

NEWS RELEASE

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Idaho Jobless Rate Drops for Ninth Straight Month

Employers maintained hiring at seasonal levels in April while the state's labor force remained unchanged, driving the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate down for the ninth straight month to 7.7 percent.

The rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point from March and was 1.2 percentage points below the post-recession high of 8.9 percent last July. The April unemployment rate was at its lowest since July 2009.

While the labor force remained essentially unchanged at 779,000 in April, the number of Idahoans with jobs was up 1,700 from March. More than 17,000 workers have found jobs since the rate began falling last summer, pushing total employment to almost 719,000. That is the highest since September 2008 when the recession began to accelerate.

A year ago, only 702,000 workers had jobs while 67,000 were unemployed. The jobless rate was 8.7 percent. The national unemployment rate in April 2012 was 8.1 percent and has been above the Idaho rate for over 10½ years.

Except for government and professional and business services, which posted below normal job increases in April, hiring in all sectors was normal for this time of year. Construction, retail and trucking all expanded payrolls well above normal in another indication of increasing economic activity although construction and manufacturing payrolls remained at the levels of the early to mid-1990s.

New hires approached 15,000 in April with nearly half filling new jobs. It was the first time April new hires have exceeded 14,000 since 2007 and the third straight month that hires have exceeded the five-year average. The Conference Board, a business think tank, reported just over three jobless workers for every posted job in its April report, nearly half the level recorded during the worst of the economic downturn.

The state economy was supporting nearly 609,000 nonfarm jobs in April, 7,100 more than in April 2011 and the 11th straight month that current jobs have exceeded the year-earlier level.

Over 1,600 people left the rolls of the unemployed between March and April, only the second time in 36 years that unemployment has declined by more than 1,600 in a month. The other was January. Total unemployment dropped to 60,200, the lowest level since August 2009.

This April about 28,500 workers received \$28.1 million in state and federal unemployment benefits, well below the 37,500 who shared \$37 million in benefits during April 2011.

Employment numbers and unemployment rates for Idaho's counties will be released Monday, May 21.

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Seasonally Adjusted Data

	4/12	3/12	4/11
Civilian Labor Force	779,100	779,000	769,300
Unemployment	60,200	61,800	67,100
% Labor Force Unemployed	7.7	7.9	8.7
Total Employment	718,900	717,200	702,200

Unadjusted Forecast Data

Civilian Labor Force	772,100	775,400	765,900
Unemployment	59,900	66,800	68,000
% Labor Force Unemployed	7.8	8.8	8.9
Total Employment	712,200	708,600	697,900

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