

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

Rhode Island added 1,600 Jobs in March; Unemployment Rate at 6.3 Percent

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state's **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for March 2015 dropped to 6.3 percent, down one-tenth of a percentage point from the revised February 2015 rate of 6.4 percent. Over the year, the unemployment rate is down one and nine-tenths percentage points from the March 2014 rate. This is the lowest unemployment rate since January 2008.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.5 percent in March 2015, unchanged 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 34,600, down 300 from the revised February figure of 34,900. This represents the lowest unemployment level since November 2007. Over the year, the number of unemployed dropped by 11,200.

A total of 15,298 individuals collected Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in March 2015,* down from 17,229 a year ago. This month, UI claimants accounted for 40.4 percent of the total unemployed.

The number of **employed RI residents** was 517,100, up 2,400 from the February figure of 514,700. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was up 7,700 from March 2014.

The RI labor force totaled 551,700 in March 2015, up 2,100 from February 2015 but down 3,500 from March 2014.

JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND: Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 480,000 in March, reflecting a gain of 1,600 jobs from the revised February estimate of 478,400. Thus far, the state's job count is up 700 through 2015, and up 4,900 from a year ago.

The Educational Services sector added 600 jobs in March, erasing the 500 job deficit reported in February. In addition, the Accommodation & Food Services sector erased their February loss of 400 jobs by adding 500 jobs to the March payroll.

Health Care & Social Assistance employment rose by 400 over the month, ending three consecutive months of job declines. Employment in the Other Services sector also grew by 400 from February, pushing their employment level above 24,000 for the first time ever.

	<u>Mar 15</u>	<u>Feb 15</u>	<u>Mar 14</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	6.3%	6.4%	8.2%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.5%	5.5%	6.6%
RI Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	480.0	478.4	475.1
Highlights:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RI unemployment rate declined to 6.3%, its lowest level since January 2008. • The number of RI-based jobs is up 1,600 from February and up 4,900 from a year ago. • The number of employed RI residents increased by 2,400 over the month. • There were 15,298 individuals collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits in March.* 			

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Monthly Employment March 2015, page 2 of 2

A gain of 100 jobs each was reported in the Financial Activities, Information, Retail Trade, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Government sectors.

Employment in the Construction sector continued to decline as 400 jobs were lost in March, matching the loss of 400 jobs from the previous month. Payrolls in the Professional & Business Services fell by 200 over the month, while falling by 100 in both the Wholesale Trade and Mining & Logging sectors.

Employment remained unchanged in the Manufacturing and Transportation & Utilities sectors.

Over the year, total nonfarm employment increased by 4,900 as job gains appeared in seven economic sectors, including Accommodation & Food Services (+1,400), Other Services (+1,300) and Manufacturing (+1,200). Smaller over-the-year gains were also noted in Educational Services (+500), Health Care & Social Assistance (+500), Financial Activities (+400) and Transportation & Utilities (+400).

Employment in five sectors — Construction (-200), Government (-200), Retail Trade (-200), Wholesale Trade (-100) and Information (-100) — was down over the year. Employment in Professional & Business Services, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Mining & Logging remained unchanged since March 2014.

MANUFACTURING: In March 2015, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$18.08 per hour, up 4 cents from February 2015 and down 53 cents from March 2014. Manufacturing production employees worked an average of 38.8 hours per week in March, up a half-hour over the month but down an hour and two-tenths from a year ago.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	Mar-15	Feb-15	Mar-14	Net Change From	
				Feb-15	Mar-14
Total Nonfarm	480.0	478.4	475.1	1.6	4.9
Total Private	420.1	418.6	415.0	1.5	5.1
Mining & Logging	0.2	0.3	0.2	-0.1	0.0
Construction	16.1	16.5	16.3	-0.4	-0.2
Manufacturing	41.7	41.7	40.5	0.0	1.2
Wholesale Trade	16.7	16.8	16.8	-0.1	-0.1
Retail Trade	46.7	46.6	46.9	0.1	-0.2
Transportation & Utilities	11.4	11.4	11.0	0.0	0.4
Information	8.7	8.6	8.8	0.1	-0.1
Financial Activities	32.5	32.4	32.1	0.1	0.4
Professional & Business Services	59.9	60.1	59.9	-0.2	0.0
Educational Services	24.8	24.2	24.3	0.6	0.5
Health Care & Social Assistance	80.9	80.5	80.4	0.4	0.5
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	9.1	9.0	9.1	0.1	0.0
Accommodation & Food Services	47.3	46.8	45.9	0.5	1.4
Other Services	24.1	23.7	22.8	0.4	1.3
Government	59.9	59.8	60.1	0.1	-0.2

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 <http://www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm>. BLS will be releasing March labor force data and job counts on April 21, 2015. DLT is scheduled to release the April 2015 labor force figures and job counts on Thursday, May 21, 2015, 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.