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N E W S R E L E A S E

Unemployment rate declines again, economy continues to improve

BATON ROUGE – Louisiana’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined to 4.5 percent in February 2018. The last time the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was lower was in April 2008. This drop represents a 0.1 percent decrease from January 2018’s rate of 4.6 percent. Compared to February 2017, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is down 1.2 percent. The over-the-year decline of 1.2 percent is the second largest in the nation this month.

Seasonally adjusted employed individuals increased by 8,718 from January 2018 to 2,032,834. The last time there were more seasonally adjusted employed individuals was in April 2015. From February 2017, the number of seasonally adjusted employed individuals increased by 42,042. The number of seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals decreased by 1,469 to 95,099 from January 2018. The last time there were fewer seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals was in May 2008. Since February 2017, the number of unemployed individuals has decreased by 24,595.

Louisiana’s seasonally adjusted civilian labor force, or the number of people who are employed in addition to those looking for work, increased by 7,249 to 2,127,933 from January 2018. Compared to February 2017, Louisiana’s seasonally adjusted civilian labor force is up by 17,447.

“Louisiana’s economy has shown consistent improvement from this time last year, which we look forward to building in the months ahead,” said Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) Executive Director Ava Dejoie. “While more work always remains, the LWC will continue to provide all the necessary resources to job-seekers and industry partners to help return every resident to the workforce.”

Seasonally adjusted data shows that nonfarm employment increased by 2,800 jobs from January 2018 to 1,974,400. There have been over-the-month gains in nonfarm employment for the past three months. From February 2017, nonfarm employment decreased by 200.

From January 2018, seasonally adjusted data shows that private-sector employment increased by 2,800 jobs to 1,649,100. Private sector employment has seen over-the-month gains in four out of the last five months. From February 2017, private-sector employment increased by 2,700 jobs. This is the fifth straight over-the-year gain for private-sector employment.

Industries that showed the largest gains for seasonally adjusted jobs:

- **Education & Health Services** gained 200 jobs for the month and is up 4,300 jobs for the year.
- **Leisure & Hospitality** gained 600 jobs for the month and is up 6,200 jobs for the year.
- **Manufacturing** gained 1,900 jobs for the month and is up 1,800 jobs for the year.
- **Other Services**, which includes industries engaged in activities such as equipment and machinery repair and services, gained 600 jobs for the month and is up 1,100 jobs for the year.

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Among other seasonally adjusted sectors in February:

- **Mining & Logging**, which includes industries in the oil and gas sector, gained 200 jobs for the month, but is down 400 jobs for the year.

Among Louisiana's metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), remaining seasonally adjusted data shows:

- Alexandria lost 100 jobs from January 2018, but is up 200 jobs from February 2017.
- Baton Rouge gained 800 jobs from January 2018, but lost 1,500 jobs from February 2017.
- Hammond gained 100 jobs from January 2018 and 1,100 jobs from February 2017. The Hammond MSA is currently at a series high for nonfarm employment.
- Houma gained 700 jobs from January 2018 and 600 jobs from February 2017.
- Lafayette lost 700 jobs from January 2018 and 2,100 jobs from February 2017.
- Lake Charles gained 1,500 jobs from January 2018 and 5,500 jobs from February 2017. The Lake Charles MSA has had over-the-year increases for 80 consecutive months.
- Monroe lost 100 jobs from January 2018 and 100 jobs from February 2017.
- New Orleans lost 600 jobs from January 2018 and 1,400 jobs from February 2017.
- Shreveport gained 1,000 jobs from January 2018, but lost 300 jobs from February 2017.

Not seasonally adjusted data shows that nonfarm employment in Louisiana increased by 14,800 jobs from January 2018 to 1,966,200. Not seasonally adjusted private-sector employment saw an increase of 10,400 jobs to 1,638,000 from January 2018.

Not seasonally adjusted employed individuals increased by 24,780 to 2,042,396 from January 2018. Compared to this time last year, not seasonally adjusted employed individuals have increased by 62,782. Not seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals decreased by 8,181 to 85,765 from January 2018. Since February 2017, the number of not seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals decreased by 26,721.

February metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and parish unemployment rates will be released on March 27, 2018. For additional state and MSA data release dates, please click [here](#).

Seasonally adjusted data are useful for comparisons among states and the nation. Not-seasonally adjusted data are useful for comparing trends in parishes and metropolitan statistical areas, and for comparing them to the state. To view all available employment data, visit Louisiana's employment homepage at <http://www.laworks.net> and select Labor Market Information from the top-right menu. Then, select LOIS (Louisiana Occupational Information System) and select Employment and Wage Data listed under Data Trends. To view the BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics for the state, visit <http://data.bls.gov/pdq/querytool.jsp?survey=la>. For BLS nonfarm employment data, click here: <http://data.bls.gov/pdq/querytool.jsp?survey=sm>.

Resources for employers and job seekers

Job-seekers can explore careers, apply for top-rated jobs and connect with local training providers using Louisiana Star Jobs, the LWC's free career tool, at <http://www.laworks.net/Stars/>. Employers looking for workers should visit Louisiana's employment homepage at www.laworks.net. Click on HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) and create an account allowing access to qualified job seekers.

About the Louisiana Workforce Commission

The Louisiana Workforce Commission is an agency of state government that administers programs designed to enhance workforce growth and provide family-sustaining jobs for Louisiana residents. The commission monitors employment, administers unemployment compensation and tax funds, provides training resources for employers and employees and

oversees worker compensation benefits. The agency also gathers and supplies information on the labor market and occupational sectors in Louisiana.

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