

NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
STATE OF MONTANA

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Montana Unemployment Rate Stable At 5.2 Percent in December

HELENA -- Montana's unemployment rate has held steady at 5.2 percent for the past three months, ending the year a half of a percentage point lower than at the start of the year. The national unemployment rate continued to fall in December, moving down 0.3 percentage points to 6.7 percent.

"More Montanans have jobs, and Montana's economy continues to grow," Governor Steve Bullock said. "We are starting the new year with expectations of even stronger job growth in the upcoming year."

"Montana starts the new year in a position of strength, with a low unemployment rate and steady job growth" said Labor Commissioner Pam Bucy. "We must continue to retrain workers to meet the demands of businesses and work to get more Montanans into high-wage jobs."

Total employment, which includes payroll employment plus agricultural and self-employed workers, added 1,394 jobs in December with the strongest job growth since May. Payroll employment estimates suggest flat employment growth over the month, with small job losses in health care outweighed by job gains in professional services. Preliminary data suggests job growth in 2013 was slower than in 2012, although the final estimates published in February will provide a more complete picture. Preliminary estimates suggest private job growth remained strong, but job losses in the government sector slowed total job growth.

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.3 percent in December, led by price increases in gasoline, fuel oils, and electricity. Core inflation, measured by the all items less food and energy index, rose by 0.1 percent, tracking relatively low inflation levels.

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*** Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau at 1-800-541-3904.*

The next Labor Situation Report will be released on Monday, March 17, 2014, skipping the month of February. Every February, the Montana Department of Labor and Industry and the Bureau of Labor Statistics re-estimate the data from the prior year in order to increase accuracy and reduce error margins. This process delays the release of the January labor market information.

***** INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *****



Visit our website at www.lmi.mt.gov for additional information and analysis, including industry employment levels, background on the unemployment rate, and annual employment data for Montana's Indian Reservations. **This month's Economy at a Glance article examines the professional licensure data collected by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.** County unemployment rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted and should be compared to the unadjusted statewide unemployment rate of **5.4** percent. County labor force information can be found by using this

link: <http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/databrowsing/?PAGEID=4&SUBID=205>.

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