-cents from December 2013.

Manufacturing production employees worked an average of 41.3 hours per week in December, up an hour and seven-tenths over the month but down three-tenths of an hour from a year ago.

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. Additional information on procedures for producing Current Employment Statistics (CES) estimates is available on the BLS web site at <http://www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm>. The January 2015 labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Thursday, March 12, 2015, at 2:00 p.m.

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.

* 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.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NONFARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	Dec-14	Nov-14	Dec-13	Net Change From	
				Nov-14	Dec-13
Total Nonfarm	478.9	479.0	471.2	-0.1	7.7
Total Private	419.2	419.2	411.2	0.0	8.0
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	16.8	16.7	15.9	0.1	0.9
Manufacturing	41.6	41.2	40.5	0.4	1.1
Wholesale Trade	16.7	16.7	16.8	0.0	-0.1
Retail Trade	46.5	46.9	46.9	-0.4	-0.4
Transportation & Utilities	11.6	11.5	11.1	0.1	0.5
Information	8.7	8.7	8.8	0.0	-0.1
Financial Activities	33.1	33.2	32.1	-0.1	1.0
Professional & Business Services	59.5	60.6	58.8	-1.1	0.7
Educational Services	24.6	24.3	22.8	0.3	1.8
Health Care & Social Assistance	80.8	81.0	80.4	-0.2	0.4
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	8.9	9.0	8.8	-0.1	0.1
Accommodation & Food Services	47.1	46.5	45.8	0.6	1.3
Other Services	23.1	22.7	22.3	0.4	0.8
Government	59.7	59.8	60.0	-0.1	-0.3