

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

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NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
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Montana's Unemployment Rate at 4.7 percent

HELENA – Montana's unemployment rate was at 4.7 percent in August, a slight increase of one-tenth of one percent from July. The unemployment rate has decreased by 0.6 percentage points since January—during that time, Montana has created more than 12,000 jobs. The unemployment rate has been between 4.5 percent to 4.7 percent since May. In August, the U.S. unemployment rate decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 6.1 percent.

"Job growth in the first half of 2014 was at a record-breaking pace, with more than 12,000 jobs added since the start of the year. Montana's economy appears to be returning to a steadier, more moderate pace," Governor Steve Bullock said. "We continue to look forward to a positive year for economic growth."

"The retail trade and transportation industries reduced employment in August, slowing job creation for the month. However, Montana's employment situation remains positive, and unemployment remains at normal levels," said Labor Commissioner Pam Bucy. "We continue to work with employers to ensure the workforce has the skills needed to fill openings, and that both businesses and workers find successful job matches."

Payroll employment estimates suggest Montana added 500 jobs over the month. Job gains occurred in professional and business services, while retail trade and transportation lost employment on a seasonal basis. Health care also posted small job loss, but the losses did not erase the larger job gains posted last month. Total employment, which includes payroll employment plus agricultural and self-employed workers, declined by 1,008 jobs in August, but still posted strong over-the-year job growth of roughly 11,100 jobs (2.3 percent). The labor force decreased slightly by 578 workers, erasing the gains from last month but remaining 6,000 higher than last year. This month's estimates suggest a slowing of job growth from the record-breaking pace posted earlier this year, but final estimates will

likely reveal smoother and more consistent growth across all months. Montana has added over 12,000 jobs since the beginning of the year.

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.1 percent in July, but then decreased by 0.2 percent in August, leaving prices lower over the two month period. Gasoline price declines were the primary cause for deflation in August. The CPI-U increased 1.7 percent over the year. The August CPI-U figures have particular importance in Montana, as they are used to adjust the state minimum wage for the upcoming year. The new minimum wage will be posted by the Department next month, consistent with Montana's minimum wage law. The index for all items less food and energy, referred to as core inflation, increased slightly in July and was unchanged in August, with a 1.7 percent increase over the year ending in August.

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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 Tuesday, October 21, 2014.

******* 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 summarizes the 2014 Labor Day Report.** County unemployment rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted and should be compared to the unadjusted statewide unemployment rate of **4.2**

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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