

*Working Together
for Vermont*

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P.O. Box 488 • Montpelier, VT 05601-0488

National Life Drive • Drawer 20 • Montpelier, VT 05620-3401

Commissioners' Message

Patricia A. McDonald, VDOL Commissioner

It's Official!

I am pleased and excited to announce that The Departments of Employment & Training and Labor and Industry officially merged into the Vermont Department of Labor as of July 1, 2005. The new department will improve services to the public by combining divisions and programs that share similar missions: employment security, employment related services, labor market information, safety and training for Vermont workers and employers, workers' compensation, and wage and hour.

The department will consist of three divisions:

1. Workforce Development,
2. Workers' Compensation and Safety, and
3. Unemployment Insurance and Wages

Operating under one administrative umbrella will allow us to strengthen current services, utilize available resources in the most cost effective manner, and provide an effective and efficient service delivery model for employers, workers and job seekers.

Please take a look at our new website at www.labor.vermont.gov and tell us what you think.

Vermont Department of Labor Accepts Two Worksites in the Green Mountain VPP

As the new Commissioner of Labor, I have had the opportunity to attend a ceremony in which one of our Vermont businesses was able honor and celebrate a great achievement. On July 15th I attended the Green Mountain Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) flag raising ceremony for the company Earth Tech. This St. Johnsbury based wastewater treatment facility was officially accepted into the Green Mountain VPP in March of 2005 as a Green Mountain VPP Star sight.

The Green Mountain VPP is a VOSHA partnership program which recognizes a worksite's superior safety and health management systems and strong commitment to the health and well being of the employees at the site as well as the communities the worksites affect.

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The Edge

Equal pay is the law - and the Vermont Commission on Women, the Civil Rights Unit of the Vermont Attorney General, and the Vermont Federation of Business and Professional Women recently released an updated version of the informational pamphlet: *Equal Pay: Your Rights and Obligations as a Vermont Employee or Employer*. In addition to outlining Vermont's equal pay laws, it includes information about the new law signed by Governor Douglas on April 28 of this year, giving all Vermont workers the right to disclose wages without fear of retaliation.

Vermont employees have the right to disclose and discuss their wages. Employers cannot require employees to sign a wage non-disclosure agreement or make employees agree not to disclose their wages as a condition of employment. Employees are protected from discipline, discharge, or any retaliatory act for disclosing their own wage.

From the pamphlet, employees can find out what rights they have as workers and what they can do if they suspect pay discrimination. In addition, employers can learn about their equal pay responsibilities. A specialized tool, the Equal Pay Audit, which can be

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Commissioner's Message –

(continued from front page)

Earlier this year, the Green Mountain VPP celebrated its very first site when it recognized Entergy Nuclear Northeast Vermont Yankee in Vernon. This worksite was officially accepted after an onsite VOSHA team evaluation in February of 2005. The VOSHA team recommended recognition as a Green Mountain VPP Merit site, and they held their flag raising ceremony on May 31, 2005.

By participating in the Green Mountain VPP, both Entergy Nuclear Northeast and Earth Tech become nationally recognized as employers dedicated to the health and wellbeing of their employees and commitment to the communities in which they operate. These companies now share this elite status with approximately 1700 employers nationwide.

I am pleased to see this program take root here in Vermont and am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to attend more of these flag raising ceremonies. This is another way in which businesses can show their dedication to the health, safety, and wellbeing of their employees, and can reap the benefits of their commitment to safety.

For more information about the VPP program and how you can become involved, please see pages 6-7 in this newsletter.

Patricia A. McDonald

Contact VDOL

If your address has changed or to discontinue your subscription, please email: sredpath@labor.state.vt.us

The Edge - (continued from front page)

used to protect every workplace against pay equity violations, is also part of the pamphlet.

Since the Equal Pay Act was instituted in 2002, employers have been able to pay different wage rates to employees when the difference is a result of:

- a seniority system
- a merit system
- a system in which earnings are based on quantity or quality of production
- any non-discriminatory factor other than sex.

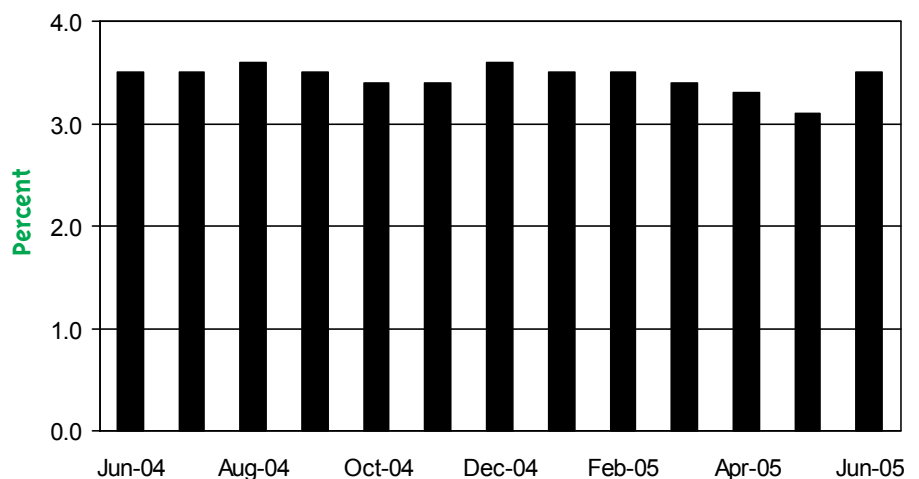
As of July 1, 2005, however, an employer may NOT:

- Require as a condition of employment that employees not disclose their wages,
- Require employees to sign a waiver or other document releasing their right to disclose or discuss their wages,
- Discipline, discharge, or discriminate against employees who disclose or discuss their wages.

This information and more is included in the pamphlet which is available on the following websites: www.atg.state.vt.us (VT Office of the Attorney General, Civil Rights Unit), www.women.state.vt.us (VT Commission on Women), www.vtchamber.com (VT Chamber of Commerce).

Find the pamphlet itself at http://www.women.state.vt.us/pdfs/Equal_Pay_Brochure.pdf, or by calling the Commission on Women at 800-881-1561. Additionally, speakers are available to address this issue. Call the Commission on Women at 800-881-1561 for more information.

Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



Vermont Unemployment Estimates Statewide *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

| | June '05 | May '05 | June '04 | Changes from: | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------------|----------|
| | | | | May '05 | June '04 |
| TOTAL LABOR FORCE¹ | 352,000 | 351,500 | 353,000 | 500 | -1,000 |
| EMPLOYED | 339,800 | 340,700 | 340,500 | -900 | -700 |
| UNEMPLOYED | 12,200 | 10,800 | 12,500 | 1,400 | -300 |
| RATE (%) | 3.5 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 0.4 | 0.0 |

¹Includes proprietors, professionals, and unpaid family workers.

Labor Market Areas By Residence *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

| AREA | Total Labor Force | Number Employed | Number Unemployed | June-05 Rate (%) | May-05 Rate (%) | June-04 Rate (%) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Barre-Montpelier | 26,000 | 25,000 | 1,000 | 3.9 | 3.3 | 4.0 |
| Bennington | 12,750 | 12,300 | 450 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 4.0 |
| Bradford | 5,250 | 5,100 | 150 | 3.1 | 2.7 | 3.7 |
| Brattleboro | 25,500 | 24,450 | 800 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.7 |
| Burlington-South Burlington | 113,600 | 109,950 | 3,650 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 3.1 |
| Hartford | 19,350 | 18,950 | 400 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 2.3 |
| Manchester | 12,550 | 12,150 | 400 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 4.0 |
| Middlebury | 18,050 | 17,500 | 550 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 3.4 |
| Morristown-Stowe | 20,200 | 19,550 | 600 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.6 |
| Newport | 14,300 | 13,750 | 550 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 4.2 |
| Randolph | 8,650 | 8,350 | 300 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 4.1 |
| Rutland | 28,300 | 27,100 | 1,200 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 4.2 |
| Springfield | 12,000 | 11,550 | 450 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 4.1 |
| St. Johnsbury | 15,350 | 14,850 | 500 | 3.3 | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| Swanton-Enosburg | 14,100 | 13,550 | 550 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.6 |
| Warren-Waitsfield | 4,200 | 4,100 | 100 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| Woodstock | 3,900 | 3,800 | 100 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.7 |
| Vermont Total | 356,150 | 344,250 | 11,900 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 3.5 |

AREAS FROM ADJOINING STATES INCLUDING VERMONT TOWNS *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| Colebrook, NH-VT | 3,900 | 3,700 | 200 | 5.0 | 6.4 | 4.3 |
| Lebanon, NH-VT | 15,450 | 15,000 | 450 | 2.9 | 2.0 | 1.4 |
| Littleton, NH-VT | 46,250 | 45,150 | 1,100 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 2.6 |
| North Adams, MA-VT | 17,300 | 16,450 | 850 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 5.5 |

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 | Prelim. June '05 | Revised May '05 | Revised June '04 | Changes From: | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|
| | | | | May '05 | June '04 |
| Total - All Industries | 308.5 | 308.1 | 302.7 | 0.4 | 5.8 |
| Private Industries | 256.4 | 255.1 | 251.2 | 1.3 | 5.2 |
| Construction | 18.2 | 17.9 | 16.7 | 0.3 | 1.5 |
| Manufacturing | 37.5 | 37.2 | 36.9 | 0.3 | 0.6 |
| Retail Trade * | 40.3 | 40.3 | 40.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Professional & Business Services | 22.0 | 21.7 | 21.1 | 0.3 | 0.9 |
| Private Ed. Services* | 12.4 | 12.5 | 12.4 | -0.1 | 0.0 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance* | 42.1 | 41.7 | 41.4 | 0.4 | 0.7 |
| Leisure & Hospitality* | 33.7 | 33.6 | 33.4 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Total Government | 52.1 | 53.0 | 51.5 | -0.9 | 0.6 |

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

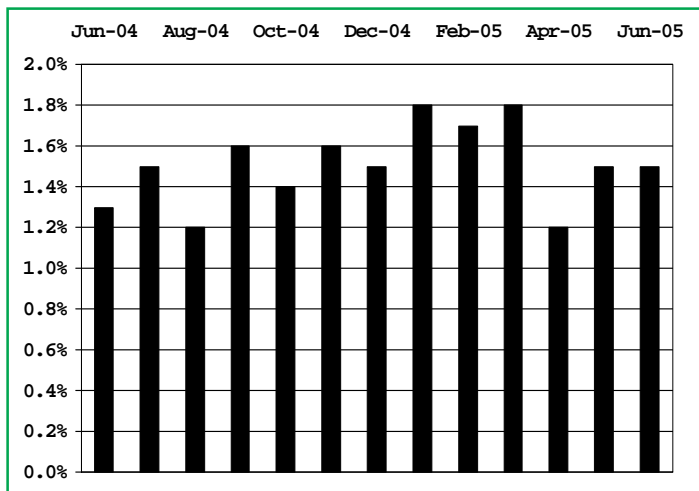
Note: Total - All Industries estimate is seasonally adjusted independently.

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

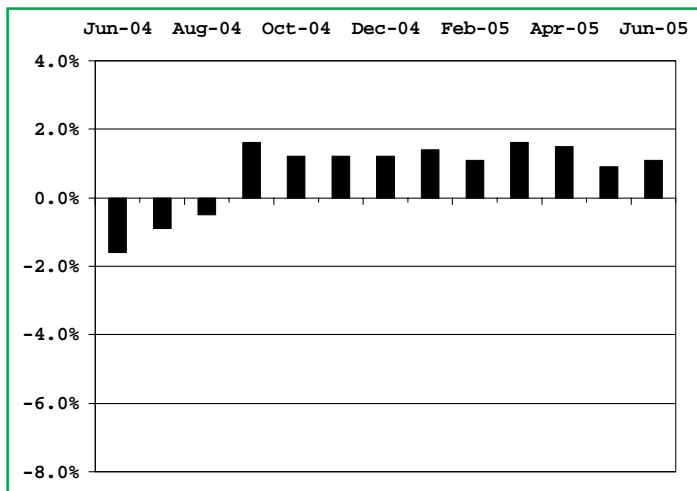
Produced by the Vermont Department of Labor in cooperation with the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless otherwise noted.

Vermont Annual Job Growth Not Seasonally Adjusted Data

All Industries



Manufacturing



Nonfarm Employment In Vermont *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

Compiled by the Vermont Department of Labor in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

| INDUSTRY BY NAICS | Prelim. | Revised | Revised | Changes From: | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| | June '05 | May '05 | June '04 | May '05 | June '04 |
| TOTAL NONFARM | 309,900 | 307,250 | 305,250 | 2,650 | 4,650 |
| TOTAL PRIVATE | 258,000 | 251,950 | 254,100 | 6,050 | 3,900 |
| GOODS PRODUCING | 58,200 | 56,350 | 56,550 | 1,850 | 1,650 |
| MANUFACTURING | 37,750 | 37,250 | 37,350 | 500 | 400 |
| Durable Goods | 27,200 | 27,050 | 26,750 | 150 | 450 |
| Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg. | 9,450 | 9,350 | 9,350 | 100 | 100 |
| Fabricated Metal Products Mfg. | 3,050 | 3,100 | 2,800 | -50 | 250 |
| Machinery Mfg. | 3,100 | 3,050 | 3,050 | 50 | 50 |
| Transportation Equipment Mfg. | 2,400 | 2,450 | 2,450 | -50 | -50 |
| Furniture & Related Product Mfg. | 2,150 | 2,050 | 2,100 | 100 | 50 |
| Non-Durable Goods | 10,550 | 10,200 | 10,600 | 350 | -50 |
| Food Mfg. | 3,750 | 3,600 | 3,800 | 150 | -50 |
| CONSTRUCTION | 19,350 | 18,050 | 18,200 | 1,300 | 1,150 |
| NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING | 1,100 | 1,050 | 1,000 | 50 | 100 |
| SERVICE-PROVIDING | 251,700 | 250,900 | 248,700 | 800 | 3,000 |
| TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES | 59,300 | 58,550 | 59,100 | 750 | 200 |
| Wholesale Trade | 10,300 | 10,250 | 10,250 | 50 | 50 |
| Retail Trade | 40,500 | 39,900 | 40,250 | 600 | 250 |
| Food & Beverage Stores | 9,500 | 9,450 | 9,500 | 50 | 0 |
| General Merchandise Store | 2,950 | 2,850 | 2,950 | 100 | 0 |
| Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities | 8,500 | 8,400 | 8,600 | 100 | -100 |
| Utilities | 1,700 | 1,700 | 1,700 | 0 | 0 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 6,800 | 6,700 | 6,900 | 100 | -100 |
| INFORMATION | 6,250 | 6,250 | 6,450 | 0 | -200 |
| FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES | 13,800 | 13,600 | 13,500 | 200 | 300 |
| Finance & Insurance | 10,400 | 10,250 | 10,150 | 150 | 250 |
| Real Estate, Rental & Leasing | 3,400 | 3,350 | 3,350 | 50 | 50 |
| PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES | 22,550 | 21,950 | 21,650 | 600 | 900 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical | 12,700 | 12,500 | 12,700 | 200 | 0 |
| Administrative, Support and Waste | 9,550 | 9,150 | 8,650 | 400 | 900 |
| EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES | 53,900 | 54,550 | 53,150 | -650 | 750 |
| Educational Services | 11,650 | 12,750 | 11,600 | -1,100 | 50 |
| College, Universities and Professional | 6,050 | 6,950 | 6,000 | -900 | 50 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 42,250 | 41,800 | 41,550 | 450 | 700 |
| Ambulatory Health Care Services | 16,550 | 16,450 | 15,950 | 100 | 600 |
| Hospitals | 10,600 | 10,550 | 10,600 | 50 | 0 |
| Nursing and Residential Care Facilities | 6,850 | 6,800 | 6,600 | 50 | 250 |
| LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY | 33,600 | 30,400 | 33,300 | 3,200 | 300 |
| Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | 4,300 | 3,700 | 4,350 | 600 | -50 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 29,300 | 26,700 | 28,950 | 2,600 | 350 |
| Accommodations | 10,000 | 8,400 | 9,750 | 1,600 | 250 |
| Hotel & Motels | 8,200 | 7,150 | 8,200 | 1,050 | 0 |
| Food Services and Drinking Places | 19,300 | 18,300 | 19,200 | 1,000 | 100 |
| OTHER SERVICES | 10,400 | 10,300 | 10,400 | 100 | 0 |
| GOVERNMENT | 51,900 | 55,300 | 51,150 | -3,400 | 750 |
| Federal Government | 6,350 | 6,300 | 6,250 | 50 | 100 |
| State Government Education | 6,150 | 7,800 | 6,300 | -1,650 | -150 |
| Local Government Education | 22,350 | 24,650 | 21,800 | -2,300 | 550 |
| Other State Government | 9,800 | 9,650 | 9,550 | 150 | 250 |
| Other Local Government | 7,250 | 6,900 | 7,250 | 350 | 0 |



The VOSHA Voluntary Protection Program - VPP

In January of 2003, the Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA), the agency charged with the enforcement of workplace safety and health regulation, officially endorsed a longstanding partnership program called Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) - now referred to as the Green Mountain VPP.

The VPP concept originated as a construction partnership program between CAL OSHA and a general contractor involved with building a nuclear power plant in 1979. Federal OSHA later adopted this program.

What is Green Mountain VPP?

Green Mountain VPP is a VOSHA partnership program, which promotes effective worksite-based safety and health in the state of Vermont. In this program, management, labor, and VOSHA 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 programs and have demonstrated a superior management commitment to the safety and health of their employees. VOSHA initially will verify that an employer's program meets the VPP criteria. VOSHA then publicly recognizes the program and removes the site from routine scheduled inspection lists (VOSHA may still investigate major accidents and valid formal employee complaints). VOSHA will reassess the recognized sites periodically to confirm that the VPP site continues to meet VPP criteria.

How Does VPP Work?

The VPP concept is built around the comprehensive safety and health management system, which is developed by a job site. This system must meet four core elements:

- 1) Management leadership and employee involvement;
- 2) Worksite analysis;
- 3) Hazard prevention and control;
- 4) Safety and health training.

A number of sub-elements, which follow each element, provide a "road map" for an employer to meet the minimum requirements of each element. Additionally, a worksite must meet stringent guidelines regarding their injury/illness records. Once a site achieves these objectives, they are invited to submit an application to participate in the VPP. VOSHA's verification includes an application review and a rigorous onsite evaluation by a team of VOSHA safety and health experts.

VOSHA approves qualified sites to one of four programs:

- Star
- Merit
- Star Demonstration - Recognition for worksites that address unique safety and health issues.
- Construction Star

Once a worksite is approved in the Green Mountain VPP, they must submit annual self-evaluations of their safety and

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The VOSHA Voluntary Protection Program - *(continued from page 6)*

health management systems. In addition the VPP team will conduct scheduled on-site re-evaluations periodically.

How Does VPP Benefit Employers?

Statistical evidence shows that employers involved with the VPP realize a significant reduction in injury and illness rates. Historically the average rate reduction by these worksites is 52 percent. Fewer injuries and illnesses lead to greater profitability as workers compensation insurance rates fall. In addition the hidden costs of injuries and illnesses, which in some cases can run as high as four times the direct costs, will plummet. Employers who have chosen the VPP route continue to enjoy higher productivity and experience an increase in work site information sharing with employees.

How Does VPP Affect Employees?

Employees at participating VPP worksites typically are more engaged. These employees openly express the desire that their employer “do well”. They have the confidence in knowing that when they go to their place of employment, their employer has a vested interest in their safety and health. This confidence is noticeable when the VPP team conducts the on-site visits and employee interviews.

If you would like to learn more about the Green Mountain VPP program, please visit our website at <http://www.labor.vermont.gov/sections/wcsafety/vosha/> or call the VPP Coordinator, Dan Whipple, at (802) 334-4367.

Welcome to
VermontJobLink
from the Vermont Department of Labor

www.vermontjoblink.com



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

P.O. Box 488 • Montpelier, VT 05601-0488

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Announcements

2005 Vermont Employer Outreach Seminars

You are invited to attend any of the one-day Employer Outreach Seminars provided by the Vermont Department of Labor and other state and federal agencies at no cost. This year we will host four seminars throughout the state. All seminars will be held on Wednesdays, from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm on the following dates:

| | |
|---|--|
| September 14, 2005 - Springfield | September 28, 2005 - Lyndonville |
| Howard Dean Center | Charles Carter Business Resource Center |
| 307 South Street | St. Johnsbury/Lyndonville Industrial Park, 1713 Industrial Parkway |

If you are interested in registering in one of the seminars listed above, please send an e-mail to [kjacob@labor.state.vt.us](mailto:kjacobs@labor.state.vt.us) with the following information:

1. Location you wish to attend
2. Your name
3. Business name and address
4. Telephone and e-mail
5. Number of attendees

* * * CHILD LABOR LAWS * * *

To find out about Vermont's Child Labor Laws, go to:

<http://www.labor.vermont.gov/sections/uiwages/wage/childlabor/>

Equal Opportunity is the Law - The State of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Applications from women, individuals with disabilities, and people from diverse cultural backgrounds are encouraged. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. 711 (TTY/Relay Service) or 802-828-4203 TDD (Vermont Department of Labor).