



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

**News Release**

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**HAWAII'S SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT  
5.5 PERCENT IN DECEMBER**

**National Unemployment Rate at 7.2 percent**

**HONOLULU** – The Hawai'i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations announced today that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December was 5.5 percent, a 0.5 percentage point increase over November's revised rate of 5.0 percent. In comparison, the U.S. seasonally adjusted unemployment rate went from a revised 6.8 percent in November to 7.2 percent in December. The seasonally adjusted December labor force totaled 661,750, and was comprised of 625,300 employed and 36,450 unemployed.

| State of Hawaii Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Data |                 |                 |                 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  | <u>Dec 2008</u> | <u>Nov 2008</u> | <u>Dec 2007</u> |
| Labor Force  | 661,750         | 660,750         | 648,500         |
| Employment   | 625,300         | 627,750         | 628,550         |
| Unemployment   | 36,450          | 32,950          | 19,900          |

|               | DEC<br>2008 | NOV<br>2008 | DEC<br>2007 |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| STATE         | 5.5         | 5.0         | 3.1         |
| HONOLULU      | 4.2         | 4.4         | 2.5         |
| HAWAII COUNTY | 7.1         | 7.1         | 3.5         |
| KAUAI         | 7.7         | 6.7         | 3.1         |
| MAUI COUNTY   | 6.7         | 6.1         | 3.4         |
| Maui Island   | 6.5         | 5.9         | 3.3         |
| Molokai       | 11.6        | 13.1        | 6.5         |
| Lanai         | 6.2         | 4.6         | 3.1         |
| U. S.         | 7.2         | 6.8         | 4.9         |

county & island rates are non-seasonally adjusted

### **Industry Payroll Employment**

In another measure of employment, total seasonally adjusted nonagricultural jobs decreased by 7,700 from 620,300 to 612,600 in December. Leisure and Hospitality reported a slight gain in jobs (+100) while Other Services remained stable. Job losses were experienced in Educational and Health Services (-100), Construction (-900) and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-1,100). Government composed the largest decline in jobs primarily due to the release of poll workers temporarily hired in the general election. Over-the-year, from December 2007, the seasonally adjusted job count declined by 13,400 jobs, predominantly in the private sector. For the year 2008, the annual average total nonagricultural jobs was 623,900. In comparison, the annual average in 2007 comprised 623,700, a net gain of 200 jobs over-the-year.

“The current economic challenges require all of us to pull together to find ways to stimulate our economy and preserve and create jobs,” said Darwin L. D. Ching, Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. “The state Administration is working collaboratively with the Legislature, counties, the private sector and unions to implement the Governor’s proactive Five-Point Economic Plan, which includes an aggressive effort to boost the construction industry through a \$1.8 billion capital improvement plan”, he added. “At the same time, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations is continuing to assist displaced workers.”

| <b>Seasonally Adjusted Non-Ag. Jobs (State)</b> |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| SELECTED SERIES:                                | <b>Dec-08</b>  | <b>Nov-08</b>  | <b>Dec-07*</b> |
| NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING<br>AND CONSTRUCTION   | 36,600         | 37,500         | 40,000         |
| TRADE, TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES               | 115,700        | 116,800        | 121,100        |
| Wholesale Trade                                 | 18,400         | 18,500         | 18,600         |
| Retail Trade                                    | 69,200         | 69,600         | 69,900         |
| EDUCATIONAL AND<br>HEALTH SERVICES              | 74,200         | 74,300         | 72,900         |
| Educational<br>Services                         | 14,500         | 14,700         | 14,000         |
| Health Care and<br>Social Assistance            | 59,700         | 59,600         | 58,900         |
| LEISURE & HOSPITALITY                           | 104,800        | 104,700        | 109,400        |
| Arts, Entertainment & Recreation                | 10,800         | 10,900         | 12,000         |
| Accommodation & Food Services                   | 94,000         | 93,800         | 97,400         |
| OTHER SERVICES                                  | 27,400         | 27,400         | 26,800         |
| GOVERNMENT                                      | 125,600        | 130,500        | 122,900        |
| Federal Government                              | 32,600         | 32,600         | 31,500         |
| State Government                                | 74,400         | 79,200         | 73,300         |
| Local Government                                | 18,600         | 18,700         | 18,100         |
| <b>TOTAL: STATE</b>                             | <b>612,600</b> | <b>620,300</b> | <b>626,000</b> |

❖ **Leisure and Hospitality (+100)**

Leisure and Hospitality experienced a slight gain in jobs from November after recording three consecutive months of job losses. Accommodation and Food Services increased by 200 mainly in Accommodation. The re-opening of the newly renovated hotel on the Big Island contributed to the growth even with reported declines in visitor arrivals and hotel occupancy rates. Arts, Entertainment and Recreation trimmed a minimal 100 jobs mostly in museums, historical sites, and similar institutions. Meanwhile, a newly renovated hotel in Waikiki, which recently celebrated a 'soft opening' will rehire staff to operate the historic hotel.

❖ **Other Services (No Change)**

This miscellaneous industry remained virtually unchanged. The uptrend in business, professional, labor, political and similar organizations was offset by the downtrend in grant-making and giving services.

❖ **Educational and Health Services (-100)**

This major industrial group dropped modestly over-the-month. Health Care and Social Assistance rose by 100 jobs. The increase was shared among the staffing in physicians' offices and outpatient care centers within the Health Care series. Education Services registered 200 fewer jobs in private schools.

❖ **Construction (-900)**

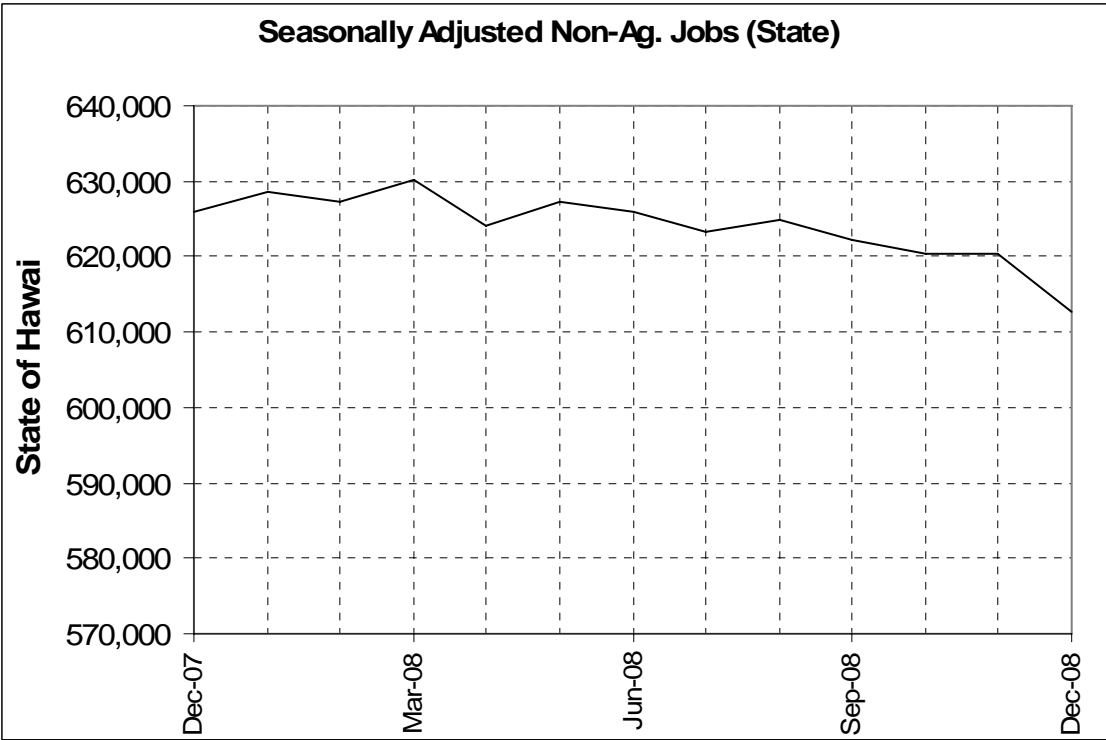
Construction experienced a loss of 900 jobs in December as this industry continues its contraction. The decline was registered in construction of buildings in residential building as well as in special trade contractors in building finishing contractors and site preparation contractors. The reduction in this sector was in part due to completion of existing projects and fewer new contract activities.

❖ **Trade, Transportation, & Utilities (-1,100)**

This major industrial group descended by the largest margin within the private sector. Wholesale Trade fell by a modest 100 jobs in electrical and electronic goods merchant wholesalers. Retail Trade dipped by 400 jobs across various series including gasoline stations with convenience stores; automotive parts, accessories and tire stores; and office supplies and stationery and gift stores. The remaining 600 jobs lost were mainly in Transportation, which reported decreases in transmit and ground passenger transportation and scenic and sightseeing transportation, water; and general freight trucking.

❖ **Government (-4,900)**

Government posted the largest job loss in December. Federal Government remained stable for the third consecutive month. Local Government slid by a slight 100 jobs after remaining unchanged for three months in a row. State Government contracted by the greatest proportion primarily due to the release of poll workers and election officials temporarily hired during the general election.



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