



Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

MEDIA ADVISORY



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	Feb. 08	Jan. 08	Feb. 07
RI Unemployment Rate	5.8%	5.7%	4.9%
US Unemployment Rate	4.8%	4.9%	4.5%
RI Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	487.8	489.0	495.5

Highlights:

- The RI monthly job count declined by 1,200 from January to February of this year.
- At 487,800, the February 2008 RI job count is the lowest in nearly four years.
- At 5.8 percent, the February RI unemployment rate is its highest since November 1995.

RI Job Count Continues to Decline; Unemployment Rate Inches Up

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that Rhode Island’s monthly job count declined by 1,200 in February 2008, reducing the number of jobs to 487,800. This represents the lowest job count since April 2004 (486,200).

Additionally, the state’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in February 2008 ticked up 0.1 of a percentage point to 5.8 percent from January’s jobless rate of 5.7 percent. This marks the highest RI unemployment rate since November 1995 (5.8%). The

national unemployment rate inched down 0.1 of a percentage point last month to 4.8 percent.

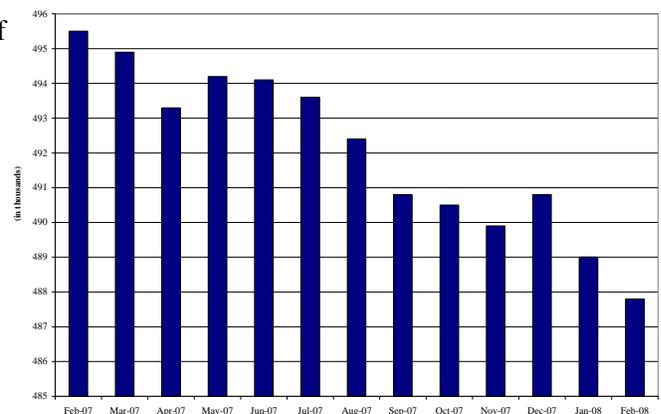
In February, the number of unemployed Rhode Island residents—those residents who classify themselves as available for and actively seeking employment—increased to 33,400, an increase of 500 from January and a year-over-year increase of 5,000 from the previous February. The number of unemployed has been trending upward since March 2007, and the current jobless level is the highest since November 1994.

Department of Labor and Training Interim Director Sandra Powell draws parallels between the Rhode Island and the U.S. economic pictures. “Just as we’ve witnessed a drop in RI jobs, payroll jobs nationally declined by 63,000 over the month,” she says. “Both Rhode Island and the nation are exhibiting monthly losses in their total labor force.” While RI’s labor force—the total of employed and unemployed RI residents—dropped by 3,500 over the month, the national labor force dropped by 450,000 over the same time period.

On a related note, the number of employed RI residents totaled 537,700 in February 2008, representing a decline of 4,100 over the previous month. On a year-over-year basis, the number of employed RI residents dropped 12,100 between February 2007 and February 2008. This represents the largest year-over-year drop in Rhode Island since November 1991.

From January to February of 2008, employment losses were reported in the Professional & Business Services (-500), Construction (-400), and Retail Trade (-400) sectors. Job losses in the Professional & Business Services sector were largely the result of reductions among Temporary Help agencies. Specialty Trades Contractors accounted for most of the decline in the Construction sector. Within Retail Trade, job losses were noted in Department Stores.

Rhode Island Seasonally Adjusted Establishment Employment
February 2007 to February 2008



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Powell adds that the industries most affected by job losses in Rhode Island—Construction; Manufacturing; Trade, Transportation & Utilities; Professional & Business Services; and Financial Activities—are the same industries experiencing job loss nationally.

The month's employment decreases were partially offset by job gains of 300 in the Educational Services and of 100 each in the Transportation & Utilities, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Other Services sectors.

From February 2007 to February 2008, RI jobs declined 7,700, a 1.6 percent decrease. The largest annual employment losses in Rhode Island occurred in the Manufacturing (-2,400), Construction (-2,200), Professional & Business Services (-2,100) and Financial Activities (-1,500) sectors. Smaller losses were noted in Retail Trade (-900); Wholesale Trade (-400); Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-200); Government (-200); and Other Services (-100).

Educational Services employment experienced the largest over-the-year gain (+900). Other gains were noted in Health Care & Social Assistance (+800), Information (+500) and Accommodation & Food Services (+100).

In February 2008, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$13.87 per hour. The average hourly production wage was down 11 cents per hour from January and up 37 cents per hour from a year ago. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 38.3 hours per week in February, down 0.3 of an hour over the month and 1.0 hour since February 2007.

Note: Current month figures are preliminary; prior month and year are revised. 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. 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 March labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, April 18, 2008.

About the RI Department of Labor and Training

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.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND

(in thousands)

	Feb-08	Jan-08	Feb-07	Net Change From	
				Jan-08	Feb-07
Total Nonfarm	487.8	489.0	495.5	-1.2	-7.7
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	20.7	21.1	22.9	-0.4	-2.2
Manufacturing	49.3	49.4	51.7	-0.1	-2.4
Wholesale Trade*	16.8	16.8	17.2	0.0	-0.4
Retail Trade	51.0	51.4	51.9	-0.4	-0.9
Transportation & Utilities	10.9	10.8	10.9	0.1	0.0
Information	10.9	10.9	10.4	0.0	0.5
Financial Activities	34.1	34.2	35.6	-0.1	-1.5
Professional & Business Services	54.6	55.1	56.7	-0.5	-2.1
Educational Services	24.1	23.8	23.2	0.3	0.9
Health Care & Social Assistance	76.5	76.4	75.7	0.1	0.8
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7.8	7.9	8.0	-0.1	-0.2
Accommodation & Food Services	43.3	43.3	43.2	0.0	0.1
Other Services	23.2	23.1	23.3	0.1	-0.1
Government	64.4	64.6	64.6	-0.2	-0.2

* State Calculated Estimate

Equal Opportunity Employer

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities / TDD (401) 462-8006

