



# Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

## MEDIA ADVISORY



**EMBARGOED until  
Friday, April 20, 2007**

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## Rhode Island's Jobless Rate Lowest in Six Years

	<b>Mar. 07</b>	<b>Feb. 07</b>	<b>Mar. 06</b>
RI Unemployment Rate	<b>4.2%</b>	4.4%	5.2%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	<b>4.4%</b>	4.5%	4.7%
RI Job Count (in 1,000s)	<b>496.3</b>	496.1	491.8

**Highlights:**

- RI's unemployment rate for March (4.2%) is the lowest since October 2000.
- RI jobs are up 4,500 from March 2006.

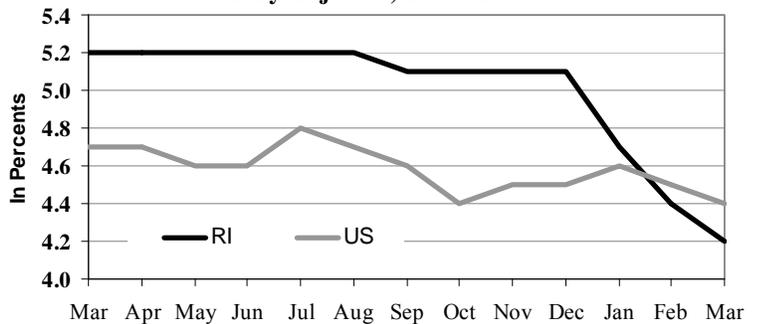
The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training reported today that the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to 4.2 percent in March, down from 4.4 percent in February. This puts the RI unemployment rate below the U.S. unemployment rate by two-tenths of a percentage point, and represents the second month in a row that Rhode Island has performed better than the national average. The RI unemployment rate has continued to drop for three consecutive months, down from 5.1% in December 2006.

"Rhode Island's unemployment rate is the lowest since October 2000," said RI Department of Labor and Training Director Adelita S. Orefice. This latest change can be attributed to the net drop in unemployed Rhode Islanders and the decrease in employed RI residents, which when combined served to reduce the state's labor force by 1,800 last month. The number of unemployed Rhode Islanders decreased from 25,800 in February to 24,000 in March, while the number of employed residents remained relatively stable at 553,700 in March, down from 553,800 in February.

Rhode Island also saw a net gain of 200 jobs in March, increasing to 496,300 from February's revised job count of 496,100. Employment gains of 200 each were noted in Construction, Accommodation & Food Services, and Other Services, while the Professional & Business Services and Natural Resources & Mining sectors each added 100 jobs. These gains were partially offset by job losses reported in Government (-300), Manufacturing (-100), Transportation & Utilities (-100) and Financial Activities (-100).

Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Information; Educational Services; Health Care & Social Assistance; and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation employment remained unchanged over the month. The increase in Accommodation & Food Services was influenced by growth in fast food restaurant employment.

**RI & US Unemployment Rates  
Seasonally Adjusted, 2006 - 2007**



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### Monthly Employment Mar. 07, page 2 of 2

Over the year, jobs were up 4,500 from the 491,800 jobs reported in March 2006. Annual employment growth occurred in the Professional & Business Services (+2,100); Financial Activities (+1,600); Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,500); Construction (+1,000); Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+600); Educational Services (+500); Retail Trade (+300); Other Services (+300); Information (+100); and Natural Resources & Mining (+100) sectors. These gains offset losses in Manufacturing (-2,200); Government (-700); Accommodation & Food Services (-600); and Wholesale Trade (-100). Transportation & Utilities remained unchanged over the year.

#### Hours and Earnings

In March 2007, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$13.46 per hour. The average hourly production wage was down four cents per hour from February but unchanged from a year ago. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.0 hours per week in March, down 0.3 of an hour over the month and up 0.4 of an hour since March 2006.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	Mar-07	Feb-07	Mar-06	Net Change From	
				Feb-07	Mar-06
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>496.3</b>	<b>496.1</b>	<b>491.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Natural Resources & Mining	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Construction	23.7	23.5	22.7	0.2	1.0
Manufacturing	51.1	51.2	53.3	-0.1	-2.2
Wholesale Trade*	16.8	16.8	16.9	0.0	-0.1
Retail Trade	52.3	52.3	52.0	0.0	0.3
Transportation & Utilities	10.9	11.0	10.9	-0.1	0.0
Information	11.1	11.1	11.0	0.0	0.1
Financial Activities	36.3	36.4	34.7	-0.1	1.6
Professional & Business Services	57.9	57.8	55.8	0.1	2.1
Educational Services	23.0	23.0	22.5	0.0	0.5
Health Care & Social Assistance	75.4	75.4	73.9	0.0	1.5
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	8.3	8.3	7.7	0.0	0.6
Accommodation & Food Services	42.0	41.8	42.6	0.2	-0.6
Other Services	23.1	22.9	22.8	0.2	0.3
Government	64.1	64.4	64.8	-0.3	-0.7

\* State Calculated Estimate

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](http://www.dlt.ri.gov).

**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. Rhode Island Labor Market Information is available at [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi). The April labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, May 18, 2007.