



**FOR RELEASE**  
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**Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Dips to 5.0 Percent in September  
 Falls Below National Rate for First Time in Six Months**

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Director Adelita S. Orefice announced today that Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September fell to 5.0 percent, its lowest level this year. The September unemployment rate is down 0.5 of a percentage point from August. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents declined by 3,000 in September to 28,200. A year ago, the unemployment rate was 4.9 percent and the number of unemployed stood at 28,000. Nationally, the unemployment rate held steady at 5.4 percent in September. Rhode Island's unemployment rate was below the national average for the first time since March.

|               | <u>Sep. 04</u> | <u>Aug. 04</u> | <u>Sep. 03</u> |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Rhode Island  | 5.0%           | 5.5%           | 4.9%*          |
| United States | 5.4%           | 5.4%           | 6.1%           |
| * Revised     |                |                |                |

"We are encouraged by the drop in RI's unemployment rate over the last two months," said Director Orefice. "September's 5.0 percent unemployment rate is our lowest rate since October 2003 and marks the first time in the last six months that RI's rate has been below the US rate."

**Rhode Island Job Highlights**

Rhode Island businesses reported a gain of 400 jobs last month, bringing the September job count to 489,600 (seasonally adjusted). Over-the-month employment gains were reflected in Leisure & Hospitality (+200); Construction (+100); and Government (+100). Trade, Transportation & Utilities (-400) was the only sector to experience a monthly loss as the traditional job gains which normally occur in Retail Trade did not materialize. Manufacturing and Professional & Business Services employment remained even over the month.

The unadjusted estimates, which traditionally increase from August to September, were up by 4,400 (+0.9%) over the month. The September job count stood at 493,500 (unadjusted), the highest September job count on record. Seasonal gains were reported in Government (+3,700), Educational Services (+2,600), and Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities (+600). Health Care & Social Assistance (+500), Manufacturing (+300), and Professional & Business Services (+200) also reported increases. Seasonal decreases occurred in Accommodation & Food Services (-1,800), Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (-700), Other Services (-500), and Construction (-200). Retail Trade, Information, and Financial Activities each shed 100 employees over the month.

The over-the-month rise in September was due to the seasonal return of both public and private school employees, as well as school bus drivers, following the summer break. The end of the summer season was also responsible for the employment decline in Accommodation & Food Services; Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation; Other Services; and Construction, as these industries scale back for the colder months.

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Over the year, employment was up 3,900 (+0.8%) from the 489,600 jobs (revised) reported in September 2003. The largest over-the-year gains were noted in Health Care & Social Assistance (+2,100), Accommodation & Food Services (+1,100), Construction (+1,000), and Educational Services (+1,000). The largest private sector employment losses occurred in Professional & Business Services (-800), Financial Activities (-600), and Manufacturing (-400). Government employment increased by 100 over the year, as job gains on the Local level (+500) offset losses in the Federal (-300) and State (-100) segments.

### **Hours and Earnings**

The \$12.99 average hourly wage earned by the Manufacturing sector's production workers in September 2004, though down five cents from last month, represented a yearly gain of eleven cents per hour. In September 2004, Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.6 hours per week, an increase of 0.7 of an hour over the month but down 0.1 of an hour over the year.

***Note:** The unemployment figures are based largely on a survey of households in Rhode Island and measure the unemployment status of people who live in the state.*

*The employment figures in the "Rhode Island Job Highlights" section are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state.*

**Rhode Island Labor Market Information is available on our web site at [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi)  
The October labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, November 19, 2004.**

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*The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training offers a wide array of employment and training services to both the general public and to individuals with unusual barriers to employment. DLT is ready to assist any job seeker, whether the goal is a first job, a better job, or a career change. Rhode Island's work force is protected through the enforcement of labor laws, prevailing wage rates, and work place health and safety standards. Temporary income support is available to unemployed, sick, or injured workers and a comprehensive rehabilitation program is available to those injured on the job.*

*DLT is dedicated to the growth and competitiveness of Rhode Island industry, administering a variety of training grants, tax credits, and apprenticeship programs to help employers. Economic indicators and labor market information are available for long-range planning. The Agency engages in active outreach, helping large and small employers retain their best workers or retrain their existing work force. At no cost to the employer, DLT will also screen job applicants, post job vacancies, and help businesses institute cost-sharing programs that can avert layoffs.*

*For more information on the innovative programs and services available to all Rhode Islanders at the Department of Labor and Training, please call (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at [www.dlt.ri.gov](http://www.dlt.ri.gov).*

#### ***Equal Opportunity Employer/Program***

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

TDD (401) 462-8006

**DLT-LMI-04-11**

