



Employment Labor Market Information Bulletin

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March 2001

Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Hits Lowest Level Since March 1989

Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell 0.2 of a percentage point over the month to 3.5 percent in February. This is the lowest unemployment rate in twelve years. The State unemployment figure was below the 4.0 percent mark for the sixth month in a row. In addition, the unemployment rate showed improvement over the February 2000 figure of 4.4 percent. The number of unemployed declined by 800 from January to February. Nationally, the unemployment rate for February held steady at 4.2 percent. Rhode Island's unemployment rate remained below the comparable national average for the fifth straight month. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents declined by 4,000 from February 2000 to February 2001.

"Although the national economy has shown signs of weakness, the Rhode Island labor market continues to prosper," said DLT Director Dr. Lee H. Arnold. "Our unemployment rate is the lowest in twelve years, while the number of jobs in the State reached an all-time February high." (Continued on Page 4)

Union Membership in 2000

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the share of wage and salary workers who were union members in 2000 averaged 13.5 percent compared with 13.9 percent in 1999. The information on union members refers to the sole or principal job of full and part-time workers. Self employed workers are excluded.

Nearly 4 in 10 government workers were unionized, compared with less than 1 in 10 in private sector employment. Protective service workers, a group that includes police and firefighters, had the highest unionization rate of 39.4 percent. Blacks were more likely than either whites or Hispanics to be union members.

Among the New England states, Rhode Island reported the highest percentage of union members in 2000. Approximately 18.2 percent of all Rhode Islands workers were members of unions.

Union Affiliation of Employed Wage and Salary Workers, 2000

(in thousands)

State	Total Employed	Members of Unions*		Represented by Unions**	
		Total	Percent of Employed	Total	Percent of Employed
Connecticut	1,508	246	16.3	262	17.4
Maine	556	78	14.0	92	16.6
Massachusetts	2,841	406	14.3	445	15.7
New Hampshire	576	60	10.4	67	11.6
Rhode Island	438	80	18.2	83	18.8
Vermont	274	28	10.3	34	18.8
Total U.S.	120,786	16,258	13.5	17,944	14.9

* Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union.

** Data refer to members of a labor union or an employee or association similar to a union, as well as workers who are not members, but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract.

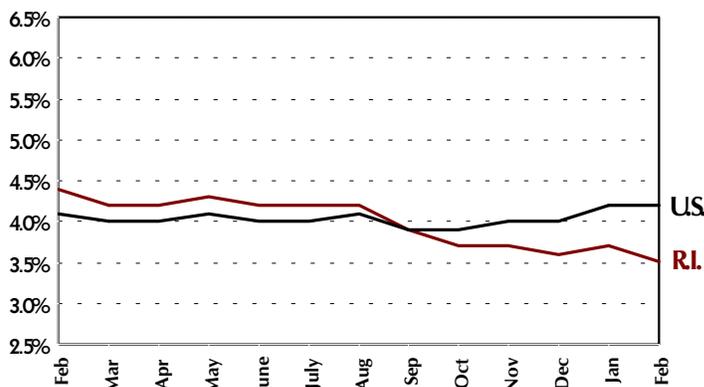
Rhode Island Labor Force Statistics* (in thousands)

	Unadjusted			Seasonally Adjusted		
	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00
Civilian Labor Force	509.4	504.4	499.5	513.6	510.3	503.5
Resident Employment	485.7	481.1	471.7	495.6	491.4	481.4
Unemployment	23.8	23.3	27.8	18.1	18.9	22.1
Unemployment Rate	4.7%	4.6%	5.6%	3.5%	3.7%	4.4%

United States Labor Force Statistics (in thousands)

	Unadjusted			Seasonally Adjusted		
	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00
Civilian Labor Force	141,238	141,049	140,185	141,751	141,955	140,860
Resident Employment	134,774	134,462	133,954	135,815	135,999	135,120
Unemployment	6,464	6,587	6,231	5,936	5,956	5,740
Unemployment Rate	4.6%	4.7%	4.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.1%

Rhode Island & United States Unemployment Rates Seasonally Adjusted 2000-2001



City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates

	Feb 01	Feb 00
Barrington	2.7	3.3
Bristol	4.3	4.8
Burrillville	4.7	6.2
Central Falls	6.7	6.6
Charlestown	6.8	6.9
Coventry	4.5	5.1
Cranston	4.3	5.0
Cumberland	4.1	5.0
East Greenwich	4.8	4.7
East Providence	4.9	6.5
Exeter	5.2	5.9
Foster	5.2	6.0
Glocester	4.0	5.2
Hopkinton	4.1	4.7
Jamestown	4.1	4.9
Johnston	5.5	6.6
Lincoln	4.2	5.0
Little Compton	3.8	5.2
Middletown	4.2	5.2
Narragansett	2.7	3.2
New Shoreham	19.1	22.7
Newport	5.9	7.6
North Kingstown	3.5	4.0
North Providence	4.4	5.3
North Smithfield	3.5	4.6
Pawtucket	5.3	6.0
Portsmouth	3.8	4.7
Providence	5.6	6.5
Richmond	1.8	2.6
Scituate	4.6	5.7
Smithfield	3.4	5.3
South Kingstown	3.9	4.6
Tiverton	5.7	6.9
Warren	4.1	6.3
Warwick	4.0	4.7
West Greenwich	5.5	6.1
West Warwick	5.3	6.8
Westerly	4.4	5.3
Woonsocket	5.4	6.0
State of R.I.	4.7	5.6

Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Feb	Jan	Feb	% Change		Year to Date		
	2001	2001	2000	Jan 01	Feb 00	2001	2000	% Change
Initial Claims	8,438	11,397	8,003	-26.0%	5.4%	19,400	19,329	0.4%
Number of Payments	58,609	64,322	72,032	-8.9%	-18.6%	122,931	127,565	-3.6%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$16.6	\$18.0	\$18.1	-8.2%	-8.7%	\$34.6	\$31.8	8.9%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	899	1,116	945	-19.4%	-4.9%	2,015	2,047	-1.6%
E.S. Fund Balance (millions)	\$277.6	\$280.6	\$251.5	-1.1%	10.4%			

*Current month figures are PRELIMINARY, prior month & 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

What's New in LMI?

The Career Resource Network (formerly RIOICC), a division of the Labor Market Information Unit, provides the most extensive information on education, occupations and career planning in the state. It offers support for career guidance and academic counseling programs; provides planning resources that relate educational preparation to career goals and expectations; equips personnel to assist others with career exploration, educational opportunities and educational financing; and assists state entities as they tailor career-related resources and training for use within their organizations.

The Career Resource Network serves educational professionals, parents, students, planners, community and agency career counselors, and other state government entities. Service is provided in three ways - computer products, publications and printed materials, and training and technical support.

For more information on Career Resource Network activities, call (401) 462-8790.

Total Establishment Employment in Rhode Island**

	Employment (in thousands)			Net Change From	
	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00	Jan 01	Feb 00
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	469.7	467.9	462.3	1800	7400
GOODS PRODUCING	89.0	89.7	89.8	-700	-800
Contract Construction	16.8	17.2	16.0	-400	800
Manufacturing	72.2	72.5	73.8	-300	-1600
SERVICE PRODUCING	380.7	378.2	372.5	2500	8200
Trans. & Public Utilities	16.6	16.6	16.5	-----	100
Trade (Wholesale & Retail)	106.8	107.2	103.7	-400	3100
Wholesale	20.4	20.4	19.9	-----	500
Durables*	12.7	12.7	12.5	-----	200
Nondurables*	7.7	7.7	7.4	-----	300
Retail	86.4	86.8	83.8	-400	2600
Building & Garden Supplies*	2.2	2.2	2.0	-----	200
General Merchandise	7.5	7.9	7.3	-400	200
Food Stores*	16.0	16.0	15.6	-----	400
Automotive Dealers	7.6	7.6	7.2	-----	400
Apparel & Accessory Stores	4.6	4.7	4.3	-100	300
Furn., Home Furn., & Equipt.*	3.0	2.9	2.7	100	300
Eating and Drinking Places	29.8	29.6	29.4	200	400
Miscellaneous Retail	15.7	15.8	15.3	-100	400
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	30.4	30.5	29.8	-100	600
Depository Institutions	9.0	9.0	8.7	-----	300
Services	162.0	159.4	158.1	2600	3900
Hotels & Other Lodging*	3.4	3.5	3.4	-100	-----
Business Services	28.4	28.1	28.3	300	100
Auto & Misc. Repair*	5.4	5.4	5.1	-----	300
Amusement & Recreation	4.6	4.7	4.3	-100	300
Health Services	52.5	52.3	50.9	200	1600
Educational Services	19.0	16.8	18.8	2200	200
Social Services	16.0	16.1	15.4	-100	600
Government	64.9	64.5	64.4	400	500
Federal	10.4	10.4	10.4	-----	-----
State	18.3	18.2	18.5	100	-200
Local	36.2	35.9	35.5	300	700
Education*	23.7	23.5	23.1	200	600
Non Education*	12.5	12.3	12.4	200	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		
	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00	Jan 01	Feb 00	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00
MANUFACTURING	72.2	72.5	73.8	-300	-1600	39.8	40.0	40.9	12.21	12.20	12.19
DURABLE MFG.	47.4	47.6	48.4	-200	-1000	39.9	40.1	41.0	12.00	11.99	12.02
Lumber/Furniture	3.0	3.0	2.9	-----	100	39.7	39.4	44.9	11.34	11.33	12.12
Stone-Clay-Glass	0.8	0.8	0.9	-----	-100	41.6	41.5	45.0	13.89	13.87	13.93
Primary Metals	3.9	3.9	4.1	-----	-200	40.4	41.3	41.5	12.91	12.92	12.78
Fabricated Metals	8.2	8.2	8.7	-----	-500	39.3	38.7	37.3	11.34	11.31	11.32
Nonelectrical Mach.	4.3	4.4	4.5	-100	-200	41.2	41.9	41.9	13.61	13.62	13.53
Electrical Mach.	5.9	6.1	5.4	-200	500	40.1	41.0	43.8	11.61	11.60	11.75
Trans. Equipment	3.5	3.4	3.3	100	200	42.1	42.3	43.4	14.42	14.44	14.37
Instruments	5.5	5.6	5.7	-100	-200	38.7	39.6	40.2	12.77	12.77	12.77
Jewelry-Silverware	9.3	9.1	9.9	200	-600	38.6	39.1	40.5	10.52	10.52	10.49
Miscellaneous Mfg.	3.0	3.1	3.0	-100	-----	40.9	40.0	39.5	11.60	11.53	11.64
NONDURABLE MFG.	24.8	24.9	25.4	-100	-600	39.8	39.7	40.5	12.62	12.59	12.52
Food Beverage	3.1	3.1	2.8	-----	300	42.0	39.9	39.5	11.36	11.36	11.49
Textiles	6.0	6.1	6.6	-100	-600	40.1	39.5	41.1	10.90	10.91	10.78
Apparel	0.9	0.9	0.9	-----	-----	38.0	37.5	38.3	9.43	9.32	9.22
Paper Products	2.0	2.0	2.0	-----	-----	38.0	38.5	37.5	12.08	12.08	12.04
Local Printing-Publishing	5.1	5.2	5.5	-100	-400	39.6	40.9	39.7	16.62	16.70	16.56
Chemical Products	2.3	2.2	2.2	100	100	42.5	42.1	41.5	14.07	14.01	13.74
Rubber Products	0.5	0.5	0.5	-----	-----	41.6	41.2	42.5	12.99	13.00	12.97
Plastics Products	4.5	4.4	4.4	100	100	38.4	39.0	42.7	13.20	13.18	13.11
Leather Products	0.4	0.5	0.5	-100	-100	37.5	38.5	41.5	8.37	8.38	8.35

** 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's Unemployment Rate Hits Lowest Level Since March 1989

(Continued from Page 1)

Rhode Island Job Highlights (Over the Year)

Since February 2000, the number of jobs in Rhode Island has increased by 7,400 (1.6%) to 469,700. Annual growth was especially strong in Services and Trade, which added 3,900 and 3,100 jobs, respectively. An increase of 1,600 jobs in Health Services accounted for nearly half of the increase reported in the Services sector as this industry continues to recover from last year's closing of one of the state's leading health care providers. All industry components in the Trade sector experienced over-the-year growth. Job gains of 400 each were reported in Restaurants, Food Stores, Automotive Dealers and Miscellaneous Retail. An 800 job gain noted in Contract Construction is attributable to increases in Special Trade Contractors. Finance, Insurance and Real Estate employment grew by 600 over the year due, in part, to increases in local banks. Government employment rose by 500 resulting from an increase of 600 jobs in local education employment. The Manufacturing sector posted an annual loss of 1,600 jobs. The largest factory cutbacks occurred in Jewelry/Silverware (-600), Textiles (-600), Fabricated Metals (-500) and Printing/Publishing (-400).

Rhode Island Job Highlights (Over the Month)

The number of jobs in Rhode Island rose by 1,800 over the month to an all-time February high of 469,700.

Services – The Services sector added 2,600 jobs in February with the largest gain reported in Private Education Services. Private educational institutions recouped 2,200 jobs as school workers and college students returned to the classrooms following the winter break. Increases were also reported in Business Services (+300) and Health Services (+200), overshadowing some minor losses in Hotels and Other Lodging, Amusement/Recreation and Social Services.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

	Feb 01	Jan 01	Feb 00	% Change Prev. Year
All Items	175.8	175.1	169.8	3.5%

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

Government – Government employment recorded a net gain of 400 jobs over the month with the addition of 300 jobs in Local Government and 100 jobs in State Government. Federal Government employment remained even.

Transportation and Public Utilities – Employment in Transportation and Public Utilities was unchanged from January to February.

Finance Insurance and Real Estate – Finance, Insurance and Real Estate employment was down 100 over the month.

Manufacturing – Manufacturing employment showed a net loss of 300 with several industries in both the durable and nondurable goods categories registering modest increases.

Trade – Trade reported a net loss of 400 jobs over the month as retailers trimmed their payrolls due to additional post-holiday cutbacks in General Merchandise stores (-400), Apparel & Accessory stores (-100) and Miscellaneous Retail (-100) negating gains in Restaurants (+200) and Furniture, Home Furnishings and Equipment stores (+100).

Contract Construction – A seasonal slowdown in General Building Construction resulted in a loss of 400 jobs in Contract Construction.

Rhode Island Establishment Employment February 1990 - February 2001

