



FOR RELEASE
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**Rhode Island’s Unemployment Rate Continues Downward Trend in November
 Remains Below National Rate**

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Director Adelita S. Orefice announced today that Rhode Island’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November was 4.4 percent, down 0.1 of a percentage point from October.

	<u>Nov. 04</u>	<u>Oct. 04</u>	<u>Nov. 03</u>
Rhode Island	4.4%	4.5%	5.1%*
United States	5.4%	5.5%	5.9%

* Revised

The November unemployment rate is the lowest since January 2001. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents declined by 400 in November to 25,100. A year ago, the unemployment rate was 5.1 percent, and the number of unemployed stood at 29,100. Nationally, the unemployment rate also inched down 0.1 of a percentage point to 5.4 percent in November. Rhode Island’s unemployment rate remained below the national average for the third straight month.

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“This month’s 400 job increase, while modest, is encouraging,” said Director Orefice. “Our unemployment rate continues to improve as the number of unemployed Rhode Island residents fell for the fifth straight month.”

Rhode Island Job Highlights

Rhode Island businesses added 400 jobs last month, bringing the November job count to 489,200 (seasonally adjusted). Over-the-month employment gains in Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+400); Construction (+200); Government (+200) and Leisure & Hospitality (+100) offset a 300 job loss reported in Professional & Business Services. Manufacturing employment showed no change.

The more detailed unadjusted estimates, which traditionally increase from to October to November, were up by 900 (+0.2%) over the month. The November job count stood at 496,300 (unadjusted), the highest November job count on record. The largest monthly gains were reported in Retail Trade (+1,500); Government (+600) and Educational Services (+400), which combined to offset seasonal losses reported in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-600) and Accommodation & Food Services (-500) and Professional & Business Services (-500).

Seasonal hiring in Retail Trade resulted in 1,500 new jobs, slightly higher than the average October to November (+1,200) increase and the largest October to November gain reported in three years. The decrease of 500 in Accommodation & Food Services, which usually drops this time of year, was much smaller than expected.

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Over the year, employment was up 4,400 (+0.9%) from the 491,900 jobs (unadjusted) reported in November 2003. The largest gains were noted in Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,300); Accommodation & Food Services (+1,300); Educational Services (+1,100); Construction (+800) and Retail Trade (+800). The largest private sector employment losses occurred in Financial Activities (-600) and Manufacturing (-600). Government employment increased by just 100, as job gains on the Local level (+500) offset losses in the Federal (-200) and State (-200) segments.

Hours and Earnings

The \$13.09 average hourly wage earned by the Manufacturing sector's production workers in November 2004 represented a yearly gain of eight cents and a monthly gain of seven cents per hour. In November 2004, Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.7 hours per week, an increase of 0.4 of an hour over the month, but a decline of 0.4 of an hour from last 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
The December labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, January 21, 2005.**

- 30 -

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 our web site at www.dlt.ri.gov.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

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

TDD (401) 462-8006

