



Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

MEDIA ADVISORY



**EMBARGOED until
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MEDIA CONTACT:

Laura Hart (401) 462-8090
lhart@dlt.state.ri.us
Nicole Romeo (401) 462-8744
nromeo@dlt.state.ri.us

Rhode Island's Jobless Rate below U.S. Average for First Time since 2005

800 new jobs created in February

	<u>Feb. 07</u>	<u>Jan. 07</u>	<u>Feb. 06</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	4.4%	4.7%	5.2%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	4.5%	4.6%	4.8%
RI Job Count (in 1,000s)	495.8	495.0	490.7

Highlights:

- RI's unemployment rate for February (4.4%) fell below the US average for the first time since May 2005.
- RI unemployment rate for February is the lowest since March 2001.
- Number of employed Rhode Islanders reached a new record-high of 553,800.

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training reported today that Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by three-tenths of a percentage point to 4.4 percent in February. The number of unemployed dropped by 1,400 during the month to 25,800.

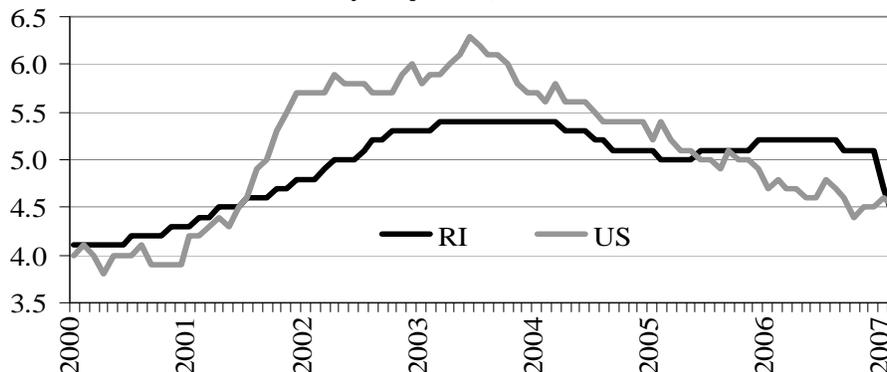
Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Director Adelita S. Orefice commented, "For the first time since May 2005, Rhode Island's unemployment rate is lower than the national average."

At 4.4 percent, the state's jobless rate for February dipped below the national average of 4.5 percent. The 4.4 percent

rate is also the lowest unemployment rate in Rhode Island since March 2001.

In related news, the number of employed Rhode Island residents climbed to a new record high level of 553,800 in February. This tops the previous high of 553,300, set in January 2007.

**RI & US Unemployment Rates
Seasonally Adjusted, 2000 - 2007**





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Orefice added, "The state has more good news to celebrate, with a net gain of 800 jobs in Rhode Island last month." Rhode Island employment increased from 495,000 Ocean State-based jobs in January to 495,800 in February. An employment gain of 800 workers was observed in Educational Services, with additional smaller gains in the Retail Trade (+300); Financial Activities (+200); Wholesale Trade (+200); Information (+100); Professional & Business Services (+100); and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100) sectors.

These gains were partially offset by job losses reported in Manufacturing (-400); Construction (-300); Transportation & Utilities (-100); Natural Resources & Mining (-100); and Government (-100).

Health Care & Social Assistance, Accommodation & Food Services, and Other Services employment remained unchanged over the month.

Employment gains in Educational Services reflected the return of student workers and other staff at the state's private colleges and universities following the winter recess. The increase in Retail Trade was influenced in part by the opening of a major retail trade store in the Providence area.

Continued cold weather in February contributed to the decrease in Construction jobs (-300). Government employment dropped by 100 jobs over the month, reflecting a loss in the state government segment.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	<u>Feb-07</u>	<u>Jan-07</u>	<u>Feb-06</u>	Net Change From	
				<u>Jan-07</u>	<u>Feb-06</u>
Total Nonfarm	495.8	495.0	490.7	0.8	5.1
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.3	0.2	-0.1	0.0
Construction	23.5	23.8	22.7	-0.3	0.8
Manufacturing	51.1	51.5	53.5	-0.4	-2.4
Wholesale Trade*	16.8	16.6	17.0	0.2	-0.2
Retail Trade	52.3	52.0	51.8	0.3	0.5
Transportation & Utilities	11.0	11.1	10.9	-0.1	0.1
Information	11.1	11.0	10.9	0.1	0.2
Financial Activities	36.4	36.2	34.4	0.2	2.0
Professional & Business Services	57.8	57.7	55.6	0.1	2.2
Educational Services	23.0	22.2	22.3	0.8	0.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	75.4	75.4	73.8	0.0	1.6
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	8.3	8.2	7.6	0.1	0.7
Accommodation & Food Services	41.8	41.8	42.1	0.0	-0.3
Other Services	22.9	22.9	22.8	0.0	0.1
Government	64.2	64.3	65.1	-0.1	-0.9

* State Calculated Estimate

Over the year, jobs were up 5,100 from the 490,700 jobs reported in February 2006. Annual employment growth occurred in the Professional & Business Services (+2,200); Financial Activities (+2,000); Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,600); Construction (+800); Educational Services (+700); Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+700); Retail Trade (+500); Information (+200); Transportation & Utilities (+100); and Other Services (+100) sectors. These gains offset losses in Manufacturing (-2,400); Government (-900); Accommodation & Food Services (-300); and Wholesale Trade (-200).

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Hours and Earnings

In February 2007, the \$13.50 average hourly wage earned by the Manufacturing sector's production workers represented a monthly gain of four cents per hour and an over-the-year gain of sixteen cents per hour. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.3 hours per week in February, unchanged over the month and up 0.4 of an hour since February 2006.

Note: Current month figures are preliminary; prior month and year are revised. Data are subject to revision.

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.

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Rhode Island Labor Market Information is available on our web sit www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi
The March labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, April 20, 2007.