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Rhode Island-Based Jobs Rose by 3,200 from January; February Unemployment Rate Decreases to 3.9 Percent

CRANSTON, R.I. - The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.9 percent in February, the Department of Labor and Training announced Thursday. The February rate was down three-tenths of a percentage point from the January rate of 4.2 percent. Last year the rate was 6.1 percent in February.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in February, down two-tenths of a percentage point from January. The U.S. rate was 6.2 percent in February 2021.

The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents — those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment — was 22,300, down 1,700 from January. The number of unemployed residents decreased by 12,400 over the year. Since April 2020, the height of pandemic-related shutdowns, the number of unemployed RI residents is down 78,000.

The number of employed Rhode Island residents was 546,200, up 1,300 over the month and up 13,800 over the year. Since April 2020 the number of employed Rhode Island residents is up 100,100.

The Rhode Island labor force totaled 568,600 in February, down 300 over the month and up 1,500 from February 2021. The labor force is up 22,200 from April 2020.

Since February 2020, the month prior to the pandemic-related shutdowns, the number of unemployed RI residents is up 1,300 and the number of employed RI residents is down 4,600. Currently, there are 3,200 fewer RI residents participating in the labor force than there were prior to the start of the pandemic.

Rhode Island-Based Jobs

Total nonfarm payroll employment in Rhode Island rebounded in February, following the revised loss of 1,000 jobs in January. February nonfarm payroll totaled 490,200, an increase of 3,200 jobs from the revised January figure of 487,000. The February job level marks the highest level since February 2020, the month prior to the economic shutdown due to the pandemic.

The Accommodation & Food Services sector regained all of the 800 jobs it lost in January, adding 1,200 jobs in February. Job gains were noted within restaurants and other eating places as well in accommodation-type establishments.

Job counts in the Manufacturing sector rose by 800 in February, erasing the 800 jobs lost in January. The Construction sector added 700 jobs in February, fueled by growth reported in both the specialty trade contractors' field and residential building construction field.

The Health Care & Social Assistance sector added 500 jobs in February, followed by a gain of 400 jobs in both the Retail Trade and Professional & Technical Services sectors. Smaller job gains were reported in the Government (+200) and Wholesale Trade sectors (+100).

	Feb 22	Jan 22	Feb 21
R.I. Unemployment Rate	3.9%	4.2%	6.1%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	3.8%	4.0%	6.2%
R.I. Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	490.2	487.0	471.3
Highlights:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Rhode Island unemployment rate was 3.9 percent in February, down three-tenths of a percentage point from last month's rate of 4.2 percent.• Through February, the Rhode Island economy has recovered 90,500 or 83.7 percent of the 108,100 jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown.			

Offsetting some of the February job gains was a loss of 500 jobs reported in the Administrative & Waste Services sector. Lastly, jobs losses were reported in the Educational Services (-300), Financial Activities (-200) and Management of Companies & Enterprises (-100) sectors.

February job levels remained unchanged in the remaining sectors (Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Information, Mining & Logging, Other Services and Transportation & Utilities.)

Due to the unprecedented pandemic-related shutdowns and restrictions implemented in April 2020, the number of jobs in Rhode Island plunged to 399,700. Gradually, restrictions began to ease, and the economy began an upward recovery trend. Over the year, Rhode Island jobs are up 18,900, led by the Accommodation & Food Services (+8,300) sector. Professional & Technical Services employment is up 2,200 jobs since February 2021, followed by the Other Services (+2,100), Manufacturing (+1,800), Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,700) and Construction (+1,200) sectors.

Smaller annual job gains were noted in the Wholesale Trade (+900), Government (+700), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+600), Transportation & Utilities (+300), Information (+300), Retail Trade (+200), Financial Activities (+100) and Mining & Logging (+100) sectors.

Over the year, jobs were down in the Educational Services (-800), Management of Companies (-500) and Administrative & Waste Services (-300) sectors.

To help prevent the outbreak of the coronavirus, many industries in the state were ordered to close or operate with restrictions in March and April of 2020, resulting in the loss of 108,100 jobs. Through February 2021, the state's economy has recovered 90,500 or 84 percent of the jobs lost during the shutdown. Five employment sectors, Construction, Manufacturing, Professional & Technical Services, Transportation & Utilities and Wholesale Trade, have reported more jobs in February 2022 than they had in the month prior to the pandemic shutdown.

The Accommodation & Food Services, Information and Other Services sectors have each recovered 88 percent of the jobs lost during the restriction period, followed by the Retail Trade (87%) and Administrative & Waste Services (81%) sectors. In addition, Health Care & Social Assistance has regained 76 percent of the jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown followed by the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (67%).

The Management of Companies and Educational Services sectors have yet to recover any of the jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown while the Financial Activities (33%) and Government (30%) sectors have recovered less than a third of the lost jobs.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND (in thousands)					
	Feb-22	Jan-22	Feb-21	Net Change From	
				Jan-22	Feb-21
Total Nonfarm	490.2	487.0 *	471.3	3.2	18.9
Total Private	426.9	423.9 *	408.7	3.0	18.2
Mining & Logging	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
Construction	20.8	20.1 *	19.6	0.7	1.2
Manufacturing	40.0	39.2 *	38.2	0.8	1.8
Wholesale Trade	16.2	16.1	15.3	0.1	0.9
Retail Trade	46.5	46.1 *	46.3	0.4	0.2
Transportation & Utilities	13.4	13.4	13.1	0.0	0.3
Information	5.7	5.7 *	5.4	0.0	0.3
Financial Activities	34.4	34.6 *	34.3	-0.2	0.1
Professional & Technical Svcs.	29.2	28.8	27.0	0.4	2.2
Management of Companies & Enterprises	12.0	12.1	12.5	-0.1	-0.5
Administrative & Waste Services	28.0	28.5 *	28.3	-0.5	-0.3
Educational Services	23.7	24.0 *	24.5	-0.3	-0.8
Health Care & Social Assistance	79.4	78.9 *	77.7	0.5	1.7
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	6.7	6.7 *	6.1	0.0	0.6
Accommodation & Food Services	48.6	47.4	40.3	1.2	8.3
Other Services	22.1	22.1	20.0	0.0	2.1
Government	63.3	63.1	62.6	0.2	0.7
*Revised estimates					

Manufacturing Hours and Earnings

In February, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$23.30 per hour, down seventeen cents from January, but up two dollars and thirty-seven cents from February 2021.

Manufacturing employees worked an average of 40.7 hours per week in February, up nine-tenths of an hour over the month, and up three and nine-tenths of an hour from a year ago.