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Wisconsin Unemployment Rate Declines to 4.8% in February

Preliminary rate is lowest since July 2008; state's employment also reaches new record high

MADISON – The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) today released the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) revisions for January and preliminary estimates for February, covering unemployment and employment statistics for the state of Wisconsin. In brief, the estimates show:

- **Place of residence data:** A preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 4.8 percent in February, down from 5.0% in January. The 4.8 percent rate is the state's lowest rate since July 2008 and is lower than the national unemployment rate of 5.5 percent in February. Wisconsin's labor force included 2,969,400 employed workers, an all-time high.
- **Place of work data:** The state added a statistically significant 13,600 private sector jobs from January to February. Other statistically significant changes include a month-over-month job gain in professional and business services. The numbers also show an upward revision in January's month-over-month private sector job gain by 4,200.

"Wisconsin's unemployment rate dropped below 5.0% percent for the first time since 2008 while employment reached an all-time high," DWD Secretary Reggie Newson said. "The state's preliminary addition of 13,600 private sector jobs over the month is the best one-month jump since September 2003 according to the benchmarked series. And, with an upward revision of January's month-over-month gain by 4,200 jobs, the monthly data series suggests we are off to a strong economic start in 2015."

The BLS uses three data sets to measure employment and unemployment:

- **Current Employment Statistics (CES):** compiled from a monthly survey sent to about 5,500 employers (3.5% of Wisconsin employers). CES data has been shown to be volatile and subject to revision.
- **Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS):** compiled from a monthly survey of 985 households and unemployment insurance claims. Measures the labor force, employment, unemployment, and the unemployment rate.
- **Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW):** compiled on a quarterly basis from Unemployment Insurance records from some 96% of Wisconsin business establishments. Considered by most economists to be the most accurate measure of jobs, the QCEW includes data from almost all employers in Wisconsin.

Other indicators that help illustrate the state of Wisconsin's economy include:

- Average Initial Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims for the first 10 weeks of 2015 dropped to the lowest point since 1995, and the annual average weekly continued UI claims are at their lowest levels since 2000.
- [Department of Financial Institutions](#) new business formation: the number of new business entities formed in Wisconsin in the first two months of 2015 grew by 4.2% compared to same period in 2014. As of February 28, 2015, new business filings totaled 7,071, compared to 6,787 in same period in 2014.
- The [Manpower Employment Outlook Survey](#) gives Wisconsin the 3rd best outlook in the US for the next quarter.

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Wisconsin Employment and Unemployment Report
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2015

1. REVISIONS TO ESTIMATES FROM JANUARY 2015

Place of Residence Data	Seasonally Adjusted			Not Seasonally Adjusted		
	Prelim	Revised	Change	Prelim	Revised	Change
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	3,119,900	3,120,800	900	3,090,800	3,093,000	2,200
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE	68.6%	68.6%	0.0%	68.0%	68.0%	0.0%
EMPLOYMENT (1)	2,963,500	2,964,400	900	2,922,400	2,924,600	2,200
UNEMPLOYMENT	156,400	156,400	0	168,400	168,400	0
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%	5.4%	5.4%	0.0%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.7%	5.7%	0.0%	6.1%	6.1%	0.0%
Place of Work Data						
NONFARM WAGE & SALARY	2,872,600	2,877,000	4,400	2,810,600	2,814,900	4,300
TOTAL PRIVATE	2,460,000	2,464,200	4,200	2,403,500	2,407,600	4,100
GOODS PRODUCING	586,600	586,900	300	566,200	566,500	300
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	4,600	4,600	0	3,900	3,900	0
CONSTRUCTION	110,000	110,000	0	93,800	93,800	0
MANUFACTURING	472,000	472,300	300	468,500	468,800	300
Durable Goods	285,000	285,600	600	283,900	284,500	600
Nondurable Goods	187,000	186,700	-300	184,600	184,300	-300
SERVICE PROVIDING	2,286,000	2,290,100	4,100	2,244,400	2,248,400	4,000
PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDING	1,873,400	1,877,300	3,900	1,837,300	1,841,100	3,800
TRADE	423,600	424,000	400	421,000	421,400	400
TRANS., WAREHOUSING, & UTILITIES	102,000	102,100	100	100,800	100,900	100
INFORMATION	49,300	48,800	-500	49,300	48,800	-500
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	153,500	153,600	100	152,700	152,800	100
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	305,700	307,800	2,100	297,500	299,600	2,100
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	432,700	432,400	-300	429,200	428,900	-300
LEISURE & HOSPITALITY	267,000	269,000	2,000	248,600	250,500	1,900
OTHER SERVICES, except Public Admin.	139,600	139,600	0	138,200	138,200	0
GOVERNMENT	412,600	412,800	200	407,100	407,300	200
Federal Government	28,600	28,600	0	28,700	28,700	0
State Government	97,200	97,200	0	93,500	93,500	0
Local Government	286,800	287,000	200	284,900	285,100	200

2. MONTHLY ESTIMATES FOR FEBRUARY 2015

Place of Residence Data	Feb-15 (P)	Jan-15 (R)	Net Change	Feb-15 (P)	Jan-15 (R)	Net Change
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	3,118,600	3,120,800	-2,200	3,088,500	3,093,000	-4,500
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE	68.6%	68.6%	0.0%	67.9%	68.0%	-0.1%
EMPLOYMENT (1)	2,969,400	2,964,400	5,000	2,917,100	2,924,600	-7,500
UNEMPLOYMENT	149,200	156,400	-7,200	171,400	168,400	3,000
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.8%	5.0%	-0.2%	5.5%	5.4%	0.1%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.5%	5.7%	-0.2%	5.8%	6.1%	-0.3%
Place of Work Data						
NONFARM WAGE & SALARY	2,891,900	2,877,000	14,900	2,831,300	2,814,900	16,400
TOTAL PRIVATE	2,477,800	2,464,200	13,600	2,408,100	2,407,600	500
GOODS PRODUCING	585,900	586,900	-1,000	564,800	566,500	-1,700
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	4,600	4,600	0	3,900	3,900	0
CONSTRUCTION	108,700	110,000	-1,300	92,200	93,800	-1,600
MANUFACTURING	472,600	472,300	300	468,700	468,800	-100
Durable Goods	286,400	285,600	800	284,200	284,500	-300
Nondurable Goods	186,200	186,700	-500	184,500	184,300	200
SERVICE PROVIDING	2,306,000	2,290,100	15,900	2,266,500	2,248,400	18,100
PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDING	1,891,900	1,877,300	14,600	1,843,300	1,841,100	2,200
TRADE	428,000	424,000	4,000	415,400	421,400	-6,000
TRANS., WAREHOUSING, & UTILITIES	102,400	102,100	300	100,100	100,900	-800
INFORMATION	49,300	48,800	500	48,700	48,800	-100
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	154,100	153,600	500	152,600	152,800	-200
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	311,200	307,800	3,400	302,400	299,600	2,800
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	434,700	432,400	2,300	434,400	428,900	5,500
LEISURE & HOSPITALITY	272,700	269,000	3,700	251,800	250,500	1,300
OTHER SERVICES, except Public Admin.	139,500	139,600	-100	137,900	138,200	-300
GOVERNMENT	414,100	412,800	1,300	423,200	407,300	15,900
Federal Government	28,700	28,600	100	28,600	28,700	-100
State Government	98,600	97,200	1,400	102,300	93,500	8,800
Local Government	286,800	287,000	-200	292,300	285,100	7,200

*Differences in total may occur as a result of rounding. (1) Includes Labor Market Disputes (P) = Prelim; (R) = Revised Blue changes are outside margin of error.
Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics and Current Employment Statistics programs, Bureau of Workforce Information and Technical Support.

Cautionary note to users: Revised methodological procedures mandated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) force individual state estimates of employment into closer alignment with the national estimate. This change results in larger month-to-month employment change for the states and the information reported by DWD.

3. HISTORY OF REVISIONS OF ESTIMATES FROM PLACE OF WORK SURVEY

	TNF			Private		
	Prelim	Revised	Change	Prelim	Revised	Change
January 2015	+600	+5,000	+4,400	+300	+4,500	+4,200
February 2015						
March 2015						
April 2015						
May 2015						
June 2015						
July 2015						
August 2015						
September 2015						
October 2015						
November 2015						
December 2015						

Note: Prelim = original month-over-month change. Revised = updated month-over-month change. The "Change" column represents the difference between the prelim month-over-month change and the revised month-over-month change.

4. LATEST QUARTERLY DATA: CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

	2013 Employment*			2014 Employment†			Sept-Sept Change	
	July	Aug	Sept	July	Aug	Sept	Number	Percent
TOTAL	2,731,504	2,742,763	2,754,031	2,764,249	2,777,436	2,783,121	29,090	1.1%
<i>Total Private</i>	2,394,480	2,405,425	2,376,933	2,425,646	2,433,650	2,404,422	27,489	1.2%
Natural Resources & Mining	29,480	29,917	30,257	30,151	30,494	31,087	830	2.7%
Construction	108,394	109,643	107,001	112,725	113,560	111,533	4,532	4.2%
Manufacturing	462,751	462,767	456,944	469,682	469,094	463,127	6,183	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities (Total)	514,117	516,003	513,025	518,463	519,122	515,171	2,146	0.4%
Information	47,407	47,637	46,786	47,954	48,316	47,294	508	1.1%
Financial Activities	150,334	150,103	148,128	146,530	146,849	145,351	-2,777	-1.9%
Professional & Business Services	302,575	304,748	303,011	307,312	310,100	308,145	5,134	1.7%
Education & Health Services	399,452	401,956	402,173	403,149	404,665	405,014	2,841	0.7%
Leisure & Hospitality	283,221	285,186	272,381	282,826	283,539	270,342	-2,039	-0.7%
Other Services	86,462	86,234	85,531	85,040	84,773	83,605	-1,926	-2.3%
Unclassified	10,287	11,231	11,696	21,814	23,138	23,753	12,057	103.1%
<i>Total Government</i>	337,024	337,338	377,098	338,603	343,786	378,699	1,601	0.4%

*Data as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

†Data as will be published at worknet.wisconsin.gov

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages counts are published 6 months after the quarter they describe.

Data from the latest published quarter and a year prior are included here.