



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**HAWAII'S 2.9% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE LOWEST SINCE 1991**

**2,200 jobs Added During the Month of August**

**HONOLULU-** The state's unemployment rate in August was the lowest it has been in 13 years, according to data released today by the Hawaii State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. The August statewide seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 2.9 per cent, a decline of 1.6 percentage points from August 2003 when the state's unemployment rate stood at 4.5 percent.

August's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate marks the fourth consecutive month that Hawaii has posted the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. It is also the lowest unemployment rate since October 1991, and marks the second consecutive month that Hawaii has seen its unemployment rate drop.

"Since August of 2003, the Lingle-Aiona Administration has overseen a 35% decrease in unemployed workers in Hawaii," said Nelson Befitel, Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. "We have the lowest unemployment rate in 13 years and largest

workforce in the history of the state. The state's strong job market is a testament to the outstanding efforts of our local businesses who toughed it out over the years when the economy was at a standstill. The business community's confidence in the state's economic outlook is evident in the number of jobs being added in different sectors."

Hawaii's low unemployment rate for August is largely due to the addition of 2,200 new seasonally adjusted non-agricultural payroll jobs. During the month of August, all of the seasonally adjusted private industry series experienced modest job gains, with trade, transportation, & utilities expanding by 500 jobs and leisure & hospitality and educational & health services both growing by 300 jobs each. Public sector employment went up by 600 jobs in August over July.

Over-the-year, the total seasonally adjusted non-agricultural job count rose by 15,200, or 2.7 percent, with trade, transportation, & utilities gaining 3,900 jobs (+3.6 percent), while leisure & hospitality (+3,700 jobs) and educational & health services (+2,400 jobs) expanded by 3.7 percent each. Since August 2003, government, largely due to more staffing in public education, has increased by 1,900 jobs, or 1.6 percent.

Nationally, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate also experienced an over-the-month decrease of 0.1 percentage point for the second month in a row, going from 5.5 percent in July to 5.4 in August. One year ago, the U.S. seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.1 percent. For the past four months, Hawaii's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has hovered around the 3.0 percent range and has been about two and one-half percentage points lower than the national seasonally adjusted unemployment rate. In August, there were 612,700 employed and 18,000 unemployed in the state, for a total seasonally adjusted labor force of 630,700.

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