

Embargoed until: March 23, 2018, 8:00 a.m. MDT

Information Contacts: Craig Shaul (208) 332-3570 ext. 3201 or Robert Kabel (208) 332-3570 ext. 3886

Idaho's Unemployment Rate at 3 Percent for 6th Month in a Row -- Fastest Over-the-Year Job Growth in the Nation --

Holding steady for the sixth consecutive month, Idaho's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3 percent in February.

Idaho also had the fastest total nonfarm job growth in the nation at 3.4 percent for February.

The state's labor force - the aggregate of people 16 years of age and older working or looking for work - continued to grow from January to February by 2,245, or 0.3 percent, to 846,448. This was accompanied by an increase of 2,465 in employment, raising the total number of employed workers to 821,448. The number of unemployed persons decreased by 220 (0.9 percent) to 25,000.

Over the year, statewide labor force for February was up 22,869 (2.8 percent), total employment was up by 25,831 (3.2 percent) and there were 2,962 (10.6 percent) fewer unemployed persons.

Idaho's labor force participation rate held steady at last month's revised rate of 64.0 percent.

Idaho's nonfarm payroll employment had a net gain of 1,700 jobs in February. Growth of 1,900 jobs across seven industry sectors - including construction; manufacturing; trade, transportation and utilities; financial activities; professional and business services; leisure and hospitality; and government - beat seasonal expectations. The only sector to see a decrease in jobs, other services, was down 200 over the month. Three sectors were unchanged from January.

Over the year, Idaho total nonfarm jobs increased by 24,000, or 3.4 percent. Construction's 9.3 percent - 4,100 additional jobs - was the largest percentage growth of Idaho's industry sectors. Financial activities; manufacturing; leisure and hospitality and education and health services rounded out the remaining top five growth industries from February 2017 to February 2018. Natural resources, with a decline of 200 jobs (5.4 percent), was the only sector to see fewer jobs over the year.

Nonfarm payrolls increased in four of the five Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with Boise up 1,000 (0.3 percent), Coeur d'Alene up 600 (0.9 percent), Idaho Falls up 200 (0.3 percent) and Lewiston up 200 (0.7 percent). Pocatello remained unchanged.

Over the year, Idaho's five MSAs all experienced gains in nonfarm payroll employment. Boise added 13,600 jobs, Idaho Falls added 2,100 jobs, Coeur d'Alene added 1,600 jobs, Lewiston added 1,000 jobs and Pocatello added 900 jobs.

According to the Conference Board, a Washington, D.C., think tank, in February there were 22,491 online job openings in Idaho compared with 21,612 in January 2017. Of these online postings, 5,150 were

-- more --

CENTRAL OFFICE • 317 West Main Street • Boise, Idaho 83735 • Tel: 208-332-3570 • Web: labor.idaho.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider. Reasonable accommodations are available upon request. Dial 711 for Idaho Relay Service.

classified as hard-to-fill, down almost 300 from 5,411 in February 2017. Hard-to-fill positions are those continuously posted for 90 days or more. Health care occupations, including physicians, surgeons, psychiatrists, occupational and physical therapists and support positions, continued to represent about 24 percent of hard-to-fill online job openings.

Annually, unemployment insurance benefit payments were down nearly 22 percent - from a weekly average of \$3.6 million a year ago to \$2.8 million weekly for February 2018. The number of claimants decreased by 21 percent to 9,100 from a weekly average of 11,700 a year ago.

Twenty-two of Idaho's 44 county unemployment rates were above the state rate in February. Five counties experienced rates at or above 5 percent: Clearwater at 7 percent; Shoshone at 5.7 percent; Lewis at 5.3 percent; and Benewah and Idaho at 5 percent. Madison County's unemployment rate remained the lowest at 1.8 percent.

Nationally, the February unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.1 percent for the fifth consecutive month and total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 313,000. The nation's labor force participation rate increased by 0.3 percentage point to 63.0 percent.

Idaho's March 2018 labor force and nonfarm payroll data will be released April 20 along with benchmarked substate area labor force data for 2017.

Updated information on Idaho's labor market will be posted at lmi.idaho.gov.

Seasonally Adjusted Data	18-Feb	18-Jan	17-Feb
Civilian Labor Force	846,448	844,203	823,579
Unemployment	25,000	25,220	27,962
% Labor Force Unemployed	3.0	3.0	3.4
Total Employment	821,448	818,983	795,617

Unadjusted Forecast Data			
Civilian Labor Force	845,047	841,217	818,289
Unemployment	28,775	32,518	32,858
% Labor Force Unemployed	3.4	3.9	4.0
Total Employment	816,272	808,699	785,431

—end—

