Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

MEDIA ADVISORY

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Laura Hart (401) 462-8090 Hlhart@dlt.ri.gov
Nicole Romeo (401) 462-8744 Hnromeo@dlt.ri.gov

	Dec 09	Nov 09	Dec 08
RI Unemployment Rate	12.9%	12.7%	9.4%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	10.0%	10.0%	7.4%
RI Job Count (*in thousands*)	453.8	455.1	471.2

Highlights:

- The December RI jobless rate increased by two-tenths of a percentage point to 12.9 percent.
- The number of unemployed RI residents increased by 1,100 over the month.
- The number of jobs in RI decreased by 1,300 over the month.

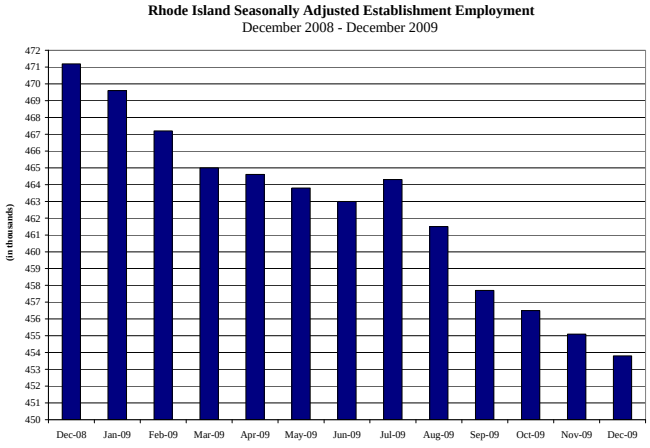
Unemployment Rate Rises to 12.9 Percent

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state's **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for December 2009 was 12.9 percent, up two-tenths of a percentage point from the November rate of 12.7 percent. The U.S. unemployment rate was unchanged over the month, remaining at 10.0 percent.

In December, the number of **unemployed RI residents**—those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment—increased by 1,100 over the month to total 73,500. Over the year, the number of unemployed RI residents increased by 20,300.

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 41,430, up 5,149 (14.2%) from the November average of 36,281.

The number of **employed RI residents** decreased 1,400 over the month, totaling 496,800 in December. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents decreased by 15,300. The decrease in the number of employed residents offset the increase in the number of unemployed residents. Therefore, the state's total labor force shrank by 300 over the month to 570,300.



JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND:
Rhode Island nonfarm payroll employment totaled 453,800 in December, equaling the lowest employment level since December 1997 (453,800). The December job count edged down by 1,300 from the November revised employment level of 455,100.

Notable job losses were reported in Manufacturing, Professional & Business Services and Accommodation & Food Services. Manufacturing employment fell by 700 in December as the Durable Goods component of Manufacturing experienced large losses, including Jewelry & Silverware Manufacturing, a sub-sector of Durable Goods. The Professional & Business Services sector also shed 700 jobs over the month, as landscaping companies continued to shed employees. Janitorial services, which provide services to buildings, also reported notable payroll losses.

(continued)

Employment was down in full-service and limited-service restaurants as the Accommodation & Food Services sector lost 500 jobs in December, while Retail Trade (-200) and Government (-100) reported modest employment losses.

Five sectors—Financial Activities (+300), Transportation & Utilities (+200), Other Services (+200), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100) and Information (+100)—reported modest employment gains between November and December. Employment in the Health Care & Social Assistance, Educational Services, Wholesale Trade, Construction, and Natural Resources & Mining sectors remained unchanged over the month.

December 2009 employment was down 17,400 (-3.7%) from December 2008, with job declines reported in nearly all economic sectors. Manufacturing (-4,400), Accommodation & Food Services (-2,200), Professional & Business Services (-2,100), Retail Trade (-1,800), Government (-1,600), and Construction (-1,300) reported the most significant annual employment declines. Smaller over-the-year losses were noted in Other Services (-800), Wholesale Trade (-700), Educational Services (-500), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-500), Transportation & Utilities (-500), Health Care & Social Assistance (-400), Information (-400) and Financial Activities (-200).

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND
(in thousands)

				Net Change From	
	Dec-09	Nov-09	Dec-08	Nov-09	Dec-08
Total Nonfarm	**453.8**	**455.1**	**471.2**	**-1.3**	**-17.4**
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	17.6	17.6	18.9	0.0	-1.3
Manufacturing	41.4	42.1	45.8	-0.7	-4.4
Wholesale Trade	16.1	16.1	16.8	0.0	-0.7
Retail Trade	45.0	45.2	46.8	-0.2	-1.8
Transportation & Utilities	10.3	10.1	10.8	0.2	-0.5
Information	9.9	9.8	10.3	0.1	-0.4
Financial Activities	32.6	32.3	32.8	0.3	-0.2
Professional & Business Services	50.6	51.3	52.7	-0.7	-2.1
Educational Services	23.1	23.1	23.6	0.0	-0.5
Health Care & Social Assistance	76.5	76.5	76.9	0.0	-0.4
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7.4	7.3	7.9	0.1	-0.5
Accommodation & Food Services	40.4	40.9	42.6	-0.5	-2.2
Other Services	21.7	21.5	22.5	0.2	-0.8
Government	61.0	61.1	62.6	-0.1	-1.6

MANUFACTURING: In December 2009, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned $14.37 per hour. The average hourly production wage remained unchanged from November 2009 and up thirty-one cents from December 2008. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 38.2 hours per week in December, up eight-tenths of an hour over the month, and up four-tenths of an hour over the year.

UPCOMING REVISIONS: In February, all states including Rhode Island will perform their annual revision of monthly labor force and employment data. Employment data is benchmarked to the payroll data submitted by all employers, and labor force data is revised to reflect new population control totals. As a result, unadjusted job numbers are revised for 2008 and 2009, while seasonally adjusted job numbers and all labor force data are revised for 2005 through 2009. Due to this benchmarking process, the January labor force figures will be released two weeks later than usual, on Friday, March 5, 2010.

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 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 on the programs and services available to all Rhode Islanders, please call the RI Department of Labor and Training at (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at www.dlt.ri.gov.