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Iowa Unemployment Rate Remains at 6.7 Percent

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained stable at 6.7 percent in September. The August unemployment rate, which was originally released at 6.8 percent, was revised downward to 6.7 percent, and the year ago statewide jobless rate was reported at 4.2 percent. By comparison, the U.S. unemployment rate edged up to 9.8 percent in September from 9.7 percent in August.

“A growing problem for the state is persistent long-term joblessness,” said Elisabeth Buck, director of Iowa Workforce Development. “Due to fairly consistent monthly job losses this year, people are staying out of work longer with no job prospects in sight.”

The number of workers estimated as unemployed was unchanged at 113,100 in September. One year ago, the count stood at 71,000.

The total number of working Iowans showed a tentative sign of improvement in September, as the level increased slightly to 1,579,700 from 1,572,500 in August. However, total employment was 26,800 lower than the year ago figure of 1,606,500.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Iowa’s total nonfarm employment declined by 1,200 in September, falling to a level of 1,478,300. Though the job market worsened, the pace of deterioration remained markedly slower than during the early months of the year. Compared to the same month one year ago, Iowa has lost 3.0 percent of its total nonfarm employment.

Manufacturing departed from this year’s downward spiral by adding 2,400 jobs in September. Gains of 1,600 and 800 were distributed in durable and nondurable goods, respectively. Education and health services continued to create jobs, posting a gain of 1,600 for the month. Meanwhile, leisure and hospitality advanced by 1,000 as restaurants and recreational facilities retained summer employment levels longer than usual. Trade and transportation, by contrast, eliminated 4,500 jobs in September with retail trade accounting for 3,000 of the loss. The drop reflected the lingering apprehension among consumers to spend. Government employment decreased by 1,200; mostly due to reductions in local government.

Compared to last year, Iowa’s total nonfarm employment has lost 45,100 jobs. However, the current number has improved since the July low, when nonfarm employment was 49,100 below the year ago estimate. Manufacturing reflected the largest drop since last year, down 23,100. Professional and business services and construction followed with over-the-year losses of 9,700 and 8,600, respectively. Education and health services posted the only substantial gain for the year at 3,100.

MEDIA ALERT: An audio cut of comments about Iowa’s labor market situation is available by calling (515) 281-6057. Local data for September is also available today, and can be accessed from the Web. Statewide labor force data for October will be released on November 20, 2009, followed by local labor force data on November 24, 2009.

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

			Change from		
	Sept 2009	Aug 2009	Sept 2008	Aug 2009	Sept 2008
Civilian labor force	1,692,800	1,685,700	1,677,500	7,100	15,300
Unemployment	113,100	113,100	71,000	0	42,100
Unemployment rate	6.7%	6.7%	4.2%	0.0	2.5
Employment	1,579,700	1,572,500	1,606,500	7,200	-26,800
U.S. unemployment rate	9.8%	9.7%	6.2%	0.1	3.6

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,478,300	1,479,500	1,523,400	-1,200	-45,100
Mining	2,100	2,100	2,200	0	-100
Construction	65,300	65,300	73,900	0	-8,600
Manufacturing	203,500	201,100	226,600	2,400	-23,100
Trade, transportation and utilities	306,300	310,800	309,400	-4,500	-3,100
Information	32,600	32,700	33,200	-100	-600
Financial activities	102,700	103,300	102,600	-600	100
Professional and business services	112,600	112,500	122,300	100	-9,700
Education and health services	210,300	208,700	207,200	1,600	3,100
Leisure and hospitality	134,200	133,200	134,900	1,000	-700
Other services	55,700	55,600	57,700	100	-2,000
Government	253,000	254,200	253,400	-1,200	-400

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

			% Change from		
	Sept 2009	Aug 2009	Sept 2008	Aug 2009	Sept 2008
Initial claims	25,752	24,662	17,440	4.4%	47.7%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	56,778	61,571	27,443	-7.8%	106.9%
Weeks paid	202,921	191,989	83,539	5.7%	142.9%
Amount paid	\$59,087,105	\$55,512,935	\$23,626,431	6.4%	150.1%

Visit www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/laborforce/locallaborforce.html for county unemployment rates, www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/laborforce/index.html for current and historical labor force data and www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/empstat/msanonag.htm for detailed information on nonfarm employment.

Visit www.iowaworkforce.org/trends/wages.html for information on hours and earnings and www.iowaworkforce.org/trends/uiclaimscomo.html to obtain a breakout of jobless benefits by county.

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