

# Employment Labor Market Information Bulletin

Lincoln Almond  
Governor

Dr. Lee H. Arnold  
Director

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## The March Unemployment Rate Hit an Eleven-Year Low

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March dipped to 3.7 percent, its lowest level since June 1989. The unemployment rate continued to show improvement over the year, dropping 0.3 of a percentage point from the March 1999 figure of 4.0 percent. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents fell by 1,400 over the year. The number of jobs in Rhode Island rose by 8,500, or 1.9 percent, between March 1999 and March 2000.

### The Unemployment Rate

The March unemployment rate of 3.7 percent was down 0.1 of a percentage point from the February rate of 3.8 percent. The number of working Rhode Islanders increased by 3,300 over the month. Nationally, the unemployment rate remained at 4.1 percent for March. The Rhode Island rate has been below the comparable national figure for seven consecutive months.

"The Rhode Island economy continued to gain momentum in March as the unemployment rate fell to its lowest level in eleven years and remained below the national average," said DLT Director Dr. Lee H. Arnold. (Continued on Page 4)

## Now Showing at the LMI Web Site!!!!

The latest edition of the Statistical and Fiscal Digest is currently available on the LMI web site. The Digest provides a variety of reference data on Unemployment Insurance, Temporary Disability Insurance, Workers' Compensation, Employment and Training Services, and Labor Market Information. To view and print tables from the Digest just go through the LMI web site at:



<http://www.dlt.state.ri.us/lmi>

and click on the New Statistical & Fiscal Digest at the bottom of the menu screen. Each line will link you directly to the data you are interested in.

If you have any questions, or difficulty accessing the Digest through the LMI web site, please call us at (401) 222-3706 or e-mail us at [mferreira@dlt.state.ri.us](mailto:mferreira@dlt.state.ri.us).

## DLT Is On the Move!

Capping a three and a half year process of renovating long-abandoned state property, the Department of Labor and Training (DLT) has begun to occupy its new headquarters in Cranston, RI. Two of the buildings in the six-building complex are now fully occupied as employees from across the state settle into their new surroundings.

Five historical buildings of native granite ashlar stone have been resurrected to their former glory and joined with a new building to create the Center General Complex. Recently recognized by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission with an award for Historical Renovation, this exciting project is nearing completion.

Centralizing several DLT offices on state-owned property not only saves valuable tax-dollars by reducing rent expenditures and overhead, but it also offers more comprehensive services from a single site. We encourage you to visit our new location when construction is complete, estimated at this time to be mid-summer 2000.

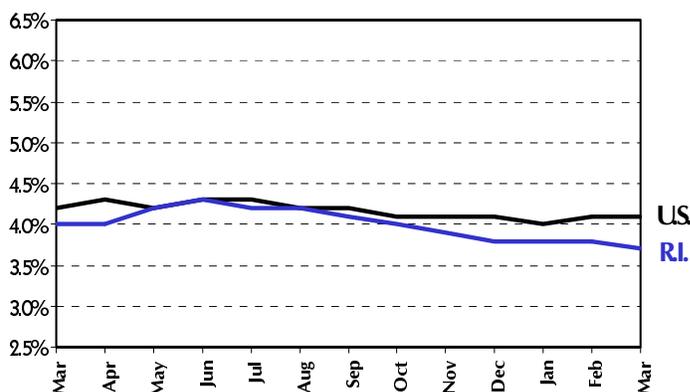
## Rhode Island Labor Force Statistics\* (in thousands)

	Unadjusted			Seasonally Adjusted		
	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99
Civilian Labor Force	500.3	500.0	495.7	505.1	502.0	500.6
Resident Employment	479.9	475.3	473.9	486.3	483.0	480.3
Unemployment	20.4	24.7	21.8	18.8	18.9	20.2
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	4.9%	4.4%	3.7%	3.8%	4.0%

## United States Labor Force Statistics (in thousands)

	Unadjusted			Seasonally Adjusted		
	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99
Civilian Labor Force	140,501	140,185	138,418	140,867	141,165	138,804
Resident Employment	134,494	133,954	132,299	135,159	135,362	132,976
Unemployment	6,007	6,231	6,119	5,708	5,804	5,828
Unemployment Rate	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%	4.1%	4.1%	4.2%

## Rhode Island & United States Unemployment Rates Seasonally Adjusted 1999-2000



## City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates

	Mar 00	Mar 99
Barrington	2.4	2.1
Bristol	3.6	3.9
Burrillville	4.7	4.3
Central Falls	5.1	5.9
Charlestown	5.2	5.9
Coventry	3.6	3.9
Cranston	3.8	4.2
Cumberland	3.5	3.7
East Greenwich	3.7	4.2
East Providence	4.8	4.4
Exeter	4.1	4.6
Foster	4.5	4.8
Glocester	3.7	3.9
Hopkinton	3.3	2.8
Jamestown	3.5	3.8
Johnston	4.9	5.7
Lincoln	3.6	4.1
Little Compton	3.3	3.9
Middletown	4.2	4.6
Narragansett	2.7	2.7
New Shoreham	18.3	16.6
Newport	5.1	5.9
North Kingstown	3.0	3.3
North Providence	3.9	4.2
North Smithfield	3.2	3.4
Pawtucket	4.3	4.9
Portsmouth	3.7	4.3
Providence	4.7	5.4
Richmond	1.6	1.8
Scituate	4.3	4.7
Smithfield	4.2	3.7
South Kingstown	3.4	3.8
Tiverton	4.8	5.3
Warren	4.2	4.0
Warwick	3.5	3.7
West Greenwich	4.3	3.4
West Warwick	4.8	4.9
Westerly	3.6	4.0
Woonsocket	4.5	4.9
State of R.I.	4.1	4.4

## Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.	% Change		Year to Date		
	2000	2000	1999	Feb 00	Mar 99	2000	1999	% Change
Initial Claims	5,690	8,003	6,995	-28.9%	-18.7%	25,019	30,533	-18.1%
Number of Payments	55,611	72,032	72,750	-22.8%	-23.6%	183,176	201,511	-9.1%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$13.9	\$18.1	\$17.3	-23.2%	-19.5%	\$45.7	\$47.3	-3.4%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	1,144	945	1,462	21.1%	-21.8%	3,191	3,720	-14.2%
E.S. Fund Balance (millions)	\$237.7	\$251.5	\$202.8	-5.5%	17.2%			

\*PLEASE NOTE: Current month figures are PRELIMINARY, prior month & year are REVISED. Farmers, Self-employed, Domestic & Armed Services personnel are excluded from Establishment Employment figures. Totals may not add due to rounding. Labor Force statistics are compiled by Labor Market Information, in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Labor.

For additional information, comments or suggestions, contact  
Labor Market Information, Phone (401)222-3706, Fax: (401)222-2731, [www.dlt.state.ri.us/lmi](http://www.dlt.state.ri.us/lmi)

## ESU Supports Hi-Lo Supermarket Recruitment

The Employer Service Unit (ESU), marketing and outreach arm of the Department of Labor & Training (DLT), has been instrumental in coordinating the efforts of Hi-Lo Supermarket's anticipated Cranston, RI store opening.

The Pontiac Avenue store has utilized federal, state, and city resources to ensure that their employees will reflect the presence of local residents. Recently, three-day recruitments were held at the Providence netWORKri office and on the premises of the store. In addition to the ESU and netWORKri, the Departments of Human Services and Elderly Affairs, DLT's Veterans Unit, Cranston High School East, The City of Cranston, the Cranston Teen Center and other community action agencies contributed their services in an attempt to provide prospective employees with not only gainful employment, but with other benefits as well. Health care, transportation, and childcare issues were addressed and plans to introduce workers to their options have been finalized.

With the shortage of available workers posing problems throughout the State, the Employer Service Unit has used creative strategies to assist employers with their hiring needs. Whether you need one employee or one hundred, call the ESU and have the Employer Service Representative in your area prepare a hiring plan for you!

**Employer Service Unit**  
1-888-616-JOBS (5627)

## Total Establishment Employment in Rhode Island\*

	Employment (in thousands)			Net Change From	
	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99	Feb 00	Mar 99
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYMENT</b>	461.9	460.0	453.4	1900	8500
<b>GOODS PRODUCING</b>	90.7	89.6	90.2	1100	500
Contract Construction	16.7	15.8	15.2	900	1500
Manufacturing	74.0	73.8	75.0	200	-1000
<b>SERVICE PRODUCING</b>	371.2	370.4	363.2	800	8000
Trans. & Public Utilities	15.6	15.5	15.9	100	-300
Trade (Wholesale & Retail)	102.1	102.5	97.9	-400	4200
Wholesale	20.1	20.2	19.5	-100	600
Durables=	12.5	12.6	12.2	-100	300
Nondurables=	7.6	7.6	7.3	-----	300
Retail	82.0	82.3	78.4	-300	3600
Building & Garden Supplies=	2.3	2.3	2.1	-----	200
General Merchandise	6.8	6.9	6.4	-100	400
Food Stores=	15.7	15.9	15.1	-200	600
Automotive Dealers	7.5	7.4	7.0	100	500
Apparel & Accessory Stores	4.4	4.5	3.5	-100	900
Furn., Home Furn., & Equipt.=	2.3	2.4	2.3	-100	-----
Eating and Drinking Places	28.4	28.3	27.9	100	500
Miscellaneous Retail	14.6	14.7	14.3	-100	300
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	29.4	29.5	29.3	-100	100
Depository Institutions	8.7	8.7	8.5	-----	200
Services	159.6	158.4	155.2	1200	4400
Hotels & Other Lodging=	3.8	3.7	3.2	100	600
Business Services	29.9	29.4	27.2	500	2700
Auto & Misc. Repair=	5.0	5.1	4.9	-100	100
Amusement & Recreation	4.8	4.6	3.9	200	900
Health Services	51.0	51.0	51.7	-----	-700
Educational Services	18.6	18.0	18.5	600	100
Social Services	15.4	15.6	14.9	-200	500
Government	64.5	64.5	64.9	-----	-400
Federal	10.6	10.4	10.7	200	-100
State	18.5	18.5	18.4	-----	100
Local	35.4	35.6	35.8	-200	-400
Education=	23.0	23.0	23.3	-----	-300
Non Education=	12.4	12.5	12.4	-100	-----

= Publication of these industries is not approved by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

## Establishment Employment, Hours and Earnings in Manufacturing Industries in Rhode Island

	EMPLOYMENT (in thousands)					PRODUCTION-WORKER AVERAGES					
	Net Change					Weekly Hours			Hourly Earnings		
	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99	Feb 00	Mar 99	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>	74.0	73.8	75.0	200	-1000	40.4	40.9	39.8	12.16	12.21	11.96
<b>DURABLE MFG.</b>	48.4	48.3	49.0	100	-600	40.1	41.1	40.0	11.95	12.06	11.74
Lumber/Furniture	2.9	2.8	2.8	100	100	42.8	44.9	40.1	12.11	12.13	12.04
Stone-Clay-Glass	1.0	1.1	1.0	-100	----	42.8	45.0	45.3	13.89	13.93	13.91
Primary Metals	4.0	4.1	4.2	-100	-200	41.2	41.5	43.3	12.72	12.76	12.87
Fabricated Metals	8.2	8.2	8.3	-----	-100	37.8	37.4	36.4	11.25	11.33	10.86
Nonelectrical Mach.	5.2	5.1	4.9	100	300	40.3	41.9	40.1	13.47	13.51	13.32
Electrical Mach.	5.3	5.4	5.4	-100	-100	42.1	43.9	42.4	11.37	11.62	11.32
Trans. Equipment	3.6	3.5	3.4	100	200	41.7	43.4	43.3	14.29	14.37	14.19
Instruments	5.3	5.4	4.8	-100	500	39.4	40.2	40.0	12.53	12.77	12.57
Jewelry-Silverware	9.8	9.7	11.0	100	-1200	38.8	40.5	38.8	10.46	10.48	10.06
Miscellaneous Mfg.	3.1	3.0	3.2	100	-100	40.0	39.6	37.1	11.54	11.64	11.06
<b>NONDURABLE MFG.</b>	25.6	25.5	26.0	100	-400	41.0	40.5	39.5	12.55	12.50	12.40
Food Beverage	2.8	2.8	2.7	-----	100	38.1	39.5	41.8	11.46	11.49	11.50
Textiles	6.8	6.9	7.2	-100	-400	41.2	41.1	39.8	10.75	10.76	10.59
Apparel	0.9	0.8	0.8	100	100	40.0	38.3	39.5	9.30	9.22	9.28
Paper Products	2.0	2.0	1.9	-----	100	39.3	37.5	36.4	12.04	12.04	11.80
Printing-Publishing	5.6	5.5	5.8	100	-200	41.2	39.7	39.1	16.58	16.56	16.47
Chemical Products	2.0	2.0	2.0	-----	-----	42.0	41.5	42.7	13.77	13.74	13.63
Rubber Products	0.6	0.5	0.5	100	100	44.5	42.5	43.1	13.03	12.97	12.92
Plastics Products	4.4	4.5	4.6	-100	-200	42.9	42.7	37.4	13.14	13.11	13.11
Leather Products	0.5	0.5	0.5	-----	-----	40.5	41.5	40.1	8.31	8.35	8.09

## The March Unemployment Rate Hit an Eleven-Year Low

(Continued from Page 1)

### The Number of Jobs in Rhode Island (Over the Year)

Since March 1999, the number of jobs in Rhode Island increased by 8,500. Year-over-year growth was especially strong in services and trade, which increased by 4,400 and 4,200 jobs, respectively. A substantial increase in business services (primarily temporary help agencies) along with additional gains in amusement/recreation, hotels/lodging, and social services more than offset a loss in health services. The trade sector reported widespread gains throughout the industry.

Nearly half of the yearly increase in retail trade occurred in general merchandise stores, apparel/accessory stores, and miscellaneous retail stores, mostly due to the opening of Providence Place Mall. Contract construction picked up 1,500 jobs over the year with special trades construction accounting for the bulk of the increase. The number of jobs in finance/insurance/real estate expanded by 100. In contrast, transportation/public utilities (-300), government (-400), and manufacturing (-1,000) registered annual job declines. Within the factory sector, a large decline in jewelry-silverware (-1,200), combined with other modest losses, overshadowed a number of gains.

### Rhode Island Job Highlights (Over the Month)

The number of jobs in Rhode Island rose by 1,900 from February to March. An increase in private education and business services, coupled with seasonal growth in contract construction, more than offset a drop in trade.

## Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

	Mar 00	Feb 00	Mar 99	% Change Prev. Year
All Items	171.1	169.7	165.0	3.7%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Services** – Services employment rose by 1,200 in March with the largest increase reported in private educational services. Private educational institutions gained 600 jobs as college students returned following the semester break. Business services added 500 jobs, mostly due to increases at personnel supply agencies.

**Contract Construction** – Contract construction employment increased by 900 over the month as improved weather conditions bolstered outdoor construction activity.

**Manufacturing** – Rhode Island manufacturers experienced an employment gain of 200 with small increases reported in both the durable and nondurable goods categories.

**Government** – Government employment was unchanged from February to March. An increase of 200 jobs in federal government due to hiring for the 2000 Census offset a loss of 200 in the local government sector. State government remained even.

**Trade** – Trade employment recorded a drop from February to March. Retailers continued to trim their payrolls by 300 jobs in store-related losses, with all but two segments reporting modest declines. Restaurants and automotive dealers posted small job gains of 100 each.

## Employment by Size

The Rhode Island economy is characterized by a large number of small companies employing a small number of workers. As of March 1999, there were 29,951 private covered firms in the state employing 379,348 workers. Nearly 90 percent of these firms employed less than twenty workers. Small employers, those with less than 20 workers, represented 89.4 percent of all employers in the state and employed 25.1 percent of Rhode Island's private sector workers. The largest employers, those with 1,000 or more employees, numbered 28 and employed 13.5 percent of Rhode Island workers.

Size Class	Employers		Employment	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
zero to 4	19,530	65.2%	28,574	7.5%
5 - 9	4,447	14.8%	29,286	7.7%
10 - 19	2,802	9.4%	37,582	9.9%
20 - 49	1,919	6.4%	57,627	15.2%
50 - 99	665	2.2%	45,812	12.1%
100 - 249	416	1.4%	62,817	16.6%
250 - 499	96	0.3%	33,367	8.8%
500 - 999	48	0.2%	33,132	8.7%
1000+	28	0.1%	51,151	13.5%
Total:	29,951	100%	379,348	100%