

The Vermont Labor Market

Departments of Employment & Training / Labor & Industry

Vermont Department of

Employment & Training

December 2003

P.O. Box 488 • Montpelier, Vermont 05601-0488 • Tel.: (802) 828-4000 • FAX: (802) 828-4022

<http://www.det.state.vt.us>

Labor & Industry section
begins on page 10

Commissioner's Message

Workforce Education and Training Funds are Still Available

The start of the new year brings optimism that our economic recovery is solidly on track. We all recognize that a vital component of a strong and sustained recovery is a highly skilled workforce.

Since its creation in 1999, the Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF) has established itself as a valuable resource in the education and training of Vermont workers for high skilled, high wage employment. Through December of 2003, 27 WETF proposals have been approved, resulting in the awarding of more than \$2,400,000. Matching funds in excess of \$5,500,000 have been secured from the participating partners in these grants. Every sector of the economy and every region of the state have benefited from the diverse range of training proposals. Approximately 2,200 workers have participated, and more than 400 employers have partnered with over 25 training providers in the implementation of these training grants.

(Continued on page 2)

The Edge

Why do Women Still Earn Less Than Men?

Recently the General Accounting Office (GAO) undertook an analysis of the difference in wages between women and men. Although the analysis identified factors that contribute to the earnings difference, it was not able to explain all of the differences. The study concluded that women earned an average of 80 percent of what men earned in 2000, after accounting for factors related to gender.

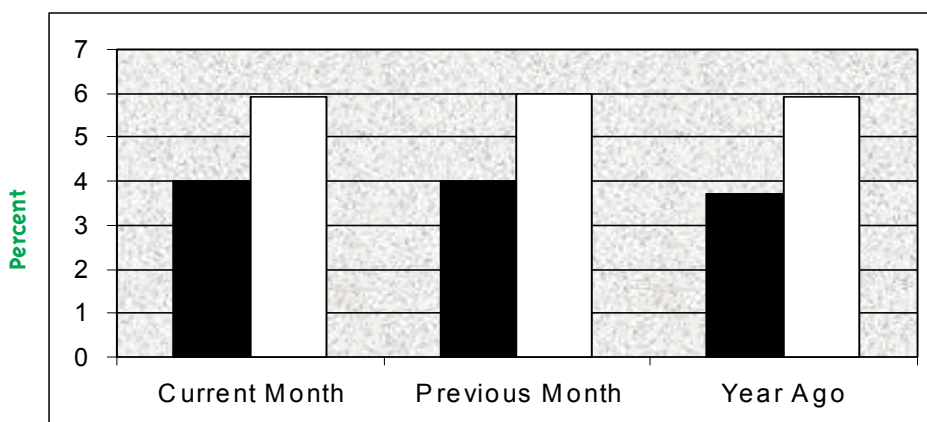
The research documented the impact of different work patterns (such as women being more likely to work part-time) or choose different occupations. Other factors included were: industry, race, marital status and job tenure. However, a difference in earnings still existed after accounting for these factors.

In order to clarify some of the questions, the GAO initiated further research using employers from eight companies who are recognized leaders in work-life practices, and a group of employees from one of these companies. Several key themes

(Continued on page 2)

Unemployment Rates Vermont and U.S.

November (SA) 2003 Rates
VT 4.0% • U.S. 5.9%



Commissioner's Message –

(continued from front page)

The goals of the WETF continue to be twofold:

- 1) matching labor market supply and demand at the local level, and
- 2) building public and private partnerships to advance workforce education and training which together will enhance the quality of the Vermont workforce and increase the number of highly skilled workers in Vermont.

While the goals remain the same, the process for applying for funds has been significantly streamlined, making it easier for applicants to prepare and submit proposals. Another major change is the adoption of a rolling application acceptance for proposals, intended to increase the flexibility to access WETF resources. There are now two categories of WETF grants, with the introduction of Mini-Grants (\$10,000 and under) in July of 2003, in addition to the Traditional (over \$10,000). Details and application materials for WETF Mini-Grants, and the RFP and application materials for Traditional Grants are available on our website at www.det.state.vt.us

I strongly encourage employers and training providers to consider this resource for the training of new workers or for upgrading the skills of incumbent workers. There is currently \$200,000 remaining in the WETF, to fund proposals approved through June 30, 2004. We are optimistic that additional funds will be appropriated during the upcoming session of the legislature.

Annex. Hinevan

The Edge - *(continued from front page)*

emerged relating to workplace culture, decisions about work and career advancement.

Although there has been a tremendous growth in the number of women in the labor force, women are still more likely than men to have primary responsibility for family, and therefore must face the challenge of juggling work and home. At the same time, many employers continue to have certain expectations about the priorities workers should give to their responsibilities outside the workplace. In order to manage work and family responsibilities, women make a variety of decisions.

Some women may choose to work in jobs that are compatible with their home or family responsibilities and may trade off career advancement or higher earnings for these jobs. Some jobs are less demanding or stressful than others, which may allow women who choose these jobs to have more time and energy for responsibilities outside of work. Even in the medical field, female physicians may choose family practice over surgery because of the more predictable schedule.

Another way women may manage work and family is alternative work arrangements like flex-time, working a part-time schedule, or taking leave from work. Although no definitive research exists on how alternative work arrangements affect earnings, the following are examples that address advancement and earnings.

- One study found that flextime, telecommuting, and reduced work hours had some negative impact on wage growth. For all three arrangements, managers or professionals experienced more negative wage effects than nonmanagerial or nonprofessional workers.
- Another study found that leaves of absence were associated with fewer promotions and smaller raises.

An ongoing discussion continues about whether the decisions that women make to manage work and family are made freely or influenced by underlying discrimination. Although some experts believe that women willingly accept the earnings consequences of making workplace choices, others contend that there is an underlying presumption that women have primary responsibility for home and family, and as a result, women are forced to make decisions to accommodate these responsibilities. Additionally, although the law prohibits gender discrimination in the workplace, occupational choices are still influenced by societal norms about gender roles.

To review the complete study, go to www.gao.gov and retrieve report GAO-04-35. You can also call the GAO at (202) 512-6000.



DET Notebook

Does it seem that good workers (or good jobs) are hard to find? Do you wonder why the front page of the newspaper carries stories about layoffs, while the extensive 'help wanted' section apparently demonstrates a multitude of available openings? Can reduced turnover, rapid recruitment and a dedicated, skilled workforce, enhance competitive position and improve profitability?

Since at least the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (c. 350 AD) there has been a persistent imbalance in labor markets worldwide. Shortages of workers, surpluses of workers, not infrequently, simultaneous substantial unemployment and large number of jobs going unfilled: the phenomenon has proven so intractable that a significant number of economists now speak about "natural levels of unemployment." One can, of course, simply accept the theorizing of the pundits and assume the problem is insolvable, an indispensable by-product of what Joseph Schumpeter labeled "creative destruction." Or, one could at least wonder, where, in the face of such obvious market

inefficiency, resources for potential solutions might be found?

Questioning both perceived wisdom and the philosophy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's greatest theoretical economist may seem, at first, a daunting task. However, help is available. Beginning with the Office of Management and Budget Circular A 95 (drafted in 1969, revised in 1976) the Federal Government has encouraged local review of projects receiving funds from Washington.

As Employment and Training Programs (MDTA, CETA, JTPA, and the current Workforce Investment Act) evolved over time, the informal collection of advisory committees grew into Vermont's present Workforce Investment Boards-WIBs in the arcana of acronyms. The Southeast quadrant of Vermont is served by the Connecticut River Valley WIB, and perhaps the best introduction is to quote the Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision

The Connecticut Valley Region will be characterized by vibrant economic development and a high quality of life driven by a

collaborative network of employers, employees, educators and agencies, who are all invested in world class, knowledge-based workforce and learning communities.

Mission

The Connecticut Valley Workforce Investment Board's mission is to provide leadership and support for a workforce development system that involves the collaboration of employers, educators, agencies and employees. This system will be responsive to our customers, outcome-oriented, accountable to all stakeholders, and continuously improving.

By establishing local boards, the WIB system is best able to respond to the unique concerns facing the various regions across the state. Participating in WIB activities allows employers the chance to directly identify issues of importance as well as having the ability to actively work towards finding solutions. Additional information about the Workforce Investment Boards may be found by visiting the Human Resources Investment Council Web Site (www.det.state.vt.us/~hric) or by contacting your nearest Department of Employment and Training Career Resource Center.

Mark Twain noted in his Autobiography that he "was seldom able to see an opportunity until it had ceased to be one...." Our economy continues to evolve, demanding an ever more skilled and flexible work force, with less and less time to contemplate the prospect of change. WIBs offer employers and employees not only a forum, but the rare occasion to actually shape the future.

Economic Spotcheck

Local Unemployment Rates (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Town/City*	Nov. '03	Oct. '03	Nov. '02
Barre City	6.3	5.6	7.6
Barre Town	2.4	2.3	3.1
Bennington Town	4.3	4.1	5.1
Brattleboro Town	3.9	3.9	2.8
Burlington City	3.3	3.2	3
Colchester Town	2.9	2.7	2.5
Essex Town	3.1	2.6	3
Hartford Town	1.8	1.4	1.4
Middlebury Town	2.5	2.3	2.2
Milton Town	4.6	4.2	3.7
Montpelier City	2.1	2	1.8
Rutland City	3.1	3	2.7
St. Albans City	2.5	2.3	2.8
St. Johnsbury Town	5	4.7	5.3
So. Burlington City	2.6	2.5	2.5
Springfield Town	5.3	6.2	6.4

*16 Largest Towns in Vermont

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

	Nov. 2003	Oct. 2003	Nov. 2002
All Items Index	184.5	185.0	181.3
Annual Percent Change	1.8	2.0	2.2

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 November employment increased slightly, up 400 from the previous month with 339,800 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 remained flat from the revised October estimate, which was revised down 500, due largely to the previously announced cuts in computer related manufacturing. Retail Trade added fewer jobs as the holiday season approached. Seasonal lay-offs in Construction were lesser than in many years previous, adding 200 in November. Combined, Manufacturing and Construction helped to alleviate a less than brisk Retail hiring pattern.

The more detailed unadjusted estimates took a rather typical decline, down 1,700 from the revised October estimate. Leisure & Hospitality lead the way as the industry bottomed out just prior to the majority of the hiring in tourist areas. Hospitals took a slight downward turn but were offset by Other Health Care, thus remaining flat over the month. Manufacturing presented some slight upward movement, all of which came out of Durable Goods.

Most of the growth in Retail was concentrated in General Merchandise stores, however, growth was modest overall.

The preliminary November estimates reflect an annual increase of 0.5%, with the change in private sector employment not considered statistically significant. Leisure & Hospitality led the way in terms of gains, adding 700 over the year. Manufacturing contributed to the largest loss, down 1,000 from this time last year.

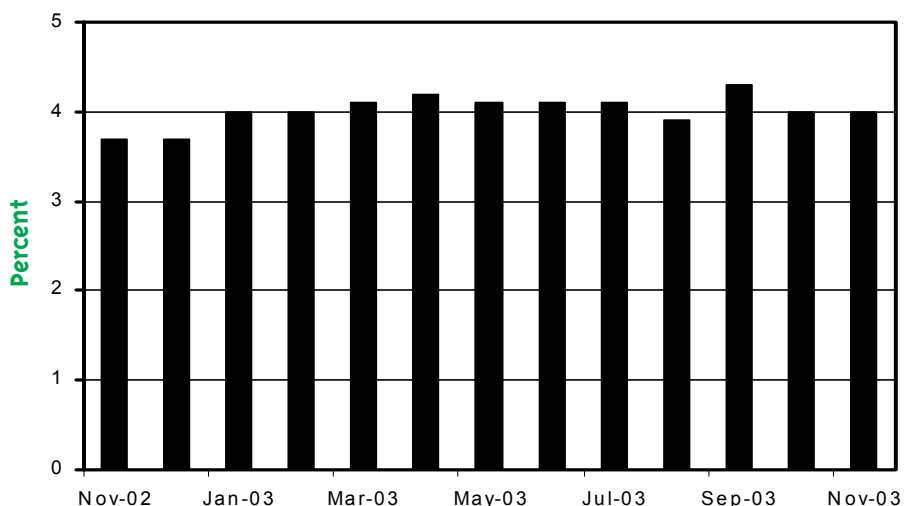
Unemployment Trends

Vermont's seasonally adjusted November unemployment rate of 4.0% was unchanged from the revised October rate, with an estimated 14,000 Vermonters unemployed during the month.

The comparable national unemployment rate was down 0.1% to 5.9% for November. Vermont continues to be well under the national rate.

The number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance filed in November increased slightly from the previous month. Seasonal lay-offs in Construction were the leading cause of the increase in claims.

Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



Labor Force Estimates *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

Vermont	Nov. '03	Oct. '03	Nov. '02	Changes from:	
				Oct. '03	Nov. '02
TOTAL LABOR FORCE¹	353,800	353,600	351,300	200	2,500
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	339,800	339,400	338,400	400	1,400
TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT	14,000	14,200	12,900	-200	1,100
RATE	4.0	4.0	3.7	0.0	0.3

¹Includes proprietors, professionals, and unpaid family workers.
VCM Regression Methodology

Labor Market Areas *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

	Nov. 2003	Oct. 2003	Nov. 2002		Nov. 2003	Oct. 2003	Nov. 2002
BARRE-MONTPELIER				MORRISTOWN-STOWE			
Labor Force	42,200	41,400	40,650	Labor Force	19,000	19,200	19,100
Unemployment	1,550	1,350	1,600	Unemployment	900	700	950
Rate	3.7	3.2	3.9	Rate	4.8	3.6	4.9
Employment	40,650	40,100	39,050	Employment	18,050	18,550	18,200
BENNINGTON-MANCHESTER				NEWPORT			
Labor Force	21,950	22,300	22,000	Labor Force	13,300	13,300	13,550
Unemployment	900	800	900	Unemployment	850	650	850
Rate	4.1	3.5	4.0	Rate	6.3	5.0	6.4
Employment	21,050	21,500	21,100	Employment	12,450	12,650	12,700
BURLINGTON				RANDOLPH			
Labor Force	109,850	108,300	106,950	Labor Force	6,400	6,500	6,500
Unemployment	3,450	3,100	3,150	Unemployment	250	300	250
Rate	3.1	2.9	2.9	Rate	3.9	4.3	4.2
Employment	106,400	105,200	103,850	Employment	6,150	6,250	6,250
ENOSBURG				RUTLAND			
Labor Force	11,100	11,550	11,300	Labor Force	30,400	30,150	30,200
Unemployment	650	550	600	Unemployment	1,450	1,300	1,150
Rate	6.1	4.8	5.3	Rate	4.8	4.4	3.8
Employment	10,450	11,000	10,750	Employment	28,950	28,850	29,050
HARTFORD-LEBANON,VT-NH LMA (VT PORTION ONLY)				ST. JOHNSBURY			
Labor Force	29,250	29,450	30,300	Labor Force	15,100	15,250	15,300
Unemployment	550	500	500	Unemployment	700	650	700
Rate	2.0	1.7	1.7	Rate	4.8	4.3	4.7
Employment	28,650	28,950	29,800	Employment	14,350	14,600	14,600
KEENE-BRATTLEBORO,NH-VT LMA (ENTIRE AREA)				SPRINGFIELD			
Labor Force	60,000	59,600	58,200	Labor Force	9,650	9,500	9,700
Unemployment	1,850	1,700	1,700	Unemployment	450	450	500
Rate	3.1	2.8	3.0	Rate	4.9	4.7	5.2
Employment	58,150	57,900	56,450	Employment	9,150	9,050	9,200
MIDDLEBURY				STATEWIDE			
Labor Force	20,450	21,050	20,800	Labor Force	353,550	352,700	350,800
Unemployment	700	550	650	Unemployment	13,350	11,700	12,450
Rate	3.3	2.7	3.1	Rate	3.8	3.3	3.6
Employment	19,800	20,450	20,150	Employment	340,200	341,050	338,350

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.	Revised	Revised	Changes From:	
	Nov. '03	Oct. '03	Nov. '02	Oct. '03	Nov. '02
Total - All Industries	301.6	301.6	300.1	0.0	1.5
Private Industries	250.0	250.3	248.9	-0.3	1.1
Construction	15.0	14.8	14.7	0.2	0.3
Manufacturing	38.1	38.0	39.2	0.1	-1.1
Retail Trade *	39.5	40.2	39.8	-0.7	-0.3
Professional & Business Services	20.8	20.8	21.0	0.0	-0.2
Education & Health Services	51.2	51.3	50.6	-0.1	0.6
Leisure & Hospitality*	34.3	34.4	33.5	-0.1	0.8
Total Government	51.6	51.3	51.2	0.3	0.4

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

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

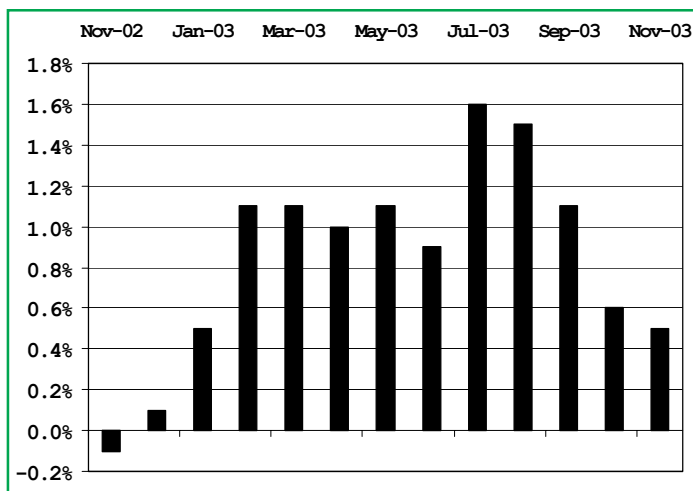
All seasonal adjustment performed with X12-ARIMA. Seasonal factors available from DET/LMI on request.

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

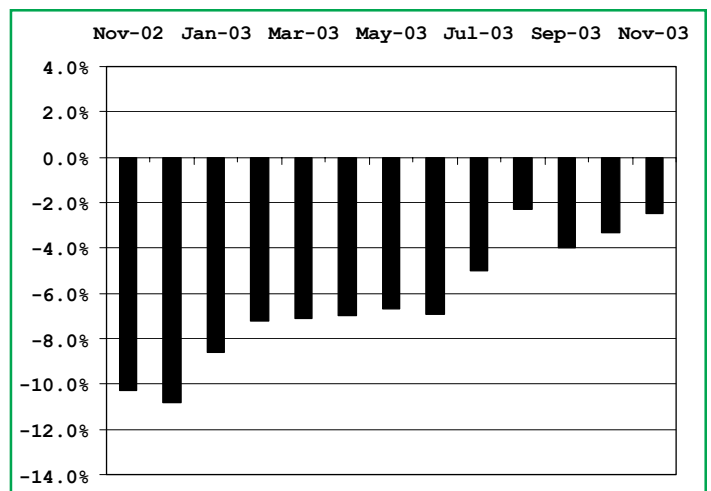
Vermont Annual Job Growth

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	Prelim.	Revised	Revised	Changes From:	
	Nov. '03	Oct. '03	Nov. '02	Oct. '03	Nov. '02
TOTAL NONFARM	304,550	306,250	302,900	-1,700	1,650
TOTAL PRIVATE	249,850	252,500	248,600	-2,650	1,250
GOODS PRODUCING	55,150	55,350	55,700	-200	-550
MANUFACTURING	38,400	38,250	39,400	150	-1,000
Durable Goods	27,600	27,350	28,050	250	-450
Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg.	9,800	9,800	10,200	0	-400
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	2,650	2,650	2,800	0	-150
Machinery Mfg.	3,100	3,050	3,200	50	-100
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,200	2,200	2,150	0	50
Furniture & Related Product Mfg.	2,550	2,500	2,450	50	100
Non-Durable Goods	10,800	10,900	11,350	-100	-550
Food Mfg.	3,800	3,850	4,000	-50	-200
CONSTRUCTION	15,550	15,850	15,250	-300	300
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	1,200	1,250	1,050	-50	150
SERVICE-PROVIDING	249,400	250,900	247,200	-1,500	2,200
TRADE TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	60,000	59,950	59,650	50	350
Wholesale Trade	10,700	10,650	10,200	50	500
Retail Trade	40,600	40,550	40,900	50	-300
Food & Beverage Stores	10,050	10,100	10,150	-50	-100
General Merchandise Store	3,650	3,500	3,450	150	200
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	8,700	8,750	8,550	-50	150
Utilities	1,700	1,700	1,700	0	0
Transportation & Warehousing	7,000	7,050	6,850	-50	150
INFORMATION	6,700	6,800	6,700	-100	0
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	13,400	13,450	13,100	-50	300
Finance & Insurance	10,400	10,350	10,100	50	300
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	3,000	3,100	3,000	-100	0
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	20,950	21,050	21,050	-100	-100
Professional, Scientific and Technical	12,350	12,450	12,200	-100	150
Administrative, Support and Waste	8,500	8,450	8,400	50	100
EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES	52,600	52,550	52,000	50	600
Educational Services	13,500	13,450	13,300	50	200
College, Universities and Professional	7,250	7,200	7,300	50	-50
Health Care and Social Assistance	39,100	39,100	38,700	0	400
Ambulatory Health Care Services	15,650	15,550	15,300	100	350
Hospitals	10,450	10,550	10,050	-100	400
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	6,600	6,550	6,600	50	0
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	30,950	33,100	30,250	-2,150	700
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2,950	3,700	2,800	-750	150
Accommodation and Food Services	28,000	29,400	27,450	-1,400	550
Accommodations	10,550	11,100	10,100	-550	450
Hotel & Motels	8,750	9,150	8,950	-400	-200
Food Services and Drinking Places	17,450	18,300	17,350	-850	100
OTHER SERVICES	10,100	10,250	10,150	-150	-50
GOVERNMENT	54,700	53,750	54,300	950	400
Federal Government	6,350	6,350	6,200	0	150
State Government Education	9,200	8,750	8,900	450	300
Local Government Education	23,550	23,100	23,600	450	-50
Other State Government	8,900	8,950	8,900	-50	0
Other Local Government	6,700	6,600	6,700	100	0

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:	
	Nov. '03	Oct. '03	Nov. '02	Oct. '03	Nov. '02
TOTAL NONFARM	110,600	110,000	108,700	600	1,900
TOTAL PRIVATE	91,150	91,100	89,950	50	1,200
GOODS PRODUCING	20,150	20,000	20,700	150	(550)
MANUFACTURING	14,900	14,750	15,900	150	(1,000)
Durable Goods	11,700	11,650	12,300	50	(600)
NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING & CONST.	5,250	5,250	4,800	0	450
SERVICE PROVIDING	90,450	90,000	88,000	450	2,450
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	21,450	21,400	21,350	50	100
Wholesale Trade	3,750	3,700	3,600	50	150
Retail Trade	14,750	14,700	14,800	50	(50)
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	2,950	3,000	2,950	(50)	0
INFORMATION	3,350	3,350	3,100	0	250
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	5,550	5,500	5,200	50	350
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	10,600	10,550	10,000	50	600
Professional Scientific and Technical	6,850	6,900	6,400	(50)	450
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	17,100	17,300	17,150	(200)	(50)
Health Care and Social Assistance	13,400	13,600	13,900	(200)	(500)
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	9,250	9,300	8,850	(50)	400
Accommodation and Food Services	7,550	7,650	7,300	(100)	250
Food Services and Drinking Places	6,250	6,250	6,050	0	200
OTHER SERVICES	3,700	3,700	3,600	0	100
GOVERNMENT	19,450	18,900	18,750	550	700
Federal Government	2,950	3,000	2,950	(50)	0
State Government Education	6,600	6,100	6,100	500	500
Local Government Education	6,150	6,050	5,950	100	200
Other State Government	1,650	1,650	1,600	0	50
Other Local Government	2,100	2,100	2,150	0	(50)

Barre-Montpelier

TOTAL NONFARM	35,700	35,400	34,600	300	1100
TOTAL PRIVATE	26,900	26,700	25,950	200	950
GOODS PRODUCING	4,700	4,700	4,800	0	-100
MANUFACTURING	3,050	3,050	3,150	0	-100
NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING & CONST.	1,650	1,650	1,650	0	0
SERVICE-PROVIDING	31,000	30,700	29,800	300	1200
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	6,300	6,200	6,150	100	150
Wholesale Trade	1,100	1,050	1,050	50	50
Retail Trade	4,350	4,350	4,300	0	50
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	850	800	800	50	50
INFORMATION	700	700	700	0	0
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	2,950	2,950	2,850	0	100
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	2,100	2,100	1,950	0	150
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	5,650	5,550	5,400	100	250
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,950	3,850	3,800	100	150
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	3,050	3,050	2,700	0	350
Accommodation and Food Services	2,700	2,700	2,400	0	300
OTHER SERVICES	1,450	1,450	1,400	0	50
GOVERNMENT	8,800	8,700	8,650	100	150
Federal Government	350	350	350	0	0
State Government Education	350	350	300	0	50
Local Government Education	2,800	2,750	2,800	50	0
Other State Government	4,550	4,550	4,500	0	50
Other Local Government	750	700	700	50	50

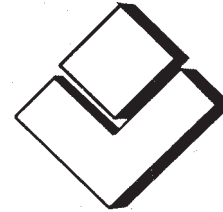
Unemployment Insurance Program Summary

	November 2003	October 2003	November 2002	Percent Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
UI Trust Fund	\$251,244,471	\$254,111,618	\$293,243,881	-1.1%	-14.3%
UI Reg. Benefit Payments *	\$5,509,529	\$4,777,912	\$6,711,393	15.3%	-17.9%
UI Initial Claims	4,856	3,891	5,568	24.8%	-12.8%
UI Weeks Claimed	32,952	22,870	31,410	44.1%	4.9%

**Includes benefit payments for reimbursable employers.*

Average Hours and Earnings of Production and Nonsupervisory Workers

INDUSTRY BY NAICS	Average Weekly Earnings(\$)			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings(\$)		
	Nov. '03 Prelim.	Oct. '03 Revised	Nov. '02 Revised	Nov. '03 Prelim.	Oct. '03 Revised	Nov. '02 Revised	Nov. '03 Prelim.	Oct. '03 Revised	Nov. '02 Revised
GOODS PRODUCING	598.05	597.65	580.93	40.3	40.3	39.6	14.84	14.83	14.67
Natural Resources & Mining	467.82	466.80	436.80	33.9	33.9	32.0	13.80	13.77	13.65
Construction	642.53	640.15	605.66	41.4	41.3	39.1	15.52	15.50	15.49
Manufacturing	585.46	585.06	575.20	40.1	40.1	40.0	14.60	14.59	14.38
Durable Goods	606.00	607.10	593.75	40.4	40.5	40.2	15.00	14.99	14.77
Non-Durable Goods	520.65	518.93	523.91	39.0	38.9	39.6	13.35	13.34	13.23
SERVICE PROVIDING									
Wholesale Trade	642.60	641.89	643.60	35.7	35.7	36.3	18.00	17.98	17.73
Retail Trade	370.14	369.83	357.01	31.0	31.0	29.9	11.94	11.93	11.94
Health Care & Social Assist.	550.85	549.04	521.13	30.4	30.3	29.0	18.12	18.12	17.97
BURLINGTON AREA									
Manufacturing	574.55	572.65	562.12	37.7	37.6	37.4	15.24	15.23	15.03



Commissioner's Message

The Wage and Hour Program at the Department of Labor and Industry receives thousands of inquiries every year asking for information about minimum wage, overtime, and other employment issues. The following is a list of some of the most frequently asked questions. Please note that Vermont's minimum wage increases to \$6.75 per hour on January 1, 2004.

Q: Does my employer have to pay the Vermont minimum wage or the Federal minimum wage?

A: All Vermont employers who employ two or more employees must pay the Vermont minimum wage which is and shall continue to be higher or equal to the federal rate.

Q: What is the minimum wage?

A: The state minimum wage is as follows, effective for the dates indicated:

Date Effective	Minimum Wage	Minimum – Tip Employee
1/1/04 – 12/31/04	\$6.75 per hour	\$3.58 per hour
1/1/05 – 12/31/05	\$7.00 per hour	\$3.65 per hour

Q: I have been fired or laid off. When is my pay due?

A: You should be paid within 72 hours of discharge. If you have a problem collecting, contact the Wage & Hour Program for a wage complaint form, and assistance.

Q: Can an employer pay an employee through electronic deposit? Can it issue an electronic wage statement?

A: Yes, both are allowed under certain conditions. An employer may issue pay through electronic funds transfer or other direct deposit system after written authorization from the employee. An electronic wage statement may be issued in lieu of paper if: statement is available at the time wages are paid; and, employee has free electronic access to it, and each employee's privacy (SS#, financial info, etc.) must be protected and confidential.

Q: My employer let me go and did not give me any reason (or gave me an unfair reason). What can I do?

A: Under Vermont law an employer is required to provide their reason for termination. If you were discriminated against based on age, sex, race, creed, national origin, physical or mental impairment, pregnancy or sexual preference, you should contact the

Civil Rights Division of the Attorney Generals Office at 802-828-3657. For any other reason you must consult with a private attorney.

Q: If I quit or am discharged, will I receive pay for vacation or sick leave?

A: Your employer does not have to pay you unless s/he provided you a written statement agreeing to pay for earned, but unused time. If you feel that you meet the terms and conditions in the employer's written statement, but did not receive payment, you may file a wage claim.

Q: Do I get paid overtime for working more than 40 hours in one week?

A: Employees are due overtime pay of one and one-half times the regular wage rate for work performed in excess of 40 hours during a workweek. Under Vermont law, however, exceptions to overtime pay requirements include employment in retail, service, hotels recreation, hospitals or nursing homes. Employment that is not subject to Vermont overtime requirements may be subject to federal overtime, if the work is in interstate commerce (eg. credit card transactions); or, in a business with an annual gross volume of sales of \$500,000 or more. Additional federal information is available from the Federal Wage and Hour Office in Burlington at 802-951-6283 or in New Hampshire at 603-666-7716.

Labor & Industry

(continued from page 10)

Q: Can my employer take money out of my wages to cover cash register shortages or damages?

A: No, your employer cannot do this. You can either inform your employer that there is no provision in the law that allows them to do this or you can contact the Wage & Hour Program.

Q: Can my employer require that I work mandatory overtime? Can my employer require that I work 8 days in a row without a day off?

A: Vermont law places no limits on the number of hours an employer can require an employee to work. Absent a written agreement or a union contract, an employer has complete discretion to require mandatory overtime.

Q: Can my employer fire me or lay me off without notice? Do I get severance pay?

A: Yes, unless it is a massive layoff or plant closure, in which case you should contact the U. S. Department of Labor at 202-535-0577, or VT. Department of Employment and Training at (802) 828-4177. Severance pay is considered a benefit, therefore you are only entitled if a written agreement provides for it.

Q: Is it legal for my employer to change the hours on my time card?

A: Vermont law does not cover time cards. Time cards are considered a means for an employer to obtain actual hours of work for the payroll. Payroll records, by law, must show accurate hours of work. You may wish to contact the Federal Wage and Hour Office in Burlington at 802-951-6283 or in New Hampshire at 603-666-7716 in

reference to the provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding time clocks.

Q: Is my employer required to provide me with rest periods or lunch breaks?

A: Vermont law requires that an employer provide "reasonable opportunities" to eat and use toilet facilities. However, neither Vermont nor Federal law specify a minimum break period nor identify what a "reasonable opportunity" is. They are provided at the employer's discretion.

Q: What determines overtime hours?

A: Overtime is usually based on more than 40 hours of actual work per week. Benefit hours are separate and should be shown as separate in the payroll records. For example, if you actually worked 36 hours in a workweek and had 8 hours off, paid for a holiday, you are NOT entitled to overtime.

Q: I earn wages plus a sales commission. I received wages, but am still owed commission. Can I collect?

A: Commissions are considered wage supplements or benefits. The Vermont Wage & Hour Program can investigate and review wage complaints, however, in disputes concerning benefits, we would only have jurisdiction if you had a written agreement clearly establishing your right to commissions.

Q: What work can a teenager perform?

A: Child labor rules detail the work permitted under the age of 18. Here is a snapshot:

Ages 16-18 – may work at nonhazardous jobs, outside of school hours.

Ages 14-15 – prohibited from work in manufacturing, mining or work deemed hazardous.

Ages 12-13 – may work at an agricultural job, non-hazardous, with parental permission.

Under age 12 – may work at agricultural job if farm is FLSA "small farm" exempt and work is non-hazardous and with parental permission.

There are also restrictions on work hours per day and per week.



**Vermont Department of
Labor and Industry
National Life Building
Drawer 20
Montpelier, Vermont
05620-3401**

**Email:
wagehour@labind.state.vt.us**

Telephone:(802) 828-2157

Fax: (802) 828-2195



P.O. Box 488 • Montpelier, VT 05601-0488
Official Business • Penalty for Private Use \$300



**Access our
TALENT BANK
and post
JOB OPENINGS**

at www.det.state.vt.us

The Department of Employment & Training is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD: (802) 828-4203.