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Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Rhode Island Unemployment Rate Increases in December but Remains below National Average

The Unemployment Rate

Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate peaked at 5.4 percent for the year in December. This was up from November's 5.1 percent rate and marks the fourth consecutive month where Rhode Island's rate has been above 5.0 percent. Rhode Island last reached the 5.4 percent level in June 1997. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents increased by 900 in December to 27,300. A year ago December, the unemployment rate was 5.0 percent and the jobless level stood at 25,100. Nationally, the jobless rate ended the year at 6.0 percent - unchanged from November. Despite the monthly upturn in the State unemployment rate, it remained below the national average for the seventeenth month in a row.

Rhode Island Job Highlights (Over the Year, Unadjusted Figures)

In December 2002, Ocean State employers reported 487,900 jobs, an increase of 3,700 (+0.8%) over last year's total of 484,200 jobs. Employment growth in the Services (+1,600), Government (+1,200), Trade (+1,100) and Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (+900) sectors contributed to this increase, offsetting job losses in Manufacturing (-800) and Transportation & Public Utilities (-300).

In Services, employment growth in Health Services (+1,100), Social Services (+400) and Other Services (+1,700), which includes Engineering Services, Accounting Services, Membership Organizations, Landscape Services and unclassified employers, offset the loss of 1,900 Business Services jobs. Within Trade, notable job growth was reported in the Retail (+900) segment, as Eating & Drinking Places (+600), Miscellaneous Retail (+400) and Home Furnishings (+300) posted over-the-year employment gains. Wholesale Trade employers added 200 jobs as well.
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In Spite of Adversity, Company Keeps Welfare of Workers Its Foremost Concern!

When George Burke, a member of the Department of Labor & Training's (DLT) Rapid Response Team received the call, he knew it wouldn't be a pleasant one. Norwood Promotional Products, Inc., a Texas corporation, informed him of the imminent closing of its Cranston, RI facility, the former Artmold Products, Inc. This notice was supplied in compliance with the Worker Adjustment & Retraining Notification Act (WARN), indicating that a company with 100 or more employees would be closing in not less than 60 days.

Normally, a situation such as this dictates that a company get its financial house in order, distribute the appropriate paperwork to employees and arrange for any liquidation issues that need to be addressed before the actual closing. (Continued on Page 4)

LMI on 'Track' with Electronic Newsletter!

In August, the Labor Market Information unit introduced its electronic newsletter, LMI Stat Track. Since that time, we have received positive feedback regarding this service and would like to extend another invitation to those who may have missed our last announcement.

Periodically, LMI emails its customers on newly available labor market data, announcements regarding LMI publications and updates to the unit's web site. The newsletter provides hypertext links directing the user to our on-line data and services right from their Inbox, allowing timely access to the most current Rhode Island labor market information available!

If you would like to begin receiving LMI Stat Track, please send your request, including your name and any e-mail addresses to be added, to Nick Ucci at nucci@dlt.state.ri.us.

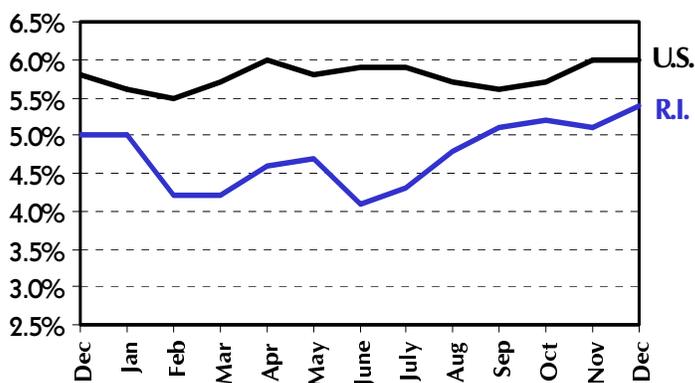
Rhode Island Labor Force Statistics* (in thousands)

	Seasonally Adjusted			Unadjusted		
	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01
Civilian Labor Force	509.2	513.5	501.8	513.7	516.5	506.3
Resident Employment	481.9	487.2	476.7	488.2	493.0	483.3
Unemployment	27.3	26.4	25.1	25.6	23.5	23.0
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	5.1%	5.0%	5.0%	4.6%	4.6%

United States Labor Force Statistics (in thousands)

	Seasonally Adjusted			Unadjusted		
	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01
Civilian Labor Force	142,542	142,733	142,314	142,298	142,405	141,912
Resident Employment	133,952	134,225	134,055	134,232	134,358	134,235
Unemployment	8,590	8,508	8,259	8,066	8,047	7,678
Unemployment Rate	6.0%	6.0%	5.8%	5.7%	5.7%	5.4%

Rhode Island & United States Unemployment Rates Seasonally Adjusted 2001 - 2002



City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates

	Dec 02	Dec 01
Barrington	2.9	2.8
Bristol	4.6	3.5
Burrillville	5.2	4.3
Central Falls	8.2	7.3
Charlestown	5.2	5.5
Coventry	4.7	4.3
Cranston	4.6	4.3
Cumberland	4.8	4.3
East Greenwich	5.2	4.2
East Providence	5.8	4.8
Exeter	4.3	3.9
Foster	4.4	5.6
Glocester	4.0	3.1
Hopkinton	2.7	2.6
Jamestown	3.6	3.4
Johnston	5.1	4.3
Lincoln	4.6	4.4
Little Compton	5.2	3.6
Middletown	3.9	3.6
Narragansett	3.1	2.4
New Shoreham	16.2	13.7
Newport	4.4	4.0
North Kingstown	3.8	3.5
North Providence	5.0	4.3
North Smithfield	5.3	3.2
Pawtucket	5.9	6.0
Portsmouth	3.0	2.9
Providence	6.3	6.1
Richmond	2.5	1.9
Scituate	5.3	4.3
Smithfield	4.4	4.0
South Kingstown	3.5	3.1
Tiverton	4.9	4.6
Warren	4.4	4.2
Warwick	4.1	4.0
West Greenwich	5.4	4.0
West Warwick	5.1	4.4
Westerly	3.4	3.1
Woonsocket	7.1	6.3
State of R.I.	5.0	4.6

Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Dec	Nov	Dec	% Change		Year to Date		
	2002	2002	2001	Nov 02	Dec 01	2002	2001	% Change
Initial Claims	12,090	6,518	16,546	85.5%	-26.9%	88,347	99,629	-11.3%
Number of Payments	63,192	42,050	61,639	50.3%	2.5%	703,694	640,088	9.9%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$18.9	\$12.7	\$18.1	48.5%	4.4%	\$208.6	\$180.8	15.4%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	1,608	1,272	1,384	26.4%	16.2%	18,166	13,579	33.8%
E.S. Fund Balance (millions)	\$253.8	\$268.8	\$277.9	-5.6%	-8.7%			

*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.

For additional information, comments or suggestions, contact

Labor Market Information, Phone (401)462-8740, Fax: (401)462-8766, www.dlt.state.ri.us/lmi

NAICS Reminder!

Beginning in 2003, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) will be publishing monthly establishment employment data based on the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). This new industry coding system, which was developed in cooperation with Canada and Mexico, is replacing the aging Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. NAICS provides a much better picture of the economy of the twenty-first century by reflecting the move away from a goods-producing, manufacturing based economy to a service-providing, information based one.

RI will begin publishing NAICS-based establishment employment beginning with January 2003 data, which will be released in March 2003. After switching to NAICS, SIC-based establishment data will no longer be produced or published. As part of the conversion process, DLT plans to construct historical time series back to 1990. Hours and earnings data will be available from January 2001 forward.

DLT will continue to assign and maintain SIC codes for registered employers through the end of calendar year 2003 in order to accommodate programs which determine a company's eligibility or responsibility based on its industry code.

Individuals responsible for administering such programs should be finalizing plans to apply the NAICS coding system to their rules and regulations.

Total Establishment Employment in Rhode Island**

	Employment (in thousands)			Net Change From	
	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01	Nov 02	Dec 01
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	487.9	489.8	484.2	-1900	3700
GOODS PRODUCING	86.0	86.8	86.8	-800	-800
Contract Construction	18.3	18.8	18.3	-500	-----
Manufacturing	67.7	68.0	68.5	-300	-800
SERVICE PRODUCING	401.9	403.0	397.4	-1100	4500
Trans. & Public Utilities	16.9	16.9	17.2	-----	-300
Trade (Wholesale & Retail)	111.5	110.8	110.4	700	1100
Wholesale	18.9	18.9	18.7	-----	200
Durables♦	11.6	11.6	11.4	-----	200
Nondurables♦	7.4	7.4	7.3	-----	100
Retail	92.6	91.9	91.7	700	900
Building & Garden Supplies♦	2.7	2.8	2.6	-100	100
General Merchandise	7.1	7.0	7.3	100	-200
Food Stores♦	15.4	15.3	15.6	100	-200
Automotive Dealers	7.8	7.8	7.9	-----	-100
Apparel & Accessory Stores	5.5	5.3	5.5	200	-----
Furn., Home Furn., & Equipt.♦	3.4	3.2	3.1	200	300
Eating and Drinking Places	32.6	32.9	32.0	-300	600
Miscellaneous Retail	18.1	17.7	17.7	400	400
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	33.9	33.9	33.0	-----	900
Depository Institutions	10.1	10.1	9.4	-----	700
Services	172.6	174.4	171.0	-1800	1600
Hotels & Other Lodging♦	4.0	4.5	4.1	-500	-100
Business Services	25.1	25.5	27.0	-400	-1900
Auto & Misc. Repair♦	5.9	5.9	5.7	-----	200
Amusement & Recreation	5.5	5.9	5.5	-400	-----
Health Services	54.2	54.0	53.1	200	1100
Educational Services	19.9	20.3	19.9	-400	-----
Social Services	17.0	16.9	16.6	100	400
Government	67.0	67.0	65.8	-----	1200
Federal	10.7	10.4	10.3	300	400
State	18.1	18.2	18.3	-100	-200
Local	38.2	38.4	37.2	-200	1000
Education♦	25.2	25.1	24.9	100	300
Non Education♦	13.0	13.3	12.4	-300	600

♦ 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					
	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01	Net Change		Weekly Hours			Hourly Earnings		
				Nov 02	Dec 01	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01
MANUFACTURING	67.7	68.0	68.5	-300	-800	40.4	40.0	41.1	12.32	12.29	12.32
DURABLE MFG.	44.0	44.0	44.9	-----	-900	40.3	40.2	40.6	12.06	12.08	12.18
Primary Metals	3.3	3.2	3.4	100	-100	38.9	41.1	41.7	12.94	12.94	12.88
Fabricated Metals	7.8	7.7	7.6	100	200	41.4	41.1	40.0	11.79	11.82	12.13
Nonelectrical Machinery	3.6	3.7	3.7	-100	-100	38.8	38.9	41.3	13.72	13.72	13.75
Electrical Machinery	4.7	4.7	5.0	-----	-300	41.1	41.5	41.3	11.34	11.36	11.49
Trans. Equipment	4.0	4.0	3.9	-----	100	41.5	40.7	40.2	14.53	14.52	14.53
Instruments	5.0	5.0	5.3	-----	-300	38.8	40.0	41.2	12.83	12.84	12.80
Miscellaneous Mfg.	12.0	12.1	12.4	-100	-400	40.0	39.9	39.6	10.71	10.70	10.71
Jewelry, Incl. Costume	9.1	9.1	9.3	-----	-200	40.1	40.1	39.3	10.52	10.50	10.49
All Other Durables	3.6	3.6	3.6	-----	-----	40.4	38.5	42.7	12.45	12.42	12.52
NONDURABLE MFG.	23.7	24.0	23.6	-300	100	40.5	39.7	41.9	12.76	12.67	12.56
Textiles	5.0	5.2	5.5	-200	-500	40.1	39.4	40.8	10.93	10.92	10.66
Printing-Publishing	5.2	5.3	5.0	-100	200	40.6	39.5	42.9	16.67	16.65	16.69
Rubber & Plastic Products	4.5	4.4	4.4	100	100	40.3	39.1	40.2	13.31	13.29	13.31
All Other Nondurables	9.0	9.1	8.7	-100	300	40.9	40.2	43.0	11.78	11.77	11.72

**Current month figures are PRELIMINARY. Prior month & year are REVISED. Totals may not add due to rounding. Farmers, Self-employed, Domestic & Armed Services personnel are excluded from Establishment Employment figures.

Rhode Island Unemployment Rate Increases in December but Remains below National Average (Continued from Page 1)

The public sector added 1,200 jobs over the year, an increase of 1.8 percent. Much of this growth was reported in Local Government (+1,000), particularly in the Non-education (+600) component. During this period, the Federal Government added 400 workers while State (-200) employment declined slightly.

The decline in Manufacturing employment resulted from job losses in its Durable Goods industries. Electrical Machinery (-300), Instruments (-300) and Jewelry & Silverware (-200) businesses reported decreased employment, offsetting a 200 job increase in Fabricated Metals. Non-durable industries gained 100 jobs overall, as growth in Other Non-durable Manufacturing (+300) and Printing & Publishing (+200) offset a decline in Textiles (-500) employment.

Rhode Island Job Highlights (Over the Month, Unadjusted Figures)

Rhode Island businesses reported a 1,900 (-0.4%) job decline in December, down from the 489,800 jobs reported one month ago. Seasonal declines in the Services (-1,800) and Contract Construction (-500) sectors contributed to this loss, offsetting job growth in Retail Trade (+700).

Trade – Retail Trade added 700 jobs over the month, a smaller gain than experienced in recent years. Miscellaneous Retail (+400), Apparel & Accessory (+200) and Home Furnishing (+200) stores all increased their payrolls, offsetting a seasonal decline in Eating & Drinking Places (-300). Wholesale Trade employment remained unchanged.

Services – Compared to past years, the loss of 1,800 Services jobs represents a steep decline. Hotels & Other Lodging (-500) and Amusement & Recreation (-400) employment was negatively impacted by the cold weather, while job losses were also reported in Business Services (-400), Educational Services (-400) and Other Services (-400).

Manufacturing – Manufacturing (-300) employment dipped slightly over the month, attributed to a decline in Non-durable Goods (-300) jobs. Collectively, the sector's Durable Goods components reported no change.

Government – The Federal Government increased its payrolls by 300 employees, reflecting the hiring of additional postal workers for the holiday season. Overall, public sector employment did not change in December.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

	Dec 02	Nov 02	Dec 01	% Change Prev. Year
All Items	180.9	181.3	176.7	2.4%

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

In Spite of Adversity, Company Keeps Welfare of Workers Its Foremost Concern! (Continued from Page 1)

In this age of corporate scandal, official misconduct and suspect accounting practices, it was refreshing to learn that one of Norwood Promotional Products major concerns was the welfare of their soon-to-be dislocated workers.

Lori Meaghar, Norwood's Human Resource Manager, contacted DLT's Employer Service Unit (ESU) to request their assistance with conceptualizing an immediate plan to help the 180+ employees who would be affected.

Employer Service Representative (ESR) Sue Biagioni fashioned a detailed strategy to address the plight of the largest group of workers, the manufacturing crew. With language as a barrier, Sue knew that her efforts would be better served with face-to-face interaction between prospective employers and workers. With only three weeks to prepare, a brief afternoon "Employment Fair" was organized on Norwood's premises to allow hiring employers to meet with qualified job seekers in order to complete employment applications and review specific worker qualifications. The diverse backgrounds of the workers, ranging from manufacturing and packaging duties to quantitative and apportionment work, made each potential employee a viable job-ready candidate. The plant's cafeteria was bustling with job seekers and employers looking to match skills with opportunities. Sue arranged for translators to be available to make communication issues negligible.

The tactical strategy planned and implemented by the ESU, coupled with the encouragement and cooperation of the company, benefited both hardworking citizens and hiring corporations. It served to illustrate how private corporations and public agencies, working together, can make even an unfortunate set of circumstances more palatable.

If you or your organization face layoff or hiring scenarios in which remedies appear to be complicated, complex or simply infeasible, call the Employer Service Unit and allow a business specialist to assist you with your planning and organizational needs.

Employer Service Unit
(401) 462-8724