



Donald L. Carcieri  
Governor  
Adelita S. Orefice  
Director

# Employment Bulletin

Rhode Island  
Department of  
Labor & Training  
1511 Pontiac Ave.  
Cranston, RI 02920  
401-462-8740  
www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi

March 2007

## Rhode Island's Jobless Rate below U.S. Average for First Time since 2005

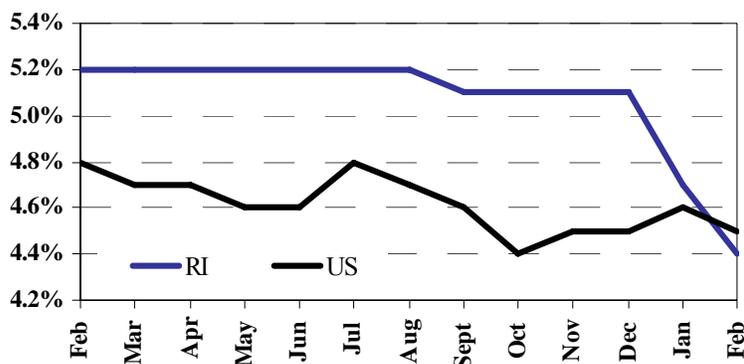
Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by three-tenths of a percentage point to 4.4 percent in February. The number of unemployed dropped by 1,400 during the month to 25,800.

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Director Adelita S. Orefice commented, "For the first time since May 2005, Rhode Island's unemployment rate is lower than the national average."

At 4.4 percent, the state's jobless rate for February dipped below the national average of 4.5 percent. The 4.4 percent rate is also the lowest unemployment rate in Rhode Island since March 2001.

The number of employed Rhode Island residents climbed to a new record high level of 553,800 in February. This tops the previous high of 553,300, set in January 2007.

RI & US Unemployment Rates  
Seasonally Adjusted 2006-2007



## Promote Improved Health in the Workplace By Encouraging Physical Activity

Employers, you can implement strategies aimed at improving the health and wellness of your employees in the workplace. Big results can come from small changes and this is true for health. Worksite programs to promote health and prevent disease empower employees to improve their health, often resulting in better morale and increased productivity. Your employees are your greatest assets. You can make your workplace a healthy, supportive environment by promoting the following low-cost and free activities:

- Create an active commuting program by offering discounted bus passes or instituting walk-to-work days.
- Create a walking path in and around your company that can be used during breaks and before and after work.
- Start a lunchtime walking group.
- Offer fitness breaks or lunchtime fitness classes. Allow employees flexible hours to be active before work, at lunch, or after work.
- Provide scheduled fitness workshops such as yoga, stress reduction exercises, martial arts, or how to start your own exercise program.
- Offer complimentary or discount memberships to local health clubs.

For more information on fitness and health, check out these helpful web site links:

- The American Council on Exercise  
[www.acefitness.org/getfit/default.aspx](http://www.acefitness.org/getfit/default.aspx)  
National Association for Fitness and Health  
[www.physicalfitness.org](http://www.physicalfitness.org)  
Shape Up America! [www.shapeup.org](http://www.shapeup.org)  
National Center for Physical Activity and Disability  
[www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org)

### Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics (in thousands)

	Rhode Island			United States		
	Feb 07	Jan 07	Feb 06	Feb 07	Jan 07	Feb 06
Civilian Labor Force	579.5	580.5	574.5	152,784	152,974	150,477
Resident Employment	553.8	553.3	544.7	145,919	145,957	143,319
Unemployment	25.8	27.2	29.7	6,865	7,017	7,158
Unemployment Rate	4.4%	4.7%	5.2%	4.5%	4.6%	4.8%

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## The Number of Jobs in Rhode Island Grows by 800

The number of jobs in Rhode Island increased by 800 over the month – from 495,000 in January to 495,800 in February. An employment gain of 800 workers was observed in Educational Services, with additional smaller gains in the Retail Trade (+300); Financial Activities (+200); Wholesale Trade (+200); Information (+100); Professional & Business Services (+100); and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100) sectors.

These gains were partially offset by job losses reported in Manufacturing (-400); Construction (-300); Transportation & Utilities (-100); Natural Resources & Mining (-100); and Government (-100). Health Care & Social Assistance, Accommodation & Food Services, and Other Services employment remained unchanged over the month.

Employment gains in Educational Services reflected the return of student workers and other staff at the state's private colleges and universities following the winter recess. The increase in Retail Trade was influenced in part by the opening of a major retail trade store in the Providence area. Continued cold weather in February contributed to the decrease in Construction jobs (-300). Government employment dropped by 100 jobs over the month, reflecting a loss in the state government segment.

Over the year, jobs were up 5,100 from the 490,700 jobs reported in February 2006. Annual employment growth occurred in the Professional & Business Services (+2,200); Financial Activities (+2,000); Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,600); Construction (+800); Educational Services (+700); Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+700); Retail Trade (+500); Information (+200); Transportation & Utilities (+100); and Other Services (+100) sectors. These gains offset losses in Manufacturing (-2,400); Government (-900); Accommodation & Food Services (-300); and Wholesale Trade (-200).

### Hours and Earnings

In February 2007, the \$13.50 average hourly wage earned by the Manufacturing sector's production workers represented a monthly gain of four cents per hour and an over-the-year gain of sixteen cents per hour. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.3 hours per week in February, unchanged over the month and up 0.4 of an hour since February 2006.

### Establishment Employment in Rhode Island Seasonally Adjusted

	Employment (in thousands)		Net Change
	Feb-07	Jan-07	
	<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>495.8</b>	
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.3	-0.1
Construction	23.5	23.8	-0.3
Manufacturing	51.1	51.5	-0.4
Wholesale Trade*	16.8	16.6	0.2
Retail Trade	52.3	52.0	0.3
Transportation & Utilities	11.0	11.1	-0.1
Information	11.1	11.0	0.1
Financial Activities	36.4	36.2	0.2
Professional & Business Services	57.8	57.7	0.1
Educational Services	23.0	22.2	0.8
Health Care & Social Assistance	75.4	75.4	0.0
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	8.3	8.2	0.1
Accommodation & Food Services	41.8	41.8	0.0
Other Services	22.9	22.9	0.0
Government	64.2	64.3	-0.1

\* State Calculated Estimate

### Manufacturing Employment in Rhode Island Not Seasonally Adjusted

	Employment					Production Worker Averages					
	(in thousands)			Net Change From		Weekly Hours			Hourly Earnings		
	Feb 07	Jan 07	Feb 06	Jan 07	Feb 06	Feb 07	Jan 07	Feb 06	Feb 07	Jan 07	Feb 06
<b>Manufacturing</b>	51.2	51.3	53.2	-100	-2000	39.3	39.3	38.9	13.50	13.46	13.34
<b>Durable Goods</b>	33.2	33.2	34.5	0	-1300	37.9	38.1	39.0	13.43	13.40	13.30
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.	7.2	7.3	7.5	-100	-300	40.2	39.8	41.6	11.88	12.02	11.79
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	4.7	4.7	4.6	0	100	36.5	35.4	40.6	14.74	14.61	14.31
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	9.6	9.5	9.9	100	-300	34.0	35.1	38.1	11.54	11.37	11.10
Jewelry & Silverware	6.8	6.7	7.0	100	-200	36.0	37.6	39.0	10.60	10.46	10.35
<b>Non-Durable Goods</b>	18.0	18.1	18.7	-100	-700	41.6	41.2	38.6	13.61	13.55	13.40
Chemical Manufacturing	4.3	4.4	4.5	-100	-200	39.3	38.0	42.5	16.10	15.89	15.45
Plastics & Rubber Products Mfg.	2.8	2.8	2.9	0	-100	44.1	43.5	40.7	14.10	14.31	14.70

*The employment figures in this section are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state. Not seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is available at: [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm).*

*Current month's figures are preliminary and subject to change.*

## Rhode Island's Construction Industry

Construction has long been one of Rhode Island's faster growing industries. In recent years (1996 to 2006) Construction has added some 9,000 (+64%) jobs to the Rhode Island economy with establishment employment increasing from 14,000 in 1996 to 23,000 in 2006.

By the end of the 2004 to 2014 projection period, it is expected that employment in Rhode Island's Construction industry will exceed 25,000, an increase of 4,272 (+20%) from the 2004 level of 21,000 and nearly twice the growth rate expected for all industries in our state. Within the Construction sector, Construction of Buildings, Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction and Special Trade Contractors are all expected to grow at more than twice the average rate with Special Trade Contractors (+3,159) accounting for nearly two-thirds of the sector's new job growth. In addition to the demand created by new job growth, it is estimated that Construction establishments will need to find workers to fill an additional 4,200 vacancies during the projection period resulting from attrition. Demand for Carpenters, Construction Supervisors, Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters, Electricians and Laborers is expected to be the highest as employers seek to replace workers and fill newly created positions. (see label page for more detail)



The Construction sector's 2005 annual average wage of \$44,792 represented the fifteenth highest annual average wage among the fifty states and was nearly \$2,700 (+6.4%) more than the US average of \$42,100. In comparison, private sector wages in the state averaged \$37,064 in 2005.

The Construction sector also has a very large number of self-employed workers, which is not reflected in the industry data. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, opportunities for workers to form their own firms are better in construction than in many other industries.

### Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed

In February 2007, 59 percent of Rhode Island's unemployed workers were eligible to collect Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. Numbering 17,410 people, these "insured unemployed" accounted for 3.2 percent of the state's total employed (unadjusted). Nearly 17 percent (2,920) of the Ocean State's insured unemployed faced long-term unemployment, defined as collecting unemployment benefits for more than fourteen weeks.

On an industry basis, 23.5 percent (4,096) of the State's insured unemployed workers came from the Construction sector. There were also 2,488 individuals with an attachment to the Administrative & Waste sector, accounting for 14.3 percent of all insured unemployed workers. An additional 11.9 percent (2,080) of those collecting UI benefits in February had worked in the Manufacturing sector. Large numbers of insured unemployed were also reported in Retail Trade (1,425), Accommodation & Food Services (1,351), Health Care & Social Assistance (884) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (715). For more information, go to [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm).

Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed, February 2007

	Total	Long-Term	Percent Long-Term
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,410</b>	<b>2,920</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
Male	11,536	1,498	13.0%
Female	5,874	1,422	24.2%
<b>Selected Industries</b>	<b>17,410</b>	<b>2,920</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
Construction	4,096	252	6.2%
Manufacturing	2,080	531	25.5%
Wholesale Trade	601	141	23.5%
Retail Trade	1,425	338	23.7%
Transportation & Warehousing	399	54	13.5%
Information	212	53	25.0%
Finance & Insurance	608	177	29.1%
Real Estate	269	68	25.3%
Professional & Tech. Services	569	105	18.5%
Administrative & Waste Services	2,488	204	8.2%
Educational Services	239	92	38.5%
Health Care & Social Assistance	884	319	36.1%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	715	79	11.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	1,351	226	16.7%
Other Services	474	127	26.8%
Public Administration	134	24	17.9%

### Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

				% Change
	Feb 07	Jan 07	Feb 06	Prev. Year
All Items	203.5	202.4	198.7	2.4%

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

### Union Membership in Rhode Island, 2006

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 15.3 percent (76,000) of private and public sector workers throughout Rhode Island were union members in 2006. This represented an over-the-year decline of 0.6 percentage points, or 3,000 workers. Regionally, the Ocean State had the second highest union membership rate, trailing only Connecticut (15.6%). Two New England states - Massachusetts (+0.6 points) and Vermont (+0.2 points) - experienced an increase in their union membership rates between 2005 and 2006.

Among the fifty states, Rhode Island reported the eleventh highest union membership rate, trailing Hawaii (24.7%), New York (24.4%), Alaska (22.2%), New Jersey (20.1%), Washington (19.8%), Michigan (19.6%), Illinois (16.4%), Minnesota (16.0%), California (15.7%), and Connecticut (15.6%). Nationally, the union membership rate was 12.0 percent, down from 12.5 percent one year earlier and well below the 20.1 percent measured in 1983.\*

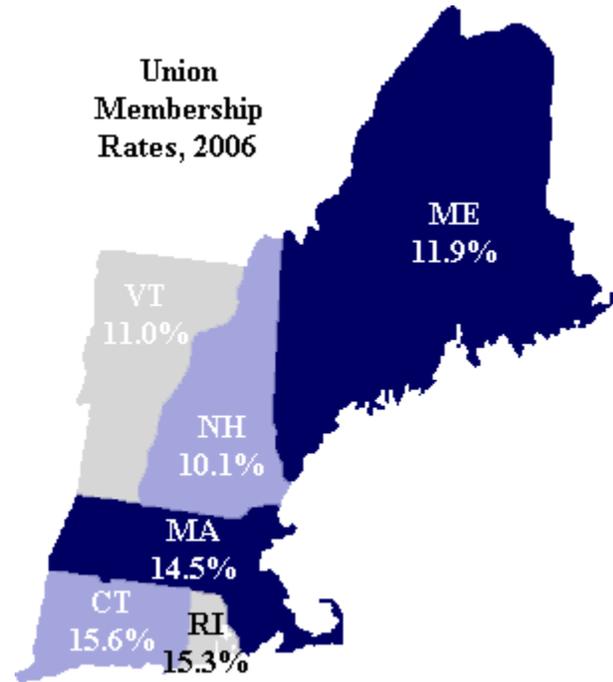
Over the year, the percentage of wage and salary workers represented by unions in the Ocean State declined, falling from 16.8 percent in 2005 to 16.0 percent in 2006. Throughout the country, 13.1 percent of public and private sector workers were represented by unions in 2006.

\* 1983 is the first year for which comparable union data are available. Data included within this report is derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of households conducted by the Bureau of Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Union membership data refers to members of a labor union or an employee association similar to a union. Union representation data includes union members as well as workers who report no union affiliation, but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract. For more information on CPS data, please visit [www.bls.gov/cps](http://www.bls.gov/cps).

### City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates for February

	2007		2006		
	2007	2006	2007	2006	
Barrington	3.6	3.9	Newport	5.3	6.9
Bristol	4.8	5.7	North Kingstown	4.2	5.0
Burrillville	5.3	6.0	North Providence	4.7	5.6
Central Falls	6.7	8.3	North Smithfield	4.6	4.9
Charlestown	5.3	6.4	Pawtucket	5.7	6.7
Coventry	4.7	5.9	Portsmouth	4.4	5.3
Cranston	4.8	5.6	Providence	5.7	7.0
Cumberland	4.5	5.3	Richmond	3.3	4.5
East Greenwich	4.2	4.7	Scituate	5.5	6.3
East Providence	5.7	6.4	Smithfield	4.4	5.1
Exeter	5.3	6.3	South Kingstown	4.7	5.2
Foster	6.3	7.9	Tiverton	6.2	6.8
Glocester	4.3	5.2	Warren	5.7	6.8
Hopkinton	5.5	6.3	Warwick	4.6	5.3
Jamestown	4.0	4.6	West Greenwich	4.9	4.9
Johnston	6.1	6.8	West Warwick	5.8	6.9
Lincoln	4.2	4.9	Westerly	5.0	6.3
Little Compton	5.1	6.2	Woonsocket	6.0	6.7
Middletown	5.0	6.4			
Narragansett	3.4	4.0	State of R.I.	5.1	6.0
New Shoreham	14.2	16.0	United States	4.9	5.1

### Union Membership Rates, 2006



### Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Feb	Jan	Feb	% Change		Year to Date		
	2007	2007	2006	Jan 07	Feb 06	2007	2006	% Change
Initial Claims	7,535	10,205	7,267	-26.2%	3.7%	17,740	17,082	3.9%
Number of Payments	64,752	69,599	63,088	-7.0%	2.6%	134,351	132,909	1.1%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$22.7	\$24.0	\$21.4	-5.4%	6.1%	\$46.7	\$44.8	4.2%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	1,099	1,431	1,157	-23.2%	-5.0%	2,530	2,598	-2.6%



# High Demand Construction Jobs



Occupational Title	Employment		Total Openings	Median Wage	Training Codes
	2004	2014			
Carpenters	3,525	4,256	1,305	\$18.59	9
Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	1,191	1,535	618	\$20.73	9
Supervisors of Construction Workers	1,514	1,853	596	\$27.45	8
Construction Laborers	2,500	2,727	560	\$17.38	10
Electricians	1,142	1,435	519	\$23.66	9
Operating Engineers	644	787	309	\$24.29	10
HVAC Mechanics & Installers	460	645	246	\$18.88	9
Painters, Construction & Maintenance	619	765	240	\$14.70	10
Cost Estimators	403	527	214	\$25.44	8
Office Clerks, General	561	616	179	\$11.28	11
Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers	384	476	169	\$21.34	10
Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	550	607	160	\$15.67	10
Roofers	295	386	160	INA	10
Construction Managers	362	443	147	\$34.74	5
Brickmasons & Blockmasons	265	334	108	\$30.29	9
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	264	323	102	\$17.30	10
Receptionists & Information Clerks	196	234	86	\$11.33	11
General & Operations Managers	213	257	84	\$39.95	4
Helpers—Brick, Block & Stone Masons	107	136	73	\$18.47	11
Insulation Workers, Floor, Ceiling, & Wall	161	183	71	INA	10
Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive	318	321	64	\$15.14	10
Supervisors of Office Support Workers	146	166	51	\$21.22	8
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	132	155	48	\$15.61	10
Excavating & Loading Machine Operators	88	107	43	\$18.99	10
Supervisors of Mechanics/Installers/Repairers	83	105	43	\$26.16	8
Laborers, Freight, Stock, & Material Movers	85	96	39	\$11.32	11
Telecommunications Line Installers & Repairers	91	105	39	INA	9
Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing	77	95	38	\$24.04	10
Tapers	99	115	37	\$19.32	10
Executive Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	104	118	34	\$18.42	10
Retail Salespersons	51	65	33	\$9.94	11
Accountants & Auditors	77	94	32	\$27.11	5

Training Codes: 1 First Professional Degree, 2 Doctoral Degree, 3 Master's Degree, 4 Bachelor's & Work Experience, 5 Bachelor's Degree, 6 Associate Degree, 7 Vocational Training, 8 Work experience, 9 Long-Term on-the-job training, 10 Moderate-term on-the-job training, 11 Short-term on-the-job training.

\* INA- Information Not Available

*Wage rate reflects the median wage paid by all Rhode Island employers during May 2005.*

*For additional industry specific occupations visit our website: [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/publications/opportunities.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/publications/opportunities.htm)*