

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

Rhode Island-Based Jobs up 2,200 from January; February Unemployment Rate Drops to 4.5 Percent

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state's **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for February 2017 was 4.5 percent, down three-tenths of a percentage point from the revised January rate. Over the year, the unemployment rate is down nine-tenths of a percentage point from the February 2016 rate of 5.4 percent. This is the lowest unemployment rate since May 2001.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 4.7 percent in February 2017, down one-tenth of a percentage point from the previous month and down two-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 25,000, down 1,200 from the revised January figure of 26,200. Over the year, the number of unemployed dropped by 4,800.

A total of 15,087 individuals collected Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in February 2017,* down from 15,262 a year ago. This month, UI claimants accounted for 54.4 percent of the total unemployed.

The number of **employed RI residents** was 527,200, up 2,300 from the revised January figure of 524,900. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was up 4,800 from February 2016.

The RI labor force totaled 552,200 in February 2017, up 1,200 from January 2017 but unchanged from February 2016.

JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND: Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 495,200 in February, reflecting a gain of 2,200 jobs from the revised January estimate of 493,000. February marks two consecutive months of strong job gains in 2017, totaling 3,900 jobs, or an average gain of 1,900 jobs per month. Since February 2016, Rhode Island based jobs are up 5,900.

Employment in Construction continued to trend up, adding 700 jobs in February, following a gain of 900 jobs in January. The Construction employment level has topped the 20,000 mark for the first time since September 2008 (20,400). Over the year, the Construction sector has added 2,200 jobs.

The number of jobs in the Other Services sector grew by 400 from January, boosting the February employment level to 23,200. Employment in the Other Services sector is up 100 over the year.

A gain of 300 jobs was reported in each of the Accommodation & Food Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, Transportation & Utilities and Wholesale Trade sectors. Employment in both the Accommodation & Food Services and Health Care & Social Assistance is up 1,100 from February 2016, while the number of jobs in the Wholesale Trade and Transportation & Utilities sectors is up 200 and 100, respectively, from a year ago.

	<u>Feb 17</u>	<u>Jan 17</u>	<u>Feb 16</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	4.5%	4.8%	5.4%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	4.7 %	4.8%	4.9%
RI Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	495.2	493.0	489.3
Highlights:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RI unemployment rate was 4.5 percent, down three-tenths of a percentage point from last month and down nine-tenths of a percentage point from a year ago. • The number of RI-based jobs is up 2,200 from January and up 5,900 from a year ago. • The number of employed RI residents increased by 2,300 over the month. • There were 15,087 individuals collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits in February.* 			

(More)

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Professional & Business Services added 200 jobs from January and has added 1,900 jobs over the year. Employment in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Government, and Mining & Logging each added 100 jobs over the month. Job growth in the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation sector was robust from a year ago, up 1,100 jobs. Government employment is up 200 from February 2016, while Mining & Logging employment is up 100 during this period.

Four employment sectors reported job declines in February, led by the Educational Services sector which shed 300 jobs. The number of jobs within this sector is also down 400 from a year ago.

Smaller job losses were noted in the Financial Activities, Manufacturing and Retail Trade sectors, all reporting a loss of 100 jobs each. Among these sectors, the Manufacturing sector has sustained the largest yearly job loss, down 800 jobs from February 2016. The number of jobs in the Financial Activities and Retail Trade sectors fell by 400 and 100, respectively, over the year.

The number of jobs in the Information sector remained unchanged from January, but was down 500 jobs over the year.

MANUFACTURING: In February 2017, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$18.60 per hour, up twenty cents from January 2017 and up ninety-seven cents from February 2016.

Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.1 hours per week in February, down three-tenths of an hour over the month but up eight-tenths of an hour from a year ago.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	Feb-17	Jan-17	Feb-16	Net Change From	
				Jan-17	Feb-16
Total Nonfarm	495.2	493.0 *	489.3	2.2	5.9
Total Private	434.6	432.5 *	428.9	2.1	5.7
Mining & Logging	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Construction	20.2	19.5	18.0	0.7	2.2
Manufacturing	40.0	40.1 *	40.8	-0.1	-0.8
Wholesale Trade	16.8	16.5	16.6	0.3	0.2
Retail Trade	48.3	48.4	48.4	-0.1	-0.1
Transportation & Utilities	11.6	11.3	11.5	0.3	0.1
Information	7.7	7.7 *	8.2	0.0	-0.5
Financial Activities	33.2	33.3 *	33.6	-0.1	-0.4
Professional & Business Services	67.2	67.0 *	65.3	0.2	1.9
Educational Services	25.1	25.4 *	25.5	-0.3	-0.4
Health Care & Social Assistance	81.7	81.4 *	80.6	0.3	1.1
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	10.4	10.3 *	9.3	0.1	1.1
Accommodation & Food Services	48.9	48.6 *	47.8	0.3	1.1
Other Services	23.2	22.8 *	23.1	0.4	0.1
Government	60.6	60.5	60.4	0.1	0.2

**Revised estimates*

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 website at www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm. BLS will be releasing all states' February labor force data and job counts on March 24, 2017. DLT is scheduled to release the March 2017 labor force figures and job counts on Thursday, April 20, 2017, 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 website 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.