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BLS Data: State Unemployment Rate Drops to 4.1%, Lowest Since February 2001

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

- **Place of residence data:** A preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 4.1 percent in September 2016, down from August and at its lowest rate since February 2001. The rate remains lower than the national unemployment rate, which increased to 5.0 percent in September 2016. Wisconsin's labor force participation rate also increased to 68.4 percent and continues to outpace the U.S. rate of 62.9 percent in September.
- **Place of work data:** Based on preliminary data, the state added a statistically significant 36,000 total non-farm jobs and 31,500 private sector jobs from September 2015 to September 2016, even with a one-month decline of 10,500 total nonfarm and 8,500 private-sector jobs. Other significant changes include year-over-year increases in Nondurable Goods by +7,500, and Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities by 6,500.

"As the U.S. unemployment rate increased to 5 percent, Wisconsin's unemployment rate dropped to 4.1 percent as more Wisconsinites entered the labor force and found jobs, and fewer were unemployed during the month," DWD Secretary Ray Allen said. "With Wisconsin unemployment at its lowest rate since February 2001, weekly UI claims dropping to their lowest levels in a generation, and an increasing labor force participation rate, a key challenge today is to find and equip even more workers with the skills needed to fill jobs in the modern economy."

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 percent 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 quarterly based on 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 of the state of Wisconsin's economy include:

- Year 2016 initial UI claims are running at their lowest level since 1989.
- Continuing unemployment claims in Wisconsin are running the lowest in at least the past 30 years.
- Wisconsin's labor force participation rate outpaces the national rate by 5.5 percentage points.
- Wisconsin was one of only 10 states with an annual average unemployment rate in 2015 lower than 2007, the year that the Great Recession began.
- Wisconsin had the sixth-highest rate of growth in average weekly private sector wages from December 2014 to December 2015, according to Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages data.

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Wisconsin Employment and Unemployment Report
AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2016

1. REVISIONS TO ESTIMATES FROM AUGUST 2016

Place of Residence Data	Seasonally Adjusted			Not Seasonally Adjusted		
	Prelim	Revised	Change	Prelim	Revised	Change
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	3,127,300	3,127,900	600	3,164,000	3,165,500	1,500
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE	68.3%	68.3%	0.0%	69.1%	69.1%	0.0%
EMPLOYMENT (1)	2,996,200	2,996,700	500	3,037,700	3,039,000	1,300
UNEMPLOYMENT	131,100	131,200	100	126,400	126,500	100
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.2%	4.2%	0.0%	4.0%	4.0%	0.0%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	4.9%	4.9%	0.0%	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Place of Work Data						
NONFARM WAGE & SALARY	2,930,700	2,933,700	3,000	2,955,400	2,958,400	3,000
TOTAL PRIVATE	2,515,500	2,519,000	3,500	2,575,700	2,579,100	3,400
GOODS PRODUCING	586,600	589,900	3,300	607,000	610,300	3,300
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	3,600	3,600	0	4,000	4,000	0
CONSTRUCTION	115,600	115,400	-200	127,700	127,500	-200
MANUFACTURING	467,400	470,900	3,500	475,300	478,800	3,500
Durable Goods	279,800	281,000	1,200	283,500	284,700	1,200
Nondurable Goods	187,600	189,900	2,300	191,800	194,100	2,300
SERVICE PROVIDING	2,344,100	2,343,800	-300	2,348,400	2,348,100	-300
PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDING	1,928,900	1,929,100	200	1,968,700	1,968,800	100
TRADE	431,100	430,700	-400	435,700	435,300	-400
TRANS., WAREHOUSING, & UTILITIES	113,800	113,800	0	114,000	114,000	0
INFORMATION	49,200	48,700	-500	49,700	49,200	-500
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	155,000	155,200	200	156,400	156,600	200
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	318,000	318,600	600	325,600	326,200	600
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	438,800	439,100	300	435,400	435,700	300
LEISURE & HOSPITALITY	272,600	272,200	-400	300,700	300,200	-500
OTHER SERVICES, except Public Admin.	150,400	150,800	400	151,200	151,600	400
GOVERNMENT	415,200	414,700	-500	379,700	379,300	-400
Federal Government	29,000	29,000	0	29,000	29,000	0
State Government	92,500	92,500	0	81,400	81,400	0
Local Government	293,700	293,200	-500	269,300	268,900	-400

2. MONTHLY ESTIMATES FOR SEPTEMBER 2016

Place of Residence Data	Sep-16 (P)	Aug-16 (R)	Net Change	Sep-16 (P)	Aug-16 (R)	Net Change
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	3,132,300	3,127,900	4,400	3,135,900	3,165,500	-29,600
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE	68.4%	68.3%	0.1%	68.5%	69.1%	-0.6%
EMPLOYMENT (1)	3,002,400	2,996,700	5,700	3,026,600	3,039,000	-12,400
UNEMPLOYMENT	129,900	131,200	-1,300	109,300	126,500	-17,200
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.1%	4.2%	-0.1%	3.5%	4.0%	-0.5%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.0%	4.9%	0.1%	4.8%	5.0%	-0.2%
Place of Work Data						
NONFARM WAGE & SALARY	2,923,200	2,933,700	-10,500	2,947,700	2,958,400	-10,700
TOTAL PRIVATE	2,510,500	2,519,000	-8,500	2,536,300	2,579,100	-42,800
GOODS PRODUCING	589,600	589,900	-300	599,100	610,300	-11,200
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	3,800	3,600	200	4,000	4,000	0
CONSTRUCTION	115,000	115,400	-400	123,400	127,500	-4,100
MANUFACTURING	470,800	470,900	-100	471,700	478,800	-7,100
Durable Goods	280,700	281,000	-300	281,100	284,700	-3,600
Nondurable Goods	190,100	189,900	200	190,600	194,100	-3,500
SERVICE PROVIDING	2,333,600	2,343,800	-10,200	2,348,600	2,348,100	500
PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDING	1,920,900	1,929,100	-8,200	1,937,200	1,968,800	-31,600
TRADE	431,600	430,700	900	430,800	435,300	-4,500
TRANS., WAREHOUSING, & UTILITIES	112,800	113,800	-1,000	114,300	114,000	300
INFORMATION	48,300	48,700	-400	48,700	49,200	-500
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	154,100	155,200	-1,100	154,200	156,600	-2,400
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	317,000	318,600	-1,600	321,800	326,200	-4,400
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	439,500	439,100	400	439,400	435,700	3,700
LEISURE & HOSPITALITY	268,200	272,200	-4,000	278,100	300,200	-22,100
OTHER SERVICES, except Public Admin.	149,400	150,800	-1,400	149,900	151,600	-1,700
GOVERNMENT	412,700	414,700	-2,000	411,400	379,300	32,100
Federal Government	29,200	29,000	200	29,100	29,000	100
State Government	93,300	92,500	800	99,400	81,400	18,000
Local Government	290,200	293,200	-3,000	282,900	268,900	14,000

*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

Month-Over-Month Changes	TNF			Private		
	Prelim	Revised	Change	Prelim	Revised	Change
January 2016	(200)	+7,200	+7,400	(1,400)	+5,800	+7,200
February 2016	+7,200	+11,600	+4,400	+8,000	+10,500	+2,500
March 2016	+11,500	+13,300	+1,800	+13,100	+14,700	+1,600
April 2016	(12,600)	(10,400)	+2,200	(11,500)	(11,500)	+0
May 2016	+5,500	+1,300	(4,200)	+9,700	+3,400	(6,300)
June 2016	+5,300	(1,100)	(6,400)	+10,900	+5,600	(5,300)
July 2016	+9,100	+7,600	(1,500)	+5,000	+2,000	(3,000)
August 2016	(2,900)	+100	+3,000	(6,200)	(2,700)	+3,500
September 2016						
October 2016						
November 2016						
December 2016						

Revised = originally revised month-over-month change. Benchmark: New benchmark values. The "Change" column represents the difference between the revised and benchmarked numbers.

4. LATEST QUARTERLY DATA: CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

	2015 Employment			2016 Employment			Mar-Mar Change	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Jan	Feb	Mar	Number	Percent
TOTAL	2,714,370	2,720,066	2,734,604	2,754,753	2,762,278	2,771,350	36,746	1.3%
<i>Total Private</i>	2,336,629	2,334,013	2,349,445	2,375,969	2,376,584	2,386,611	37,166	1.6%
Natural Resources & Mining	26,400	26,437	27,375	27,267	27,412	28,087	712	2.6%
Construction	93,722	92,475	94,875	97,858	97,671	100,673	5,798	6.1%
Manufacturing	460,051	459,454	460,281	460,736	458,819	459,772	-509	-0.1%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	513,214	507,933	511,113	526,618	523,095	524,756	13,643	2.7%
Information	48,090	47,760	47,477	49,035	48,906	48,723	1,246	2.6%
Financial Activities	144,517	144,318	144,613	145,760	145,503	145,689	1,076	0.7%
Professional & Business Services	300,445	301,151	301,542	313,077	314,136	313,206	11,664	3.9%
Education & Health Services	405,861	408,238	410,174	415,636	418,681	419,716	9,542	2.3%
Leisure & Hospitality	245,577	246,797	251,307	254,412	256,438	258,848	7,541	3.0%
Other Services	81,857	81,694	82,615	81,538	81,604	82,729	114	0.1%
Unclassified	16,895	17,756	18,073	4,032	4,319	4,412	-13,661	-75.6%
<i>Total Government</i>	377,741	386,053	385,159	378,784	385,694	384,739	-420	-0.1%

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

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.