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## DWD Secretary Newson: Stick with Big-Picture Statistics for Big Picture on Wisconsin Jobs in 2011

MADISON – If you want to see how Wisconsin compared to other states last year in jobs and employment, then the latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data is a good place to start. But don't get caught up in the volatility of monthly totals, or you'll miss the big picture.

The same revised BLS data that's been used to attack the state's performance last year also show that, **when averaged over the year, 2011 was a time of private sector job growth and declining unemployment under Governor Walker's first year in office.** Consider the following points:

- Wisconsin's annual average private sector job total was just under 2.33 million in 2011, 18,800 higher than the total in 2010 and the first positive change in the series since 2007. Again: **The year 2011 as a whole averaged 18,800 more private-sector jobs in Wisconsin than 2010 as a whole.** Twenty-three states had lower annual average growth in private-sector totals over the year. In terms of percentage changes, seven states had lower over-the-year growth than Wisconsin. Taken together, these numbers reaffirm that **Wisconsin did not see the worst private sector job loss in the nation last year.**
- Wisconsin's annual average unemployment rate dropped a full percentage point to 7.5 percent from 8.5 percent in 2010, **ranking us among the 10 states with the most dramatic decline in unemployment rates in 2011.** In fact, Wisconsin's average annual unemployment rate ranking of 20<sup>th</sup> lowest represents a drop from 24<sup>th</sup> in 2010, and is **Wisconsin's lowest ranking among the states and District of Columbia since 2000.** This data series also show the **number of Wisconsinites employed grew by over 11,600 last year, reversing a trend of loss in annual average employment from 2007-10.**

These examples compare two identical 12-month cycles. Annual average totals are commonly used in economic studies that summarize activity over comparable time frames.

Perhaps more importantly, these examples make sense when you consider other indicators of economic improvement in 2011, **including a decline in new Unemployment Insurance claims, an increase in state sales and withholding tax collections, and multiple surveys indicating employers plan to hire in 2012.**

As difficult as this may be for critics of the Walker Administration to admit, Wisconsin's economy is undeniably headed in the right direction. It moved in the right direction in 2011, and it will keep moving in the right direction in 2012.

I'd ask that everyone stay focused on the big picture, which shows much more progress up to this point than some statistics may suggest.