

The Vermont Labor Market

Departments of Employment & Training / Labor & Industry

Vermont Department of

Employment & Training

May 2004

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

Commissioner's Message

Women's Economic Opportunity Conference

The increased presence of women in the workforce has changed the face of our labor market. However, women still face unique challenges when it comes to work. Childcare, equal pay and entrance into non-traditional occupations are among them. On June 26, 2004, Senator Leahy will again sponsor the Women's Economic Opportunity Conference. The annual conference - it is in its eighth year- will take place at Vermont Technical College in Randolph, VT beginning at 8 am and will run until 4 pm. This is an opportunity for women from all walks of life to interact around issues of job change, personal growth, starting a new business, financial security and others.

"I am pleased that this conference, now in its 8th year, has earned a great reputation statewide for providing information, resources, and networking. Whether you are interested in identifying your own career goals, exploring

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**Labor & Industry section
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The Edge

Equal Pay -No Excuses

Vermont employees have the right to equal pay for equal work. Seems like a no-brainer. However, it was not until 2002 that Vermont adopted an equal pay law, called the Equal Pay Act. This law applies to any employer, employment agency, labor organization or anyone seeking Vermont employees, and it states that it is illegal to pay wages to employees of one sex at a rate less than the rate paid to employees of the other sex for equal work that requires equal skill, effort and responsibility.

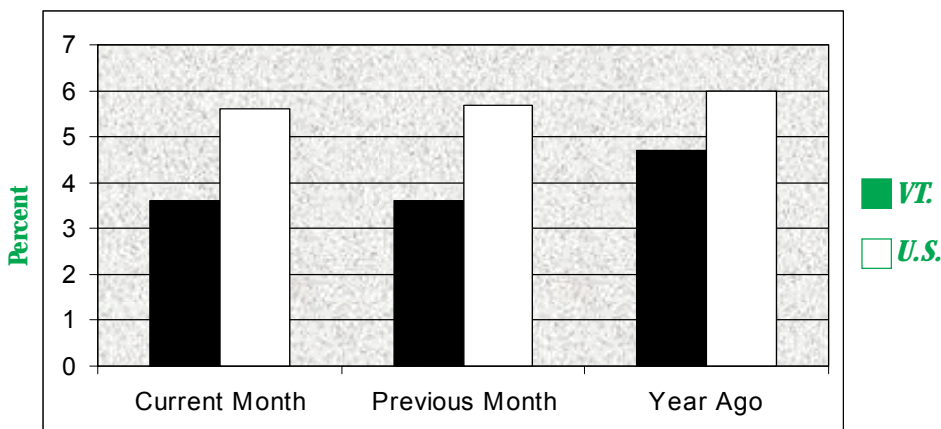
In an effort to help both employers and employees determine compliance with the Equal Pay Act, an Equal Pay Audit is available. It includes information that will protect a workplace against pay equity violations.

Job descriptions should be clear and concise and include the skills required to perform the job, the physical or mental effort needed,

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Unemployment Rates Vermont and U.S.

April (SA) 2004 Rates
VT 3.6% • U.S. 5.6%



Commissioner's Message –

(continued from front page)

a non-traditional career, or examining career options for the older woman, I'm sure you will find this an exciting and informative day."

This year the keynote speaker will be Major General Martha Rainville, Adjutant General of the State of Vermont. General Rainville is the first woman in the 367 year history of the National Guard to serve as a State Adjutant General. Her occupational journey, which began in Aircraft Maintenance, is one she will share with us that day. Having her speak this year is particularly timely given the number of Vermonters who are currently serving in the military.

There are five strands of workshops included this year. Under the general heading of "Careers" participants can choose from presentations about non-traditional careers in transportation, finding work that feeds your passion, working after age 55, and goal setting. There will be five presentations dedicated to business issues, ranging from Business Law 101 to Starting Your Own Business to guidelines of pricing. Yoga, gardening, and a session on humor are included under Stress Busters. Come and find out more about computers at workshops on web building, digital cameras, and bookkeeping programs. A complimentary lunch is included and the opportunities for networking are plentiful.

"This conference is about information, networking, connection and gaining the confidence to value myself," is the way one past

participant described it. Please join the Department of Employment & Training and our planning partners in making this conference another success.

Invitations and registration materials will be available soon. On-line registration will be available at www.vtsbdc.org

Annex. Kinevan

The Edge - (continued from front page)

the degree of accountability required and the working conditions of the job. Employers need to evaluate their compensation system by examining the relationship between wage rates and job descriptions. Is there a performance rating system in place? Do employees understand the compensation system and are job openings including salary ranges posted in the workplace?

Other issues employers should think about are evaluation systems, awards, training and opportunities for advancement. The audit is included in the pamphlet from which this information has been taken. Entitled "Equal Pay and Your Rights and Obligations as a Vermont Employee or Employer", the pamphlet was a collaborative effort of the Vermont Attorney General's Office of Civil Rights, the Vermont Business and Professional Women, and the Vermont Commission on Women.

It is available at no cost from the Attorney General's Office of Civil Rights. The information can also be found at www.bpwusa.org the website for Business and Professional Women/USA.

An employee can be paid different wages 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.

Employers cannot remedy pay inequities by reducing the wage rate of any employee in order to comply with the equal pay law, nor may they retaliate against employees who file complaints with the Attorney General's Office. Hopefully, employees and employers can work together to make sure that equal pay for equal work is adhered to throughout Vermont's economy.

If, however, an employee still feels dissatisfied after discussing wage discrepancies with his/her employer, charges may be filed. The Vermont Attorney General has the authority to investigate complaints of wage discrimination and to seek damages from employers who violate the equal pay law.



DET Notebook



Are High School Graduates Ready for the Workplace?

About 80 percent of high school students think they are, almost half of their parents think they are, but less than 30 percent of employers think they are. Consequently, employers spend billions of dollars remediating employees in order to bring them up to

competency in a myriad of areas.

The Barre Career Resource Center is currently working with U-32 in an attempt to help students ready themselves for the workplace. Each Tuesday morning, from 9:30 to 11:00, a group of students comes to the center where they discuss everything about how to find and keep a job. Facilitated by Evelyn Shearer and George Lowe,

students learn about hygiene, proper dress and language, and interviewing techniques. One Tuesday the students role-played interviews that were taped. On the following Tuesday, an employer was invited to come, critique the tapes and offer advice to the soon-to-be job seekers.

Students work in class and at DET to fill out practice applications, create resumes, cover letters and thank you notes. They are able to take interest surveys in order to explore occupations that may interest them and skills assessments to find out where they need to work harder. Evelyn and George work with the students helping them to understand the ways to find jobs. What is the 'hidden' job market? How does one 'network'? What can the internet offer? And what should I expect after I get a job?

This innovative job club will be ending as school does, but will start up again in September. If you would like more information, please feel free to call George (476-2619) or Evelyn (476-2608) at the Barre CRC.

Economic Spotcheck

Local Unemployment Rates (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Town/City*	Apr. '04	Mar. '04	Apr. '03
Barre City	6.9	9.0	9.7
Barre Town	2.2	3.2	3.3
Bennington Town	4.4	5.3	6.7
Brattleboro Town	3.3	3.3	4.7
Burlington City	2.8	3.0	4.0
Colchester Town	2.6	3.1	3.4
Essex Town	2.5	2.8	3.1
Hartford Town	1.7	2.0	2.4
Middlebury Town	2.3	2.6	2.8
Milton Town	4.6	5.2	5.0
Montpelier City	1.7	2.0	2.7
Rutland City	3.3	2.7	3.9
Shelburne Town	1.1	1.3	1.9
So. Burlington City	1.9	2.2	2.7
Springfield Town	4.7	4.6	8.8
Williston Town	0.8	1.0	1.1

*16 Largest Towns in Vermont

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

	Apr. 2004	Mar. 2004	Apr. 2003
All Items Index	188.0	187.4	183.8
Annual Percent Change	2.3	1.7	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 April employment dropped, down by 1,100 from the previous month with 340,000 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 jumped by 0.5 % to 300,500 for a gain of 1,400 jobs. Most sectors were up over the month, however, a temporary maintenance project related to electrical power generation brought significant employment, also adding to the overall increase. Construction contributed 300 jobs, as the spring hiring season was under way. Health Care & Social Assistance continued its mostly upward trend with an additional 200 jobs. Manufacturing jobs presented a slight increase for the second month in a row. After three months of job creation, Retail fell slightly, dropping by 100 jobs in April.

The more detailed unadjusted estimates fell by 2,000 as much of the seasonal employment in winter recreational activities waned. Leisure & Hospitality led the way, having lost almost 4,800 jobs, which is fairly typical but less than last year's loss. Construction offset some of that loss, adding almost 1,100 jobs. Other Services, which includes maintenance functions at electrical generating plants added over 900 jobs.

Professional & Business Services continued its upward trend, adding jobs for the third straight month.

The preliminary April estimates reflect an annual increase of 1.4%. The annual change in private industry was not considered statistically significant. At the forefront was Health Care & Social Assistance. Construction was also up significantly, possibly due in part to ongoing low interest rates. Manufacturing continued to lead the way in terms of annual losses.

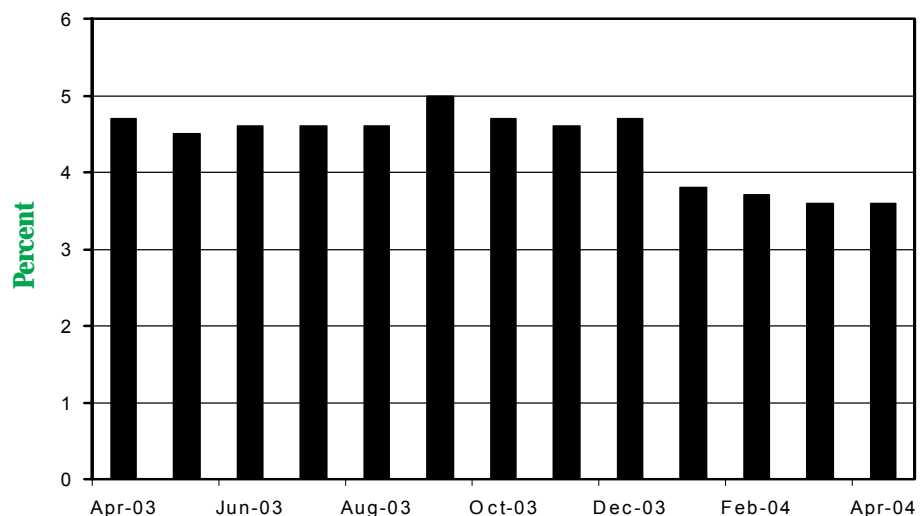
Unemployment Trends

Vermont's seasonally adjusted April unemployment rate of 3.6% was unchanged from the March rate. An estimated 12,600 Vermonters were unemployed in April.

The comparable national unemployment rate was 5.6%, down just 0.1% from the previous month. Vermont continues to be well under the national rate.

The number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance filed in April were up significantly from the previous month. Service Industries were the largest contributors. Claims in Manufacturing were almost double what they were last month. Construction claims were down as expected, with many going back to work as the season began to pick up.

Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



Labor Force Estimates *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

Vermont	Apr. '04	Mar. '04	Apr. '03	Changes from:	
				Mar. '04	Apr. '03
TOTAL LABOR FORCE¹	352,700	353,900	349,800	-1,200	2,900
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	340,000	341,100	333,600	-1,100	6,400
TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT	12,600	12,700	16,300	-100	-3,700
RATE	3.6	3.6	4.7	0.0	-1.1

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

Labor Market Areas *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

	Apr. 2004	Mar. 2004	Apr. 2003		Apr. 2004	Mar. 2005	Apr. 2003
BARRE-MONTPELIER				MORRISTOWN-STOWE			
Labor Force	40,450	41,400	39,900	Labor Force	18,850	20,200	19,000
Unemployment	1,550	2,000	2,100	Unemployment	1,100	1,150	1,350
Rate	3.9	4.8	5.2	Rate	5.8	5.6	7.1
Employment	38,900	39,400	37,800	Employment	17,800	19,050	17,650
BENNINGTON-MANCHESTER				NEWPORT			
Labor Force	21,200	21,450	21,350	Labor Force	13,400	13,450	13,600
Unemployment	850	900	1,200	Unemployment	950	1,100	1,400
Rate	4.1	4.3	5.6	Rate	7.2	8.1	10.2
Employment	20,350	20,550	20,150	Employment	12,400	12,350	12,250
BURLINGTON				RANDOLPH			
Labor Force	107,500	108,000	106,400	Labor Force	6,550	6,500	6,400
Unemployment	2,950	3,400	3,900	Unemployment	350	400	350
Rate	2.7	3.2	3.7	Rate	5.5	6.1	5.6
Employment	104,600	104,600	102,500	Employment	6,200	6,100	6,050
ENOSBURG				RUTLAND			
Labor Force	10,450	10,300	10,700	Labor Force	30,900	31,700	30,150
Unemployment	600	750	850	Unemployment	1,600	1,450	1,700
Rate	5.9	7.2	8.1	Rate	5.2	4.6	5.6
Employment	9,850	9,550	9,800	Employment	29,300	30,250	28,450
HARTFORD-LEBANON,VT-NH LMA (VT PORTION ONLY)				ST. JOHNSBURY			
Labor Force	29,200	29,250	28,750	Labor Force	15,050	15,200	15,100
Unemployment	650	750	850	Unemployment	750	900	1,050
Rate	2.2	2.6	3.0	Rate	5.0	5.8	6.9
Employment	28,550	28,500	27,950	Employment	14,300	14,350	14,050
KEENE-BRATTLEBORO,NH-VT LMA (ENTIRE AREA)				SPRINGFIELD			
Labor Force	58,300	59,900	57,050	Labor Force	10,100	10,300	10,200
Unemployment	1,950	1,900	2,050	Unemployment	500	450	750
Rate	3.4	3.2	3.6	Rate	5.1	4.4	7.3
Employment	56,300	58,000	55,000	Employment	9,550	9,850	9,450
MIDDLEBURY				STATEWIDE			
Labor Force	21,000	20,550	21,050	Labor Force	348,700	352,850	346,150
Unemployment	650	850	850	Unemployment	13,500	14,850	17,400
Rate	3.1	4.1	4.1	Rate	3.9	4.2	5.0
Employment	20,350	19,700	20,200	Employment	335,200	338,050	328,750

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>Apr. '04</i>	<i>Mar. '04</i>	<i>Apr. '03</i>	<i>Mar. '04</i>	<i>Apr. '03</i>
Total - All Industries	300.5	299.1	296.7	1.4	3.8
Private Industries	248.7	247.5	244.9	1.2	3.8
Construction	16.1	15.8	14.9	0.3	1.2
Manufacturing	37.1	37.0	37.8	0.1	-0.7
Retail Trade *	39.1	39.2	39.3	-0.1	-0.2
Professional & Business Services	20.5	20.5	20.2	0.0	0.3
Private Ed. Services*	12.7	12.6	12.4	0.1	0.3
Health Care & Social Assistance*	41.2	41.0	39.2	0.2	2.0
Leisure & Hospitality*	32.9	32.9	31.6	0.0	1.3
Total Government	51.8	51.6	51.8	0.2	0.0

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

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

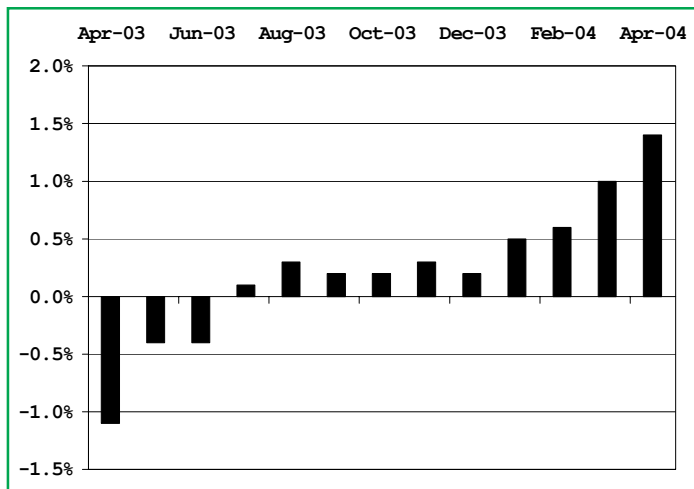
All seasonal adjustment performed with X12-ARIMA. Seasonal factors available from DET/LMI on request.

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

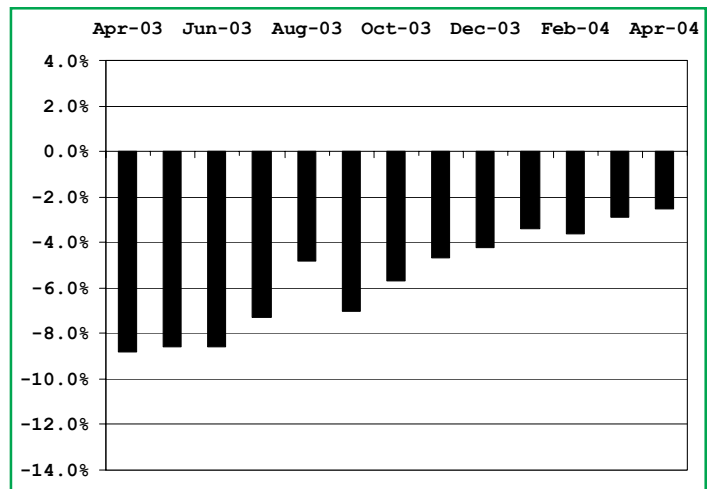
Vermont Annual Job Growth

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:	
	Apr. '04	Mar. '04	Apr. '03	Mar. '04	Apr. '03
TOTAL NONFARM	298,100	300,100	293,900	-2,000	4,200
TOTAL PRIVATE	243,850	245,950	240,000	-2,100	3,850
GOODS PRODUCING	52,200	51,050	52,350	1,150	-150
MANUFACTURING	36,750	36,650	37,700	100	-950
Durable Goods	26,200	26,150	27,150	50	-950
Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg.	9,150	9,200	9,900	-50	-750
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	2,900	2,850	2,800	50	100
Machinery Mfg.	3,050	3,050	3,000	0	50
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,450	2,400	2,250	50	200
Furniture & Related Product Mfg.	2,500	2,500	2,300	0	200
Non-Durable Goods	10,550	10,500	10,550	50	0
Food Mfg.	3,700	3,750	3,650	-50	50
CONSTRUCTION	14,600	13,550	13,750	1,050	850
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	850	850	900	0	-50
SERVICE-PROVIDING	245,900	249,050	241,550	-3,150	4,350
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	57,000	56,850	57,000	150	0
Wholesale Trade	10,250	10,200	10,150	50	100
Retail Trade	38,250	38,200	38,400	50	-150
Food & Beverage Stores	9,100	9,150	9,400	-50	-300
General Merchandise Store	2,800	2,750	2,750	50	50
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	8,500	8,450	8,450	50	50
Utilities	1,700	1,700	1,700	0	0
Transportation & Warehousing	6,800	6,750	6,750	50	50
INFORMATION	6,450	6,450	6,450	0	0
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	13,000	13,050	13,050	-50	-50
Finance & Insurance	10,100	10,100	10,150	0	-50
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	2,900	2,950	2,900	-50	0
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	20,200	19,900	19,950	300	250
Professional, Scientific and Technical	12,050	11,950	12,250	100	-200
Administrative, Support and Waste	7,850	7,650	7,450	200	400
EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES	54,200	54,050	52,000	150	2,200
Educational Services	13,200	13,100	12,900	100	300
College, Universities and Professional	7,350	7,250	7,250	100	100
Health Care and Social Assistance	41,000	40,950	39,100	50	1,900
Ambulatory Health Care Services	15,750	15,600	15,350	150	400
Hospitals	10,300	10,350	9,950	-50	350
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	6,700	6,750	6,550	-50	150
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	29,950	34,700	29,150	-4,750	800
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3,100	3,300	3,000	-200	100
Accommodation and Food Services	26,850	31,400	26,150	-4,550	700
Accommodations	10,150	14,200	9,400	-4,050	750
Hotel & Motels	9,200	13,250	8,500	-4,050	700
Food Services and Drinking Places	16,700	17,200	16,750	-500	-50
OTHER SERVICES	10,850	9,900	10,050	950	800
GOVERNMENT	54,250	54,150	53,900	100	350
Federal Government	6,100	6,050	6,200	50	-100
State Government Education	8,500	8,550	8,300	-50	200
Local Government Education	23,950	23,800	23,950	150	0
Other State Government	9,050	9,050	9,000	0	50
Other Local Government	6,650	6,700	6,450	-50	200

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:	
	Apr. '04	Mar. '04	Apr. '03	Mar. '04	Apr. '03
TOTAL NONFARM	108,550	107,750	107,350	800	1,200
TOTAL PRIVATE	89,300	88,450	88,550	850	750
GOODS PRODUCING	19,850	19,600	20,400	250	-550
MANUFACTURING	14,750	14,650	15,550	100	-800
Durable Goods	11,300	11,050	12,000	250	-700
NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING & CONST.	5,100	4,950	4,850	150	250
SERVICE PROVIDING	88,700	88,150	86,950	550	1,750
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	20,650	20,650	20,750	0	-100
Wholesale Trade	3,700	3,700	3,800	0	-100
Retail Trade	14,050	14,000	13,900	50	150
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	2,900	2,950	3,050	-50	-150
INFORMATION	3,300	3,250	3,000	50	300
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	5,250	5,150	5,250	100	0
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	9,600	9,450	9,650	150	-50
Professional Scientific and Technical	6,050	6,000	6,200	50	-150
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	18,300	18,250	17,450	50	850
Health Care and Social Assistance	14,800	14,800	13,950	0	850
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	8,650	8,450	8,500	200	150
Accommodation and Food Services	7,050	6,850	7,100	200	-50
Food Services and Drinking Places	6,050	5,850	5,900	200	150
OTHER SERVICES	3,700	3,650	3,550	50	150
GOVERNMENT	19,250	19,300	18,800	-50	450
Federal Government	2,800	2,800	2,950	0	-150
State Government Education	6,400	6,550	6,050	-150	350
Local Government Education	6,050	6,000	6,000	50	50
Other State Government	1,650	1,650	1,550	0	100
Other Local Government	2,350	2,300	2,250	50	100

Barre-Montpelier

TOTAL NONFARM	34,150	34,350	33,450	-200	700
TOTAL PRIVATE	25,300	25,500	24,900	-200	400
GOODS PRODUCING	4,500	4,300	4,350	200	150
MANUFACTURING	2,950	2,900	3,000	50	-50
NATURAL RESOURCES, MINING & CONST.	1,550	1,400	1,350	150	200
SERVICE-PROVIDING	29,650	30,050	29,100	-400	550
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	5,850	5,800	5,800	50	50
Wholesale Trade	900	950	950	-50	-50
Retail Trade	4,200	4,150	4,100	50	100
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	750	700	750	50	0
INFORMATION	650	650	700	0	-50
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	2,600	2,600	2,700	0	-100
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	2,050	2,100	1,850	-50	200
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	5,400	5,350	5,300	50	100
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,700	3,700	3,750	0	-50
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	2,850	3,300	2,800	-450	50
Accommodation and Food Services	2,550	2,900	2,500	-350	50
OTHER SERVICES	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0
GOVERNMENT	8,850	8,850	8,550	0	300
Federal Government	350	350	350	0	0
State Government Education	350	350	300	0	50
Local Government Education	2,750	2,750	2,750	0	0
Other State Government	4,750	4,750	4,500	0	250
Other Local Government	650	650	650	0	0

Unemployment Insurance Program Summary

	<i>April 2004</i>	<i>March 2004</i>	<i>April 2003</i>	<i>Percent Change From Last Month Last Year</i>	
UI Trust Fund	\$224,399,925	\$220,272,158	\$255,606,560	1.9%	-12.2%
UI Reg. Benefit Payments *	\$8,057,831	\$11,600,998	\$9,860,850	-30.5%	-18.3%
UI Initial Claims	4,515	3,381	5,954	33.5%	-24.2%
UI Weeks Claimed	35,876	42,758	44,753	-16.1%	-19.8%

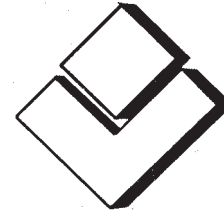
**Includes benefit payments for reimbursable employers.*

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>Apr. '04 Prelim.</i>	<i>Mar. '04 Revised</i>	<i>Apr. '03 Revised</i>	<i>Apr. '04 Prelim.</i>	<i>Mar. '04 Revised</i>	<i>Apr. '03 Revised</i>	<i>Apr. '04 Prelim.</i>	<i>Mar. '04 Revised</i>	<i>Apr. '03 Revised</i>
GOODS PRODUCING	596.17	595.36	584.38	40.2	40.2	39.7	14.83	14.81	14.72
Natural Resources & Mining	464.39	463.01	458.28	33.7	33.6	33.5	13.78	13.78	13.68
Construction	636.32	637.87	601.75	41.0	41.1	39.1	15.52	15.52	15.39
Manufacturing	583.20	583.20	581.85	40.0	40.0	40.1	14.58	14.58	14.51
Durable Goods	606.69	606.29	602.36	40.5	40.5	40.4	14.98	14.97	14.91
Non-Durable Goods	517.03	517.03	516.75	38.7	38.7	39.0	13.36	13.36	13.25
SERVICE PROVIDING									
Wholesale Trade	641.89	643.33	624.71	35.7	35.8	34.9	17.98	17.97	17.90
Retail Trade	368.64	368.64	362.92	30.9	30.9	30.6	11.93	11.93	11.86
Health Care & Social Assist.	549.34	547.53	536.38	30.3	30.2	29.7	18.13	18.13	18.06
BURLINGTON AREA									
Manufacturing	574.15	572.25	571.53	37.6	37.5	37.7	15.27	15.26	15.16

Vermont Department of

Labor & Industry



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Commissioner's Message

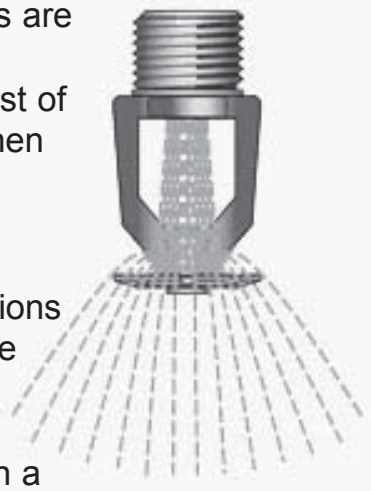
Knowing Your Fire Facts in Vermont...

To best protect your business, employees or family you need to know about the risk of fire here in Vermont. New information on the fire loss in Vermont is now available in a brief summary report that will be expanded into a more extensive and detailed report later this summer. The Report of the Fire Marshal is a collaborative effort between Labor & Industry Commissioner Michael Bertrand and Public Safety Commissioner Kerry Sleeper. The report shows that when the facts are put down on paper the impact of fires on Vermont is impressive.

Over the last five years fire departments in Vermont have responded to over 100,000 incidents with an average of over 1238 structure fires each year. Sixty-five civilians have died from fire during that time, along with four firefighters, with an estimated property loss of over \$100 million dollars.

Business and mercantile properties are more likely to have fires than any other commercial properties but fire is most common in residential occupancies including 1 & 2 family dwellings and apartments. Fire deaths are also more common in residential occupancies where people spend most of their time and are most vulnerable when they are asleep.

What's being done to address this fire problem? Many engineering solutions and code enforcement inspections are aimed at commercial properties and public buildings. Fire detection and alarm systems can alert people in a



building so they have time to get out of harms way and automatic fire sprinklers can contain and suppress a fire before it can do much damage; and from a business perspective the fire sprinkler system can keep your business operating or minimize any down time. But before these engineering solutions can work for you the systems have to be installed and once installed they have to be maintained.

Fire inspections are another key to fire safety. The 5200 fire inspections conducted by the Fire Prevention Division last year, plus additional inspections by municipalities, occurred due to construction activity, complaints by officials, tenants & landlords, requests made by owners; and inspections were also conducted on a periodic basis in building with a higher risk such as health care, education or assembly occupancies such as nightclubs and bars. Over the winter a concerted effort of inspec-

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tions at nightclubs and restaurants, combined with information for those owners, targeted the hazards of blocked exits, overcrowding and flammable decorations in the wake of the tragic nightclub fire in Rhode Island.

There are now over 1,000 Vermont fire fighters who are national certified.

When safety hazards are identified during an inspection a limited but reasonable time is allowed to correct the violation based on the degree of hazard, magnitude of the costs and the disruption of service.

Educational solutions go hand in hand with inspections for public buildings and education provides even a stronger focus for fire safety in multifamily dwellings, but for many single-family dwellings education may be the *only* solution for fire safety. A study by the Home Safety Council indicates that 97% of American households have at least one smoke detector and 83% test them at least once a year. Vermont law has required smoke detectors to be installed in single-family

dwellings for over 10 years and multi-family buildings for 28 years. Yet, over the last 5 years smoke detectors were reported as operating in only four of the 38 fatal residential fires. In some instances smoke detectors were in place but the batteries had been removed. Installing smoke detectors, checking them to make sure they work, having a home escape plan and practicing the escape plan are common public fire safety educational themes that were presented in 94 programs using one of the mobile Fire Safety Houses, the distribution of 26,000 Vermont Fire Safety Calendar and numerous fire safety programs by local fire departments. A year long campaign with the same coordinated focus of fire safety messages for each month is also underway using cable television providers around the state.

Critical to fire safety for Vermonters is the training available to people in the fire service. There are now over 1,000 Vermont fire fighters who are national certified and over 3,000 firefighters attend training each year through the Vermont Fire Academy.

Development of the data in the fire marshal report concerning fire fatalities is



based on investigations by Vermont State Police fire investigators. The Report of the Fire Marshal indicates a slight decrease in the total number of fires investigated but an increase in the number of arrested and juvenile arsons.

Everyone needs to know that fire is fast, dark, hot and deadly. It is not like what you see at the amusement park or at the movies. Fight Fire with Facts. For additional information contact Robert M. Howe, Chief Fire Prevention Officer, 1-800-640-2106.

Robert M. Howe



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

OCCUPATIONAL WAGE SURVEY

The occupational employment and wage survey continued in mid-May when nearly 900 Vermont employers received large white window envelopes containing questionnaires for the May 2004 panel. The packet includes contact and reporting information, and a yellow flyer of Classification Guidelines to assist employers in responding. The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program is conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, throughout the country. The results provide comparable wage and employment data by occupation that employers and workers can use to help assess pay levels. We always appreciate the time and effort of the employers who respond to our surveys. Occupational wage estimates from the May 2003 OES survey are available on our web page at <http://www.vtLmi.info/OCCUPATIONS>. We update the estimates twice a year.

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.
