

# The Vermont Labor Market

Departments of Employment & Training / Labor & Industry

Vermont Department of

## Employment & Training

March 2004

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### Commissioner's Message

#### Youth Leadership

Vermont's Youth Leadership project has been underway since November of 2002. Headed by the Vermont Children's Forum (VCF) and overseen by the Department of Employment & Training, the project was designed to empower Vermont teens through the development of leadership skills. Originally a one-year grant, VCF has been able to extend it for another six months; the current grant will end in June of this year, however sustainability has been built in and the project itself will continue.

For the purposes of this grant, the term 'leadership' has unique connotations. Many think youth leadership means only placing youth in key leader roles, or preparing them for those

*(Continued on page 2)*

### The Edge

#### New E-Recruitment Service

On March 15, 2004 DET launched a free, interactive Web application to provide job matching and workplace information service for employers and job seekers.

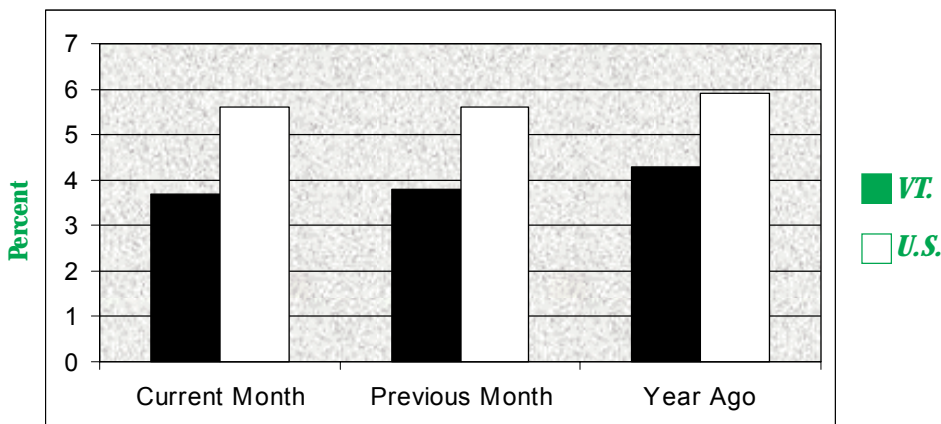
Employers can use [www.vermontjoblink.com](http://www.vermontjoblink.com) to establish self-service Internet accounts to manage their own job listings, search job seeker resumes to find and recruit qualified workers, and to access important labor market information, including the wage rate for their jobs.

Getting started is easy. Click on the Create Account link, scroll down the resulting page and click on the Employer link,

*(Continued on page 3)*

#### Unemployment Rates Vermont and U.S.

February (SA) 2004 Rates  
VT 3.7% • U.S. 5.6%



## Commissioner's Message –

(continued from front page)

roles. The definition of 'youth leadership' for this grant is broadened to mean assisting the youth to be a 'leader' in the achievement of his/her personal dreams, goals and self as well as other youths.

There are many developmental assets, skills and characteristics a leader possesses and they tend to fall into two categories: Internal skills and External assets. Internal skills include commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and a sense of positive identity. External assets are positive support and communication from family and others, a feeling of being valued and respected by the community, an awareness of the boundaries and rules of a community and constructive use of personal time.

The Vermont Children's Forum brought together a group of adults and young people to write a curriculum called *Our Voices: Our Community*. The curriculum takes from 25-30 hours and includes retreat time. There are modules on communication, decision making, conflict resolution and team building. The curriculum *Our Voices: Our Community*

appeals to a broad range of learning styles and life experiences. It is also experiential and incorporates many of the premises of activity-based learning. Designed by a team of youth and adult partners, the intent is to model the effectiveness of those partnerships in a rich learning environment and to offer that example to other groups interested in youth development. Currently 485 students are involved in the curriculum and 160 youth and adult facilitators have been trained to deliver it.

Although the modules are the same, the program is flexible and thus is different in each community or school where it exists. In South Burlington, the entire ninth grade class is participating through their teacher advisor times. Tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders facilitate the groups and then follow up with the teachers. Ultimately, the younger students learn leadership skills while the older students build their facilitation skills and experience working as a team with adults.

Each site must design and implement a final project as part of the curriculum. Students in Peacham leave after sixth grade to attend a variety of middle schools. Leadership students decided they wanted to continue their sense of community by holding monthly meetings after their departure to middle school. They call their project KINC - which stands for kids included, and they presented it at town meeting.

Cabot had a summer program at which high school students and adult advisors worked with middle school students on puppetry. The middle school students then took their puppet show on the road to various elementary schools. The subject of the show is the effect using tobacco has on humans - kids especially.

The Department of Employment & Training is committed to serving youth in various ways. The Youth Leadership Curriculum will continue in various settings and communities across the state as they build their own programs utilizing this model.

*Annex. Hinevan*

Welcome to  
**VermontJobLink**  
 from the Vermont Department of Employment & Training

**[www.vermontjoblink.com](http://www.vermontjoblink.com)**

and then complete the New Account Creation for Employer application. You will be asked to create your own unique User Name and Password and to submit some additional information about your company.

After completing this form, you may enter job listings into the Vermont JobLink system. However, your account must be validated by our staff before your job listings will be made available to job seekers. This validation is usually accomplished within 24 hours. If you enter an email address, we will notify you the moment your account has been approved.

Once your account is validated, you will be able to log into Vermont JobLink to conduct searches of active job seeker resumes by geographic location, occupational classification, keywords, and a number of other search parameters.

When listing job openings, employers have three options for choosing how much of their company/business information they wish to display on the Internet.

- All Information - All company information will be displayed including contact information.
- Search Only/Never Display A "search only" job order is not viewable by job seekers, but allows you to search and view job seeker resumes and job seeker skills comparisons.
- Blind Ad - No Company Identification. This disclosure option hides all company contact information from job seekers except your e-mail address.

If you check the E-Mail Resume Matches box on your active job order page, the system will send you an e-mail each night with all new resumes entered into Vermont JobLink that match the

occupational classification of your job opening. Your active job orders are not only available to job seekers using Vermont JobLink, but are also available to our professional staff for use in matching and referring qualified job seekers to you.

When entering a new job order, the system populates the form with the business information you entered when you first created your employer account. Then, you must select an occupational classification that best describes your job opening. This is an important step as the occupational classification is used as the basis for conducting all automatic matching/e-mail notification activities. You may also use text boxes to describe job duties and specific job requirements of your job openings.

***We hope to see you soon at [www.vermontjoblink.com](http://www.vermontjoblink.com).***

# Economic Spotcheck

## Local Unemployment Rates (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Town/City*	Feb. '04	Jan. '04	Feb. '03
Barre City	10.7	11.5	13.2
Barre Town	3.8	4.4	4.9
Bennington Town	5.7	5.5	7.8
Brattleboro Town	3.8	3.7	4.0
Burlington City	3.2	3.5	4.0
Colchester Town	3.3	3.4	3.5
Essex Town	3.1	3.4	3.6
Hartford Town	2.1	2.1	2.3
Middlebury Town	3.1	3.1	3.6
Milton Town	6.0	6.3	6.2
Montpelier City	2.3	2.5	2.9
Rutland City	3.0	2.8	3.5
Shelburne Town	1.5	1.2	2.2
So. Burlington City	2.5	2.8	3.0
Springfield Town	5.2	5.5	9.2
Williston Town	1.1	1.3	1.5

\*16 Largest Towns in Vermont

### U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX Base Period (1982 - 1984 = 100)

	Feb. 2004	Jan. 2004	Feb. 2003
All Items Index	186.2	185.2	183.1
Annual Percent Change	1.7	1.9	3.0

**BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE CPI - The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time of a fixed market basket of goods and services. It is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, fuels, transportation fares, and other items that people buy for day to day living. The CPI shown above represents the U.S. city average for all urban consumers and is not seasonally adjusted.**

**There is no separate Consumer Price Index for Vermont or any area within the state.**

## Employment Trends

Total seasonally adjusted February employment increased, expanding by 800 from the previous month with 340,700 working Vermonters. This estimate includes all Vermont residents who worked, whether at wage and salary jobs, or as self-employed.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the estimated number of nonfarm jobs fell by 0.3 % to 299,200 for a loss of 900 jobs, offsetting the gain in January. Government was the largest contributor to the drop, losing 300 jobs between January and February. The educational component was the largest factor as it related to the loss. Several institutions made their final post holiday employment adjustments. Health Care also took a slight downturn, its first in a year. Leisure & Hospitality displayed a loss as well. Varying weather conditions could have played a role at skiing and riding areas, which are a large part of this industry.

The more detailed unadjusted estimates inched up slightly, adding almost 1,200 jobs in February. Seasonal increases in both Government and Private Education were the two largest contributors to the overall increase. Combined, they added 2,000 jobs in February. Professional & Business Services presented a slight gain, partially due to some employment having been reclassified from Finance & Insurance. Construction lost 500 jobs as weather and other typical seasonal factors took hold. Though less than its typical seasonal loss, Retail lost 400 jobs. Hotels & Motels were down slightly, most likely due to seasonal and weather related factors.

These preliminary February estimates reflect an annual increase of 0.6%. The

annual change in private industry was not considered statistically significant. Leading the way in terms of growth was Health Care & Social Assistance, which contributed almost 2,100 jobs. A majority of the increase came from Social Assistance, due in part to private household workers transitioning to covered employment. Construction added 1,100 jobs. Historically low interest rates could have played a role in its annual growth. Manufacturing was the leader in terms of losses over the year, dropping 1,400 jobs. Though losses were found in Durable and Non-Durable Goods, Durable Goods was by far the greatest contributor, more specifically, Computer & Electrical Equipment Manufacturing.

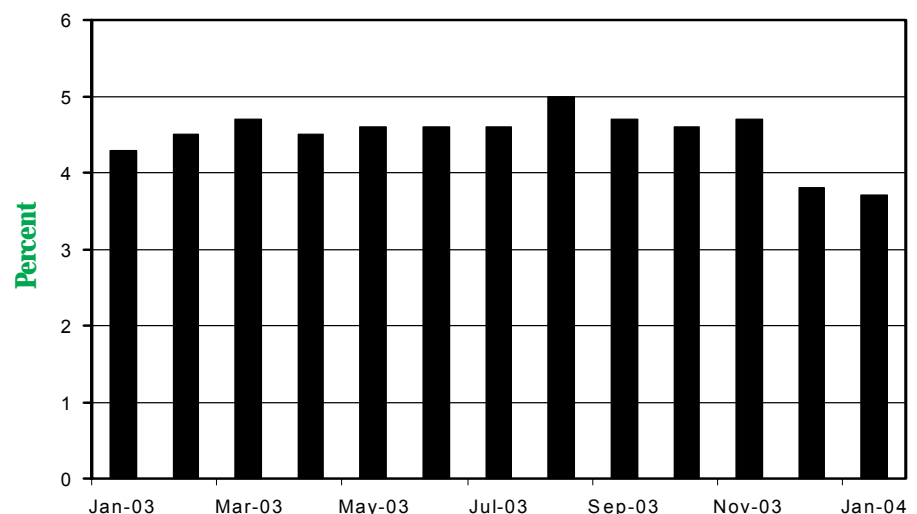
## Unemployment Trends

Vermont's seasonally adjusted February unemployment rate of 3.7% was down just 0.1%, from the January rate, which remained unchanged at the revision. An estimated 13,000 Vermonters were unemployed in February.

The comparable national unemployment rate was once again 5.6%, unchanged from the previous month. Vermont continues to be well under the national rate.

The number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance filed in February decreased slightly from the previous month. The largest drop in initials was in Construction, followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade. The granite industry seems to have partially recovered from its temporary seasonal lay-offs; claims were well down from the January number.

## Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



# Labor Force Estimates *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

Vermont	Feb. '04	Jan. '04	Feb. '03	Changes from:	
				Jan. '04	Feb. '03
<b>TOTAL LABOR FORCE<sup>1</sup></b>	353,800	353,400	350,300	400	3,500
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYMENT</b>	340,700	339,900	335,200	800	5,500
<b>TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT</b>	13,000	13,500	15,100	-500	-2,100
<b>RATE</b>	3.7	3.8	4.3	-0.1	-0.6

<sup>1</sup>Includes proprietors, professionals, and unpaid family workers.  
VCM Regression Methodology

## Labor Market Areas *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

	Feb. 2004	Jan. 2004	Feb. 2003		Feb. 2004	Jan. 2005	Feb. 2003
<b>BARRE-MONTPELIER</b>				<b>MORRISTOWN-STOWE</b>			
Labor Force	41,550	41,200	40,500	Labor Force	20,350	20,300	20,500
Unemployment	2,250	2,400	2,700	Unemployment	1,200	1,250	1,450
Rate	5.4	5.8	6.7	Rate	6.0	6.1	7.0
Employment	39,300	38,800	37,750	Employment	19,150	19,050	19,050
<b>BENNINGTON-MANCHESTER</b>				<b>NEWPORT</b>			
Labor Force	21,550	21,750	21,450	Labor Force	13,350	13,400	14,100
Unemployment	1,000	1,000	1,250	Unemployment	1,200	1,200	1,550
Rate	4.7	4.6	5.8	Rate	8.9	9.0	11.2
Employment	20,550	20,750	20,200	Employment	12,150	12,200	12,500
<b>BURLINGTON</b>				<b>RANDOLPH</b>			
Labor Force	108,200	106,700	105,350	Labor Force	6,350	6,400	6,350
Unemployment	3,800	3,900	4,300	Unemployment	400	450	400
Rate	3.5	3.6	4.1	Rate	6.7	6.7	6.3
Employment	104,400	102,850	101,050	Employment	5,950	5,950	5,950
<b>ENOSBURG</b>				<b>RUTLAND</b>			
Labor Force	10,250	10,300	10,950	Labor Force	31,450	31,200	31,500
Unemployment	900	850	1,000	Unemployment	1,600	1,600	1,800
Rate	8.7	8.5	9.3	Rate	5.0	5.1	5.6
Employment	9,350	9,400	9,900	Employment	29,850	29,600	29,700
<b>HARTFORD-LEBANON,VT-NH LMA (VT PORTION ONLY)</b>				<b>ST. JOHNSBURY</b>			
Labor Force	29,050	29,200	28,500	Labor Force	15,200	15,150	15,300
Unemployment	850	850	900	Unemployment	1,050	1,100	1,200
Rate	2.9	2.9	3.2	Rate	6.8	7.1	7.8
Employment	28,250	28,350	27,600	Employment	14,150	14,100	14,100
<b>KEENE-BRATTLEBORO,NH-VT LMA (ENTIRE AREA)</b>				<b>SPRINGFIELD</b>			
Labor Force	N/A	59,700	N/A	Labor Force	10,550	10,600	10,600
Unemployment	N/A	2,050	N/A	Unemployment	550	500	700
Rate	N/A	3.5	N/A	Rate	5.0	4.9	6.8
Employment	N/A	57,650	N/A	Employment	10,050	10,100	9,900
<b>MIDDLEBURY</b>				<b>STATEWIDE</b>			
Labor Force	20,300	20,350	20,950	Labor Force	352,800	351,000	349,950
Unemployment	950	1,000	1,100	Unemployment	16,550	16,900	19,200
Rate	4.8	4.8	5.3	Rate	4.7	4.8	5.5
Employment	19,350	19,400	19,850	Employment	336,250	334,150	330,750

Monthly estimates are preliminary and subject to revision.

Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

## Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment in Thousands

BY NAICS	<i>Prelim.</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>Changes From:</i>	
	<i>Feb. '04</i>	<i>Jan. '04</i>	<i>Feb. '03</i>	<i>Jan. '04</i>	<i>Feb. '03</i>
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>299.2</b>	<b>300.1</b>	<b>298.1</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Private Industries</b>	<b>247.7</b>	<b>248.3</b>	<b>246.3</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Construction	15.8	15.7	14.7	0.1	1.1
Manufacturing	36.8	36.8	38.3	0.0	-1.5
Retail Trade *	38.9	38.8	39.7	0.1	-0.8
Professional & Business Services	20.4	20.2	20.2	0.2	0.2
Private Ed. Services*	12.7	12.6	12.3	0.1	0.4
Health Care & Social Assistance*	40.7	40.9	38.9	-0.2	1.8
Leisure & Hospitality*	32.6	32.8	32.9	-0.2	-0.3
<b>Total Government</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>-0.3</b>

\*These estimates are not endorsed by the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Note: Total - All Industries estimate is seasonally adjusted independently.

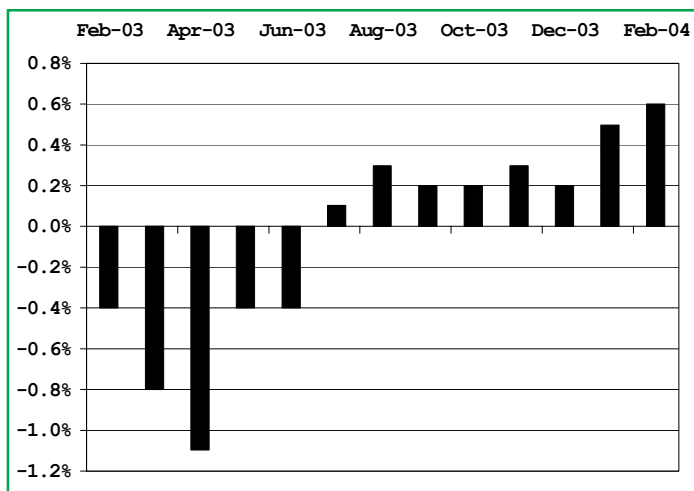
All seasonal adjustment performed with X12-ARIMA. Seasonal factors available from DET/LMI on request.

Produced by the Vermont Department of Employment and Training in cooperation with the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless otherwise noted.

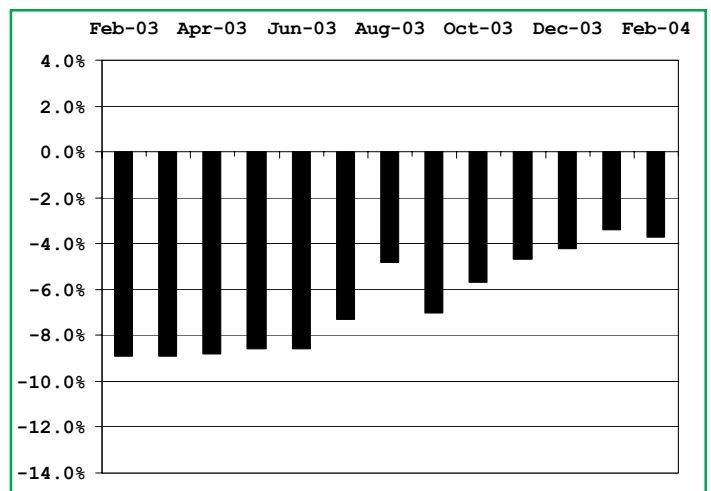
## Vermont Annual Job Growth

### Not Seasonally Adjusted Data

#### All Industries



#### Manufacturing



## Nonfarm Employment In Vermont (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Compiled by the Department of Employment and Training in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

INDUSTRY BY NAICS	<i>Prelim.</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>Changes From:</i>	
	<i>Feb. '04</i>	<i>Jan. '04</i>	<i>Feb. '03</i>	<i>Jan. '04</i>	<i>Feb. '03</i>
<b>TOTAL NONFARM</b>	<b>299,700</b>	<b>298,550</b>	<b>298,050</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>1,650</b>
<b>TOTAL PRIVATE</b>	<b>245,800</b>	<b>246,200</b>	<b>244,150</b>	<b>-400</b>	<b>1,650</b>
<b>GOODS PRODUCING</b>	<b>50,700</b>	<b>51,350</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>-650</b>	<b>-300</b>
MANUFACTURING	36,400	36,550	37,800	-150	-1,400
Durable Goods	25,900	26,050	27,050	-150	-1,150
Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg.	9,100	9,100	9,900	0	-800
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	2,900	2,900	2,750	0	150
Machinery Mfg.	3,000	3,050	3,000	-50	0
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,350	2,350	2,250	0	100
Furniture & Related Product Mfg.	2,450	2,450	2,350	0	100
Non-Durable Goods	10,500	10,500	10,750	0	-250
Food Mfg.	3,750	3,800	3,700	-50	50
CONSTRUCTION	13,500	14,000	12,400	-500	1,100
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	800	800	800	0	0
<b>SERVICE-PROVIDING</b>	<b>249,000</b>	<b>247,200</b>	<b>247,050</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>1,950</b>
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	56,750	57,100	57,350	-350	-600
Wholesale Trade	10,200	10,150	10,100	50	100
Retail Trade	38,000	38,400	38,750	-400	-750
Food & Beverage Stores	9,000	9,200	9,400	-200	-400
General Merchandise Store	2,750	2,900	2,700	-150	50
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	8,550	8,550	8,500	0	50
Utilities	1,750	1,700	1,700	50	50
Transportation & Warehousing	6,800	6,850	6,800	-50	0
INFORMATION	6,450	6,400	6,450	50	0
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	12,900	13,000	13,050	-100	-150
Finance & Insurance	10,000	10,150	10,100	-150	-100
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	2,900	2,850	2,950	50	-50
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	19,700	19,550	19,450	150	250
Professional, Scientific and Technical	11,800	11,700	12,100	100	-300
Administrative, Support and Waste	7,650	7,650	7,050	0	600
EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES	53,900	53,250	51,450	650	2,450
Educational Services	13,200	12,450	12,850	750	350
College, Universities and Professional	7,250	6,700	7,050	550	200
Health Care and Social Assistance	40,700	40,800	38,600	-100	2,100
Ambulatory Health Care Services	15,550	15,650	15,050	-100	500
Hospitals	10,250	10,300	9,950	-50	300
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	6,700	6,750	6,550	-50	150
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	35,500	35,600	35,500	-100	0
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3,250	3,250	3,250	0	0
Accommodation and Food Services	32,250	32,350	32,250	-100	0
Accommodations	14,950	15,200	14,850	-250	100
Hotel & Motels	13,900	14,150	13,800	-250	100
Food Services and Drinking Places	17,300	17,150	17,400	150	-100
OTHER SERVICES	9,900	9,950	9,900	-50	0
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>53,900</b>	<b>52,350</b>	<b>53,900</b>	<b>1,550</b>	<b>0</b>
Federal Government	6,150	6,150	6,200	0	-50
State Government Education	8,400	7,150	8,300	1,250	100
Local Government Education	23,800	23,500	23,850	300	-50
Other State Government	9,000	8,950	8,950	50	50
Other Local Government	6,550	6,600	6,600	-50	-50

## Nonfarm Employment By Area (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Note: Monthly estimates are preliminary and subject to revision. See Annual Employment & Earnings for details. Benchmark 3/2002.

### Burlington

INDUSTRY BY NAICS	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Changes From:	
	Feb. '04	Jan. '04	Feb. '03	Jan. '04	Feb. '03
<b>TOTAL NONFARM</b>	<b>107,450</b>	<b>106,400</b>	<b>106,250</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>1,200</b>
<b>TOTAL PRIVATE</b>	<b>88,200</b>	<b>88,150</b>	<b>87,550</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>650</b>
<b>GOODS PRODUCING</b>	<b>19,500</b>	<b>19,650</b>	<b>20,100</b>	<b>-150</b>	<b>-600</b>
MANUFACTURING	14,600	14,650	15,600	-50	-1,000
Durable Goods	11,000	11,000	12,000	0	-1,000
NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING & CONST.	4,900	5,000	4,500	-100	400
<b>SERVICE PROVIDING</b>	<b>87,950</b>	<b>86,750</b>	<b>86,150</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,800</b>
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	20,700	20,750	20,900	-50	-200
Wholesale Trade	3,750	3,700	3,800	50	-50
Retail Trade	14,000	14,050	14,100	-50	-100
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	2,950	3,000	3,000	-50	-50
INFORMATION	3,200	3,200	3,050	0	150
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	5,150	5,200	5,150	-50	0
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	9,300	9,250	9,200	50	100
Professional Scientific and Technical	5,950	5,900	6,050	50	-100
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	18,200	18,100	17,350	100	850
Health Care and Social Assistance	14,700	14,700	13,800	0	900
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	8,500	8,450	8,200	50	300
Accommodation and Food Services	6,850	6,850	6,900	0	-50
Food Services and Drinking Places	5,850	5,800	5,750	50	100
OTHER SERVICES	3,650	3,550	3,600	100	50
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>19,250</b>	<b>18,250</b>	<b>18,700</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>550</b>
Federal Government	2,850	2,850	2,950	0	-100
State Government Education	6,400	5,500	5,950	900	450
Local Government Education	6,100	5,950	6,000	150	100
Other State Government	1,650	1,650	1,550	0	100
Other Local Government	2,250	2,300	2,250	-50	0

### Barre-Montpelier

<b>TOTAL NONFARM</b>	<b>34,250</b>	<b>33,950</b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>750</b>
<b>TOTAL PRIVATE</b>	<b>25,450</b>	<b>25,950</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>-500</b>	<b>450</b>
<b>GOODS PRODUCING</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>3,950</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>250</b>
MANUFACTURING	2,850	2,900	2,800	-50	50
NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING & CONST.	1,350	1,400	1,150	-50	200
<b>SERVICE-PROVIDING</b>	<b>30,050</b>	<b>29,650</b>	<b>29,550</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>500</b>
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	5,800	5,800	5,650	0	150
Wholesale Trade	950	950	950	0	0
Retail Trade	4,150	4,150	4,000	0	150
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	700	700	700	0	0
INFORMATION	700	700	700	0	0
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	2,550	2,650	2,700	-100	-150
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	2,050	1,900	1,850	150	200
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	5,300	5,250	5,300	50	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,750	3,750	3,700	0	50
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	3,450	3,250	3,450	200	0
Accommodation and Food Services	3,000	2,900	3,050	100	-50
OTHER SERVICES	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>8,700</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>
Federal Government	350	350	350	0	0
State Government Education	350	300	300	50	50
Local Government Education	2,700	2,700	2,750	0	-50
Other State Government	4,750	4,750	4,450	0	300
Other Local Government	650	600	650	50	0

## Unemployment Insurance Program Summary

	<i>February 2004</i>	<i>January 2004</i>	<i>February 2003</i>	<i>Percent Change From Last Month    Last Year</i>	
UI Trust Fund	\$231,448,676	\$238,319,840	\$267,153,805	-2.9%	-13.4%
UI Reg. Benefit Payments *	\$9,752,714	\$10,233,877	\$11,057,413	-4.7%	-11.8%
UI Initial Claims	3,261	4,102	4,321	-20.5%	-24.5%
UI Weeks Claimed	41,413	42,773	47,842	-3.2%	-13.4%

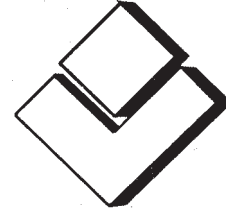
*\*Includes benefit payments for reimbursable employers.*

## Average Hours and Earnings of Production and Nonsupervisory Workers

INDUSTRY BY NAICS	<i>Average Weekly Earnings(\$)</i>			<i>Average Weekly Hours</i>			<i>Average Hourly Earnings(\$)</i>		
	<i>Feb. '04 Prelim.</i>	<i>Jan. '04 Revised</i>	<i>Feb. '03 Revised</i>	<i>Feb. '04 Prelim.</i>	<i>Jan. '04 Revised</i>	<i>Feb. '03 Revised</i>	<i>Feb. '04 Prelim.</i>	<i>Jan. '04 Revised</i>	<i>Feb. '03 Revised</i>
<b>GOODS PRODUCING</b>	595.36	595.36	581.33	40.2	40.2	39.6	14.81	14.81	14.68
Natural Resources & Mining	462.67	464.05	427.67	33.6	33.7	31.4	13.77	13.77	13.62
Construction	635.91	635.50	597.12	41.0	41.0	38.9	15.51	15.50	15.35
Manufacturing	584.66	584.66	578.15	40.1	40.1	39.9	14.58	14.58	14.49
Durable Goods	608.19	606.69	600.47	40.6	40.5	40.3	14.98	14.98	14.90
Non-Durable Goods	517.03	517.98	514.65	38.7	38.8	38.9	13.36	13.35	13.23
<b>SERVICE PROVIDING</b>									
Wholesale Trade	641.89	639.73	621.13	35.7	35.6	34.7	17.98	17.97	17.90
Retail Trade	368.33	368.64	359.63	30.9	30.9	30.4	11.92	11.93	11.83
Health Care & Social Assist.	551.15	549.04	539.70	30.4	30.3	29.9	18.13	18.12	18.05
<b>BURLINGTON AREA</b>									
Manufacturing	573.78	571.88	571.16	37.6	37.5	37.7	15.26	15.25	15.15

*Vermont Department of*

# *Labor & Industry*



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## *Commissioner's Message*

### **High Cost of Workers' Compensation Insurance Leads to Renewed Focus on Safety.**

The high cost of workers' compensation insurance in Vermont is an issue of great importance to Governor Douglas and the General Assembly. The House has already passed a package of reforms designed to reign in some of the excesses of the system and deter abuse, and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs has heard a tremendous amount of testimony about Vermont's workers' compensation system and what can be done to help control costs.

Unfortunately, the high cost of workers' compensation insurance is continuing to rise. State insurance regulators have approved a premium increase, effective April 1, 2004 of 10.3% in the voluntary market and 14.2% in the assigned risk market. While the approved rates are below what the insurance companies filed for, this increase will surely prompt more calls for action.

The silver lining on this dark cloud is that the high cost of workers' compensation insurance has caused employers to place renewed emphasis on keeping their workers safe and healthy. As I have stated in this space several times before, the most effective way for an employer to control workers' compensation insurance costs is to stress the importance of safety in all operations – create a “culture of safety” - and effectively manage your workers' compensation claims when they occur.

Many Vermont employers are already taking this approach. For example, I know of one Vermont-based construction company that instituted a “zero tolerance” approach to workplace injuries and was able to bring their experience rating down dramatically. This led to a decrease in the amount that they pay for workers' compensation insurance, which in turn allowed them to bid lower than their competitors on projects. In short, they found that creating a “culture of safety” gave them a significant advantage over their competitors.

Good management of your workers' compensation claims when an injury does occur is just as important. Be compassionate and let your employee know that you want them to get better and you will help in

any way you can. Recognize that, under Vermont law, you have the right to send your injured employee to a physician of your choice (after that, the employee has the right to choose a different physician). Research the health care providers in your area, and consider choosing a provider who is familiar with occupational medicine and is familiar with Vermont's workers' compensation system. Additionally, identify meaningful duties that an employee released to “light duty” can perform at your workplace.

So, as the Legislature continues to debate workers' compensation reform under the Golden Dome, recognize that the most effective reform is something that requires no legislative approval: create a “culture of safety” in your workplace, and effectively manage your claims when they do occur. For further information about workplace safety and workers' compensation, please visit us on the web at [www.state.vt.us/labind](http://www.state.vt.us/labind).

*(Continued on page 11)*

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*(continued from page 10)*

### **Voluntary Protection Program**

The VOSHA Program has officially implemented a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). This is a program that recognizes companies that have exemplary safety and health programs and have demonstrated a superior management commitment to the safety and health of their employees.

The Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) are designed to recognize and promote effective worksite-based safety and health. In the VPP, management, labor, and OSHA establish cooperative relationships at workplaces that have implemented a comprehensive safety and health management system. Approval into VPP is VOSHA's official recognition of the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health.

- Management agrees to operate an effective program that meets an established set of criteria
- Employees agree to participate in the program and work with management to assure a safe and healthful workplace
- VOSHA initially verifies that the program meets the VPP criteria. We then publicly recognize the site's exemplary program, and remove the site from routine scheduled inspection lists (VOSHA may still investigate major accidents, valid formal employee

complaints, and chemical spills)

- VOSHA also reassesses periodically to confirm that the site continues to meet VPP criteria (every year for the merit program)

The VPP concept recognizes that compliance enforcement alone can never fully achieve the objectives of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Good safety management programs that go beyond VOSHA standards can protect workers more effectively than simple compliance.

VPP participants are a select group of facilities that have designed and implemented outstanding health and safety programs. Star participants meet all VPP requirements. Merit participants have demonstrated the potential and willingness to achieve Star program status, and are implementing planned steps to fully meet all Star requirements.

In practice, VPP sets performance-based criteria for a managed safety and health system, invites sites to apply, and then assesses applicants against these criteria. VOSHA's verification includes an application review and a rigorous onsite evaluation by a team of VOSHA safety and health experts.

Statistical evidence for VPP's success is impressive. The average VPP worksite has a lost workday incidence rate 52% below the average for its industry. These sites typically do not start out with such low rates. Reductions in injuries and illnesses begin when the site

commits to the VPP approach to safety and health management and the challenging VPP application process.

Fewer injuries and illnesses mean greater profits as workers' compensation premiums and other costs are reduced. Entire industries benefit as VPP sites evolve into models of excellence and influence practices industry-wide.

VOSHA gains a corps of ambassadors enthusiastically spreading the message of safety and health system management. These partners also provide VOSHA with valuable input and augment its limited resources.

Another benefit to VOSHA is a safety and health advocacy group that came into existence as a result of the VPP, the Voluntary Protection Program Participants' Association (VPPPA). The VPPPA is a nonprofit organization founded in 1985. As part of its efforts to share the benefits of cooperative programs, the VPPPA works closely with OSHA and State Plan States in the development and implementation of cooperative programs. The VPPPA also provides expertise to these groups in the form of comments and stakeholder feedback on agency rulemaking and policies. Additionally, the association provides comments and testimony to members of Congress regarding legislative bills on health and safety issues.

If you would like to learn more about the Voluntary Protection Program or the VOSHA program, visit the Vermont Department of Labor and Industry's website at <http://www.state.vt.us/labind>.



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## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DATA

**T**he Labor Market Information section of DET has created a set of Excel files that contain the residency based data for Vermont from Table 1 of the special EEO tabulation from the 2000 Census. This data provides race/ethnic and gender details by occupation, and may be useful to employers preparing affirmative action plans. There are seven files at the county level and one statewide file. Data can be downloaded from the LMI web site at:

<http://www.vtlmi.info/detftp.htm#eoo>

Detailed documentation is available from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at:

<http://www.eeoc.gov/stats/census/index.html>