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Idaho July Unemployment Rate Declines to 3 Percent **-- State Nonfarm Job Growth Outpaces the Nation --**

Idaho's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for July fell to its lowest levels since mid-2008 while businesses led the nation in over-the-month job growth at 0.6 percent.

According to department analysts, July's unemployment rate decrease to 3 percent is due to the combined effect of people exiting and entering the workforce and the number of unemployed dropping by 745 to 24,598.

Month over month, Idaho's labor force remained steady at 818,310 with a slight labor force loss of 335 people. Total employment climbed 410 to 793,712.

Nonfarm jobs grew by 4,300 – pushing Idaho's total payrolls to 713,100. Eight of the state's 11 industry sectors shared the increase. Trade, transportation and utilities added the most jobs in July at 1,700, while leisure and hospitality jobs grew the fastest at 1.4 percent.

Idaho's nonfarm jobs have shown steady annual growth for nearly eight years since the trough of the past recession in January 2010. Year-over-year, the state's nonfarm payroll jobs were up 2.3 percent with a net gain of 15,700 jobs. Education and health care services grew the fastest at 4.2 percent. Strong job gains also occurred in construction, information, manufacturing and leisure and hospitality.

The state's labor force participation rate — the percentage of people 16 years and older with jobs or looking for work — has steadily declined since February of this year, dropping to 63 percent, the lowest participation rate since May of 1976.

Department analysts classified 5,344 of Idaho's 23,500 online job postings for July as hard-to-fill. Health care jobs — physicians, surgeons, psychiatrists, occupational and physical therapists and support positions — accounted for 27 percent of all hard-to-fill jobs. Ads for registered nurses, retail salespersons and tractor-trailer drivers were the most numerous at 914 combined.

Nationally, unemployment fell to 4.3 percent — down one tenth of a percent from June — as the country's labor force increased by 0.2 percent and the participation rate rose slightly to 63 percent.

Annually, unemployment insurance benefit payments were down nearly 16 percent — from \$1.4 million a year ago to \$1.2 million in July 2017. The number of claimants decreased by nearly 15 percent from a weekly average of 4,900 a year ago to 4,200.

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The Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) showed the strongest seasonally adjusted over-the-year percentage nonfarm employment growth of all MSAs at 4.6 percent in July, or 1,300 jobs, followed by the Boise metro area with a 3.7 percent increase, or 11,300 jobs.

Month over month, four of Idaho’s MSAs saw nonfarm job increases. Lewiston (up 1 percent) experienced the largest percentage job increase, followed closely by Idaho Falls (up 0.9 percent), Coeur d’Alene (up 0.8 percent) and Boise (up 0.6 percent). Pocatello saw no change in job level.

Twenty-three of Idaho’s 44 counties had unemployment rates at or above the state rate in July. Of these, three counties were at or above 6 percent: Lewis at 6.4 percent, Shoshone at 6.3 percent and Clearwater at 6.2 percent. Madison County’s unemployment rate remained the lowest at 1.8 percent.

For more information on Idaho’s unemployment picture please visit lmi.idaho.gov.

| Seasonally Adjusted Data | 7/17 | 6/17 | 7/16 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 818,310 | 818,645 | 815,124 |
| Unemployment | 24,598 | 25,343 | 31,102 |
| % Labor Force Unemployed | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.8 |
| Total Employment | 793,712 | 793,302 | 784,022 |

| Unadjusted Forecast Data | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 833,463 | 829,194 | 827,800 |
| Unemployment | 23,899 | 22,688 | 30,081 |
| % Labor Force Unemployed | 2.9 | 2.7 | 3.6 |
| Total Employment | 809,564 | 806,506 | 797,719 |

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