

For Immediate Release: Aug. 19, 2016

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Idaho Unemployment Rate Edges Up to 3.8% **-State's Over-the-Year Job Growth is Nation's Fastest-**

Strong job growth, a continued demand for workers and an increase in people looking for work edged Idaho's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate up slightly in July to 3.8 percent.

Idaho regained its status as number one in the nation for over-the-year job growth in July with nearly 23,000 more jobs and a 3.4 percent increase driven by across-the-board gains in all industries. Construction showed the biggest gain with a 12.6 percent increase, followed by growth in financial activities, leisure and hospitality and other services.

Month-to-month, growth in the state's seasonally adjusted nonfarm payrolls remained steady between June and July with an addition of 3,900 jobs and a 0.6 percent increase.

Idaho's labor force increased by almost 1,500 to 811,850, total employment grew by 1,000 to 781,020 and after remaining flat for three consecutive months, the number of unemployed Idahoans increased by 500 in July. Combined, these factors resulted in a slight bump in the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, up a tenth of a percent from June. The last time the state's unemployment rate showed any increase was in April 2015.

The state's labor force participation remained unchanged at 64.1 percent.

Nationally unemployment held steady at 4.9 percent.

According to the Conference Board, a Washington, D.C., think tank, there were 25,000 online postings for Idaho jobs in July. Of those, 5,050 were classified by department analysts as "hard-to-fill" - jobs continuously posted for 90 days or more. Based on vacancy rates - the number of openings compared with total employment for that occupation - health care jobs accounted for more than 20 percent of all hard-to-fill jobs and included physicians, surgeons, psychiatrists and occupational and physical therapists. By volume, registered nurses and truck drivers maintained the first and second spots for the largest number of hard-to-fill jobs.

Annually, July's unemployment benefit payments were down by 4 percent - from \$1.45 million a year ago to \$1.40 million for July 2016. The number of weeks compensated dropped 6.6 percent over the year.

Twenty-two of Idaho's 44 counties had unemployment rates above the state rate. Madison and Franklin counties experienced the lowest rates in the state at 2.7 percent and 2.9 percent. Lewis County had the highest rate at 7 percent.

The Idaho Falls metropolitan statistical area (MSA) reported the lowest unemployment rate of all MSAs at 3.3 percent, down from 3.5 percent one year earlier. The Coeur d'Alene MSA experienced the highest unemployment rate among the MSAs at 4.6 percent, down from 5.0 percent the previous July.

Details on Idaho's unemployment picture can be found at lmi.idaho.gov.

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Seasonally Adjusted Data	Jul-16	Jun-16	Jul-15
Civilian Labor Force	811,800	810,300	797,900
Unemployment	30,800	30,300	33,300
% Labor Force Unemployed	3.8	3.7	4.2
Total Employment	781,000	780,000	764,600

Unadjusted Forecast Data			
Civilian Labor Force	824,700	821,800	810,200
Unemployment	30,000	29,700	32,000
% Labor Force Unemployed	3.6	3.6	3.9
Total Employment	794,700	792,100	778,200

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