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Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Increases in November

Following four successive months of declines, Rhode Island's unemployment rate increased 0.5 of a percentage point to 4.9 percent in November. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents rose by 3,000 over the month to 27,800. A year ago, the unemployment rate was 5.4 percent and the jobless level stood at 30,400. The national jobless figure for November edged down to an eight month low of 5.9 percent. Rhode Island's unemployment rate remained below the national average for the twenty-eighth straight month.

"The number of jobs in Rhode Island showed little change over the month as labor market conditions remained soft," said DLT Acting Director Marvin D. Perry. "The lack of sustained job growth to absorb the increasing number of Rhode Islanders seeking employment seems to have caused an upturn in our unemployment rate."

Rhode Island Job Highlights

The Rhode Island job count stood at 480,900 in November. Rhode Island businesses reported a small gain of 200 jobs last month following declines of 1,700 in August, 700 in September and 400 in October. The November employment figure is down 2,600 from the July peak, but still up 1,200 since the beginning of the year. Over-the-month decreases were reported in five of the seven measured sectors with the greatest loss occurring in Trade, Transportation & Utilities (-1,500). Other sectors reporting over-the-month declines included Construction (-300), Professional & Business Services (-200), Leisure & Hospitality (-100) and Other Services (-100). Manufacturing and Government each posted increases of 300 jobs. (Continued on Page 4)

Rhode Island's Minimum Wage

A reminder that the RI minimum wage rate increased on January 1, 2004 from \$6.15 per hour to \$6.75 per hour. For more information, contact the Labor Standards unit at 401-462-8550.

2004 Unemployment Insurance Tax Schedule

Rhode Island employers will continue to pay Unemployment Insurance taxes according to Tax Schedule I during 2004 – the same tax schedule in effect for 2003. Depending on their experience with layoffs, employer tax rates will range from 1.69% to 9.79%. The wage base on which Employment Security taxes will be paid during the 2004 tax year will be \$14,000 (up from \$12,000 in 2003).

The payroll tax for new employers - those who have not been covered by the Employment Security Act for three full years as of September 30, 2003 - will be 1.79% in 2004. The new employer rate for 2003 was 1.59%. Rhode Island employers will be notified of their individual 2004 tax rates by the end of December.

Union Membership In Rhode Island

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the percentage of unionized wage and salary employees in Rhode Island has fallen 1.5 percentage points since 1989. In 2002, the Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates that 17.2 percent (81,000) of Ocean State workers were union members, compared to 18.7 percent (85,000) thirteen years earlier. This decline has occurred despite a 3.1 percent increase in the total number of employed workers during this period.

Rhode Island's declining union membership rate is indicative of a nationwide trend. In 1989, 16.4 percent (17.0 million) of employed workers were unionized. By 2002, this level had fallen to 13.2 percent (16.1 million), a 3.2 percentage point loss. Within New England, each of the region's six states also reported significant declines in unionization. In 1989, both Connecticut (18.5%) and Massachusetts (17.5%) reported membership rates higher than the national average, followed by Maine (15.2%), Vermont (11.9%), and New Hampshire (11.6%). (Continued on Page 4)

Rhode Island Labor Force Statistics*

(in thousands)

	Seasonally Adjusted			Unadjusted		
	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02
Civilian Labor Force	564.8	567.3	562.6	567.4	568.4	565.7
Resident Employment	537.0	542.5	532.1	542.3	544.7	538.4
Unemployment	27.8	24.8	30.4	25.1	23.7	27.3
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	4.4%	5.4%	4.4%	4.2%	4.8%

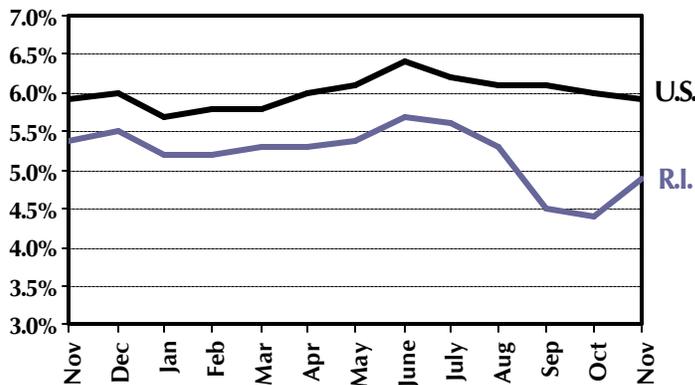
United States Labor Force Statistics

(in thousands)

	Seasonally Adjusted			Unadjusted		
	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02
Civilian Labor Force	147,277	146,793	145,180	146,969	146,787	144,854
Resident Employment	138,603	138,014	136,542	138,700	138,619	136,684
Unemployment	8,674	8,779	8,637	8,269	8,169	8,170
Unemployment Rate	5.9%	6.0%	5.9%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%

Rhode Island & United States Unemployment Rates

Seasonally Adjusted 2002-2003



City & Town

Unadjusted Unemployment Rates

	Nov 03	Nov 02**
Barrington	3.2	3.0
Bristol	3.8	4.4
Burrillville	4.3	5.0
Central Falls	7.5	7.8
Charlestown	4.0	5.0
Coventry	4.0	4.7
Cranston	4.4	4.6
Cumberland	4.5	4.7
East Greenwich	3.6	5.2
East Providence	4.5	5.5
Exeter	3.8	4.0
Foster	3.6	4.6
Glocester	3.4	3.7
Hopkinton	3.1	2.7
Jamestown	2.7	3.6
Johnston	4.6	5.2
Lincoln	4.1	4.7
Little Compton	3.2	4.6
Middletown	3.3	3.6
Narragansett	2.8	3.3
New Shoreham	11.5	11.5
Newport	3.5	4.3
North Kingstown	3.3	4.0
North Providence	4.1	5.0
North Smithfield	4.3	5.3
Pawtucket	6.0	5.6
Portsmouth	2.7	3.2
Providence	5.8	5.9
Richmond	2.1	2.4
Scituate	4.1	5.1
Smithfield	3.4	4.6
South Kingstown	3.3	3.5
Tiverton	5.1	4.2
Warren	3.7	4.4
Warwick	3.7	4.2
West Greenwich	4.2	5.4
West Warwick	4.4	4.6
Westerly	3.4	3.1
Woonsocket	6.0	7.1
State of R.I.	4.4	4.8

** Revised

Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Nov	Oct	Nov	% Change		Year to Date		
	2003	2003	2002	Oct 03	Nov 02	2003	2002	% Change
Initial Claims	5,531	5,182	6,518	6.7%	-15.1%	77,003	76,257	1.0%
Number of Payments	39,617	40,175	42,050	-1.4%	-5.8%	635,599	640,502	-0.8%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$12.3	\$12.5	\$12.7	-1.6%	-3.1%	\$190.7	\$189.7	0.5%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	1,241	1,255	1,272	-1.1%	-2.4%	16,641	16,558	0.5%
E.S. Fund Balance (millions)	\$221.4	\$214.9	\$268.8	3.0%	-17.6%			

Rhode Island labor market information is available on the web at www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi. If you find that the LMI web site meets your need for labor market information and you would like to be removed from the mailing list for this publication, please call LMI at (401) 462-8740 or e-mail us at lmi@dlt.state.ri.us.

*Current month figures are preliminary; prior month and year are revised. 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.

Total Nonfarm Employment in Rhode Island* November 2003

Sectors reflect the recent conversion from the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).
Not all industries previously classified under a particular SIC are classified in a similarly titled NAICS sector.

	Employment in Thousands			Net Change From	
	Nov 2003	Oct 2003	Nov 2002	Oct 2003	Nov 2002
Total Nonfarm	488.1	487.4	486.6	700	1,500
Goods Producing	81.6	81.7	82.0	-100	-400
Natural Resources & Mining	0.3	0.3	0.2	0	100
Construction	20.8	21.2	19.8	-400	1,000
Specialty Trade Contractors	12.9	13.2	12.8	-300	100
Manufacturing	60.5	60.2	62.0	300	-1,500
Durable Goods	38.7	38.6	40.5	100	-1,800
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.	8.4	8.3	8.8	100	-400
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	4.7	4.9	5.2	-200	-500
Electrical Equipment & Appliance Mfg.	2.8	2.9	3.0	-100	-200
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	3.9	3.8	3.8	100	100
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	11.5	11.4	12.4	100	-900
Jewelry & Silverware	8.6	8.5	9.3	100	-700
Non-Durable Goods	21.8	21.6	21.5	200	300
Chemical Manufacturing	3.6	3.6	3.8	0	-200
Plastics & Rubber Products Mfg.	3.5	3.4	3.2	100	300
Service Providing	406.5	405.7	404.6	800	1,900
Wholesale Trade	17.4	17.3	16.6	100	800
Retail Trade	57.2	55.5	56.0	1,700	1,200
Grocery Stores	6.4	6.3	6.3	100	100
Health & Personal Care Stores	5.8	5.8	5.6	0	200
General Merchandise Stores	12.2	11.4	12.2	800	0
Department Stores	5.7	5.1	5.8	600	-100
Other General Merchandise Stores	6.3	6.3	6.2	0	100
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	11.6	11.6	11.6	0	0
Transportation & Warehousing	10.5	10.5	10.4	0	100
Information	11.0	11.0	11.3	0	-300
Publishing	3.6	3.5	3.5	100	100
Financial Activities (including Real Estate)	32.4	32.5	32.7	-100	-300
Finance & Insurance	26.5	26.6	26.8	-100	-300
Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	12.1	12.3	12.1	-200	0
Insurance Carriers & Related Activities	10.7	10.6	11.0	100	-300
Professional & Technical Services	18.3	18.5	19.0	-200	-700
Management of Companies & Enterprises	6.8	6.8	6.6	0	200
Administrative & Waste Services	23.6	24.0	23.5	-400	100
Educational Services	19.6	19.2	20.2	400	-600
Colleges & Universities	12.4	12.2	13.9	200	-1,500
Health Care & Social Assistance	71.4	71.5	70.0	-100	1,400
Ambulatory Health Care Services	21.0	21.1	20.0	-100	1,000
Hospitals	22.5	22.5	22.4	0	100
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	17.8	17.9	17.7	-100	100
Social Assistance	10.1	10.0	9.9	100	200
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	6.9	7.5	7.2	-600	-300
Accommodation & Food Services	40.0	40.7	40.0	-700	0
Accommodation	4.1	4.3	4.1	-200	0
Food Services & Drinking Places	35.9	36.4	35.9	-500	0
Other Services	23.1	23.0	22.4	100	700
Government	67.2	66.6	67.5	600	-300
Federal Government	10.4	10.4	10.3	0	100
State Government	17.9	17.9	18.2	0	-300
Local Government	38.9	38.3	39.0	600	-100
Local Education	25.7	25.2	25.6	500	100
Local Non-Ed	13.2	13.1	13.4	100	-200

*Not seasonally adjusted.

For more detail see "Introducing NAICS" at www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202/naics/naics.htm.

Some subcategories are not additive.

Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Increases in November

(Continued from Page 1)

The more detailed unadjusted employment estimates increased by 700 over the month, reflecting the expected pre-holiday hiring in Retail Trade. The unadjusted job count for November stood at 488,100 compared to 487,400 in October. Seasonal gains were reflected in Retail Trade (+1,700), Government (+600) and Educational Services (+400). Several industries reported job losses typical for this time of year. The largest decreases were noted in Accommodation & Food Services (-700), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-600), Construction (-400) and Administrative & Waste Services (-400).

Over the year, employment (unadjusted) was up 1,500 from the 486,600 jobs reported in November 2002. Increases in Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,400), Retail Trade (+1,200), Construction (+1,000) and Wholesale Trade (+800), overshadowed the major decreases reported in Manufacturing (-1,500), Professional & Technical Services (-700) and Educational Services (-600).

The \$12.99 average hourly wage earned by the Manufacturing sector's production workers in November 2003 represents a yearly gain of eighteen cents per hour and an over-the-month increase of six cents per hour. In November 2003, Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.9 hours per week, up 0.4 of an hour from October and up 1.2 hours from November 2002.

Happy New Year!

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

				% Change
	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02	Prev. Year
All Items	184.5	185.0	181.3	1.8%

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

Union Membership In Rhode Island

(Continued from Page 1)

Since that time, each of these states has reported a union membership rate decline in excess of Rhode Island's 1.5 percentage points. In 2002, 14.2 percent of Massachusetts workers were unionized, representing a decline of 3.3 percentage points. Vermont's rate fell 2.4 percentage points to 9.5 percent during this period, with Maine (-2.3 percentage points) reporting a similar decline to 12.9 percent. Both New Hampshire (-1.9 percentage points) and Connecticut (-1.8 percentage points) experienced declines closer to that of the Ocean State as their membership rates fell to 9.7 percent and 16.7 percent, respectively.

Today, Rhode Island's 17.2 percent membership rate makes it the most highly unionized state in the region and tenth highest in the United States, trailing New York (25.3%), Hawaii (24.4%), Alaska (24.3%), Michigan (21.1%), Illinois (19.6%), New Jersey (19.4%), Washington (18.4%), Minnesota (17.6%), and California (17.5%). Regional neighbors, including Connecticut (11th), Massachusetts (17th), Maine (23rd), New Hampshire (27th), and Vermont (28th), were all ranked lower in 2002.

Manufacturing Employment in Rhode Island, Not Seasonally Adjusted November 2003

	Employment					Production Worker Averages					
	(in thousands)			Net Change From:		Weekly Hours			Hourly Earnings		
	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02	Oct 03	Nov 02	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02	Nov 03	Oct 03	Nov 02
Manufacturing	60.5	60.2	62.0	300	-1500	39.9	39.5	38.7	12.99	12.93	12.81
Durable Goods	38.7	38.6	40.5	100	-1800	39.2	38.8	38.7	12.98	12.95	12.82
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.	8.4	8.3	8.8	100	-400	39.8	39.7	40.2	11.60	11.56	11.57
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	4.7	4.9	5.2	-200	-500	37.4	38.1	40.6	13.70	13.73	13.71
Electrical Equipment & Appliance Mfg.	2.8	2.9	3.0	-100	-200	36.7	36.7	37.2	9.53	9.53	9.42
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	3.9	3.8	3.8	100	100	39.8	40.3	42.4	15.30	15.34	15.51
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	11.5	11.4	12.4	100	-900	39.3	38.2	39.2	10.69	10.62	10.56
Jewelry and Silverware	8.6	8.5	9.3	100	-700	40.1	39.6	40.8	10.11	10.05	9.94
Non-Durable Goods	21.8	21.6	21.5	200	300	41.0	40.6	38.7	13.00	12.90	12.79
Chemical Manufacturing	3.6	3.6	3.8	0	-200	39.6	39.7	39.3	15.57	15.60	15.66
Plastics & Rubber Products Mfg.	3.5	3.4	3.2	100	300	40.0	39.3	38.1	14.65	14.64	14.40