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# Vermont Labor Market

March 2005

## Departments of

**Employment & Training** <http://www.det.state.vt.us> • P.O. Box 488, Montpelier, VT 05601-0488

**Labor & Industry** <http://www.state.vt.us/labind> • National Life Dr., Drawer 20, Montpelier, VT 05620-3401

## Commissioners' Message

*Patricia A. McDonald, DET Commissioner*

The Unemployment Insurance Division at the Department of Employment & Training has begun a project that will enable employers to file their Quarterly Wage and Contribution reports over a secure internet link. The project is funded by a special grant received from the U.S. Department of Labor, and addresses one of the goals set by the Vermont Institute on Government Effectiveness. The institute, which was created by Governor Douglas in 2002, has made a number of recommendations on ways that state agencies and departments can improve their interactions with the customers they serve.

Employers in Vermont have traditionally received a blank form in the mail each quarter and are required to complete the report and pay any contributions that are due not later than the last day of the month following the end of each calendar quarter. Those reports require a lot of "hands on" effort both on the part of the employers and the department, which processes some 20,000 such reports each quarter.

Several other states have already developed electronic systems that enable employers to file these reports on-line over secure internet links. We will be utilizing the best practices that came from the experience of other states.

Employers currently have to enter, for each individual they employed in a calendar quarter, the Social Security Number, Name, Gross Wages, whether the individual is paid Hourly or by Salary and if by Hour, the Hourly rate and the Gender of the employee. The new system will display the Social Security Number, Name, whether Hourly or Salary, and if Hourly, the rate of pay and Gender, as was previously reported by the employer. That means that the employer will only have to enter the Gross Wages paid. The system will use the Gross Wages paid to calculate the actual tax report and keep track of wages paid to each individual employee during a calendar year so that taxes will not be paid on wages over the statutory \$8000 per year limit. The employer will be presented with an electronic "tax bill", which they can proceed to pay by Electronic Funds Transfer or print off and use as a payment stub if the

*(Continued on page 2)*

## The Edge

### Employment for All

Many social justice issues plead for our attention these days, but neglect of the mentally ill is one of the most frightening and damaging to our society. The closing of Waterbury State Hospital leaves many without the guidance and help they need to re-enter our world as self-sustaining citizens. The Navigator Program, funded through the Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration, was designed to help people with disabilities "navigate" through the enormous challenges of seeking work. It is a national initiative that was established in 2003, and 17 states are involved. Vermont currently has six navigator positions, located throughout the state, and our navigator staff has doubled since the program's inception.

Unique to Vermont's Navigator Program is the agreement between Rutland Mental Health Services, Inc.(RMHS) and the Department of Employment & Training (DET) to establish a pilot project in the Rutland DET office. RMHS will place a Clinical-Masters Level professional in the Rutland Career Resource Center in order to assist DET case managers in their efforts to place clients with mental disabilities in meaningful employment. The mental health

*(Continued on page 2)*

# Commissioner's Message –

*(continued from front page)*

payment is to be made by check. Historical information will be maintained so that an employer can go back and check past reports. The system will also allow information that employers have already created in certain readily available accounting software packages to be uploaded to the wage report, so even that data does not have to be data entered by the employer. The system will allow employers to add new employees and delete employees who no longer work for them.

The target group for this new system is the 97% of employers in Vermont who have 20 or fewer employees. To help ensure that the system is designed to meet the needs of employers, the UI Division established an employer advisory group. This group will meet with the division work team from time to time to review the status of the project, provide feedback and, eventually, to help test the system, which is scheduled to roll out in 2006.

*Patricia A. McDonald*

## Contact DET

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# The Edge - *(continued from front page)*

specialist will be in the office two days a week to see clients. Appointments will be scheduled through the navigators with input from DET case managers. Together, the client, navigator and mental health counselor will develop a plan for re-entry to the workforce. Other states are looking at the Vermont pilot as a prototype. At the end of the pilot period, currently slated for June of this year, it will be evaluated by the parties involved. Some of the issues to be addressed are:

- The appropriateness of the level of confidentiality between RMHS
- If consumer rights and choices are being respected.

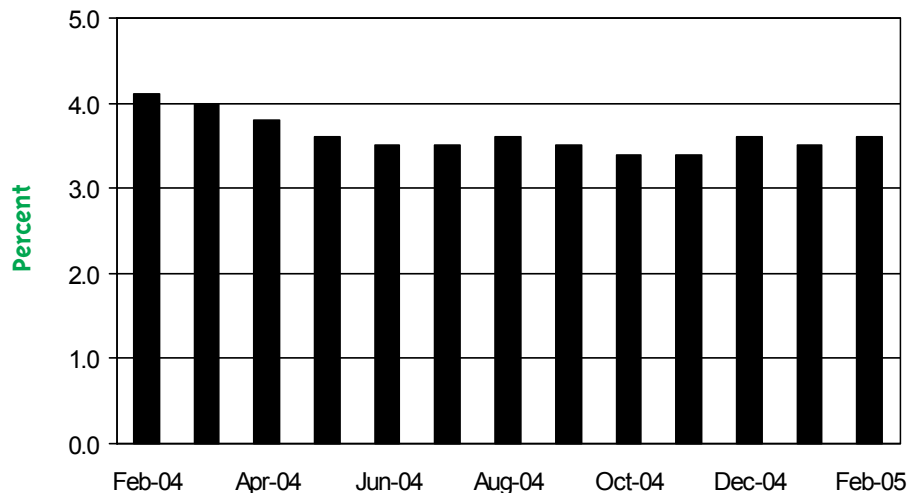
The success of such a program here will determine whether it becomes available in the other Navigator states.

Although each state involved has its own unique method working with clients, all of the Disability Program Navigators (DPN) are trained to assist people with disabilities access and coordinate the various programs that impact their ability to find, return to, or retain employment. They must act as job developers and develop linkages with employers to facilitate job placements for persons with disabilities. Navigators also work with in- and out-of-school youth with disabilities to help them plan a future of economic self-sufficiency. And, in addition to conducting outreach to a variety of agencies and organizations, DPNS are a valuable resource to the workforce investment community providing comprehensive knowledge of federal, state, and local programs that impact the ability of persons with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.

As the economy recovers, and the 'boomer' generation retires, employers will need more workers. The Disability Program Navigator Initiative will help put the skills, talent and enthusiasm of people with disabilities back into our workforce.

*For more information about Vermont's program contact Jim Dorsey at [jdorsey@det.state.vt.us](mailto:jdorsey@det.state.vt.us).*

## Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



## Vermont Unemployment Estimates Statewide *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

	Feb. '05	Jan. '05	Feb. '04	Changes from:	
				Jan. '05	Feb. '04
<b>TOTAL LABOR FORCE<sup>1</sup></b>	353,400	353,100	353,000	300	400
<b>EMPLOYED</b>	340,800	340,800	338,500	0	2,300
<b>UNEMPLOYED</b>	12,600	12,200	14,500	400	-1,900
<b>RATE (%)</b>	3.6	3.5	4.1	0.1	-0.5

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

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

AREA	Total Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Feb-05 Rate (%)	Jan-05 Rate (%)	Feb-04 Rate (%)
Barre-Montpelier	25,300	23,800	1,500	5.9	6.7	6.3
Bennington	12,700	12,100	600	4.7	4.5	5.0
Bradford	4,150	3,900	250	6.2	6.9	6.8
Brattleboro	23,000	22,100	900	4.0	4.0	4.1
Burlington-South Burlington	114,950	110,900	4,050	3.5	3.6	3.9
Hartford	18,700	18,400	300	1.6	1.7	2.8
Manchester	10,850	10,350	500	4.6	4.4	4.5
Middlebury	16,700	15,950	800	4.7	4.7	5.5
Morristown-Stowe	18,750	17,750	1,000	5.4	5.4	5.9
Newport	14,500	13,550	950	6.6	6.6	6.8
Randolph	8,100	7,700	350	4.5	4.6	5.8
Rutland	30,000	28,800	1,150	3.9	3.7	4.2
Springfield	12,950	12,400	550	4.2	3.9	4.4
St. Johnsbury	15,000	14,300	750	4.9	5.1	5.6
Swanton-Enosburg	14,550	13,650	900	6.1	6.0	6.7
Warren-Waitsfield	4,900	4,800	100	1.9	1.9	2.1
Woodstock	3,750	3,650	100	3.0	2.9	2.9
<b>Vermont Total</b>	<b>350,950</b>	<b>336,100</b>	<b>14,850</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.7</b>

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

Colebrook, NH-VT	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.1	11.5
Lebanon, NH-VT	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.8	1.8
Littleton, NH-VT	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.9	4.5
North Adams, MA-VT	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.3	6.7

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:	
	Feb. '05	Jan. '05	Feb. '04	Jan. '05	Feb. '04
<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>305.8</b>	<b>305.4</b>	<b>301.2</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>Private Industries</b>	<b>252.9</b>	<b>252.4</b>	<b>249.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.9</b>
Construction	17.0	16.8	16.4	0.2	0.6
Manufacturing	37.3	37.1	36.9	0.2	0.4
Retail Trade *	40.2	40.1	39.6	0.1	0.6
Professional & Business Services	21.2	21.2	20.9	0.0	0.3
Private Ed. Services*	12.4	12.6	12.3	-0.2	0.1
Health Care & Social Assistance*	41.5	41.3	40.2	0.2	1.3
Leisure & Hospitality*	33.4	33.2	33.1	0.2	0.3
<b>Total Government</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>

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

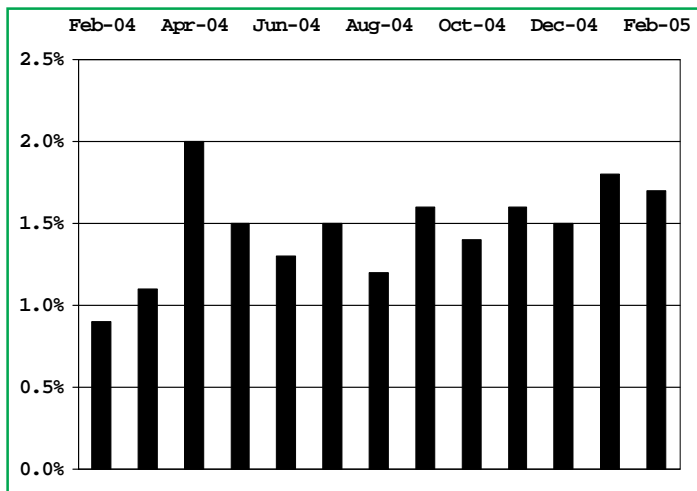
Note: Total - All Industries estimate is seasonally adjusted independently.

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

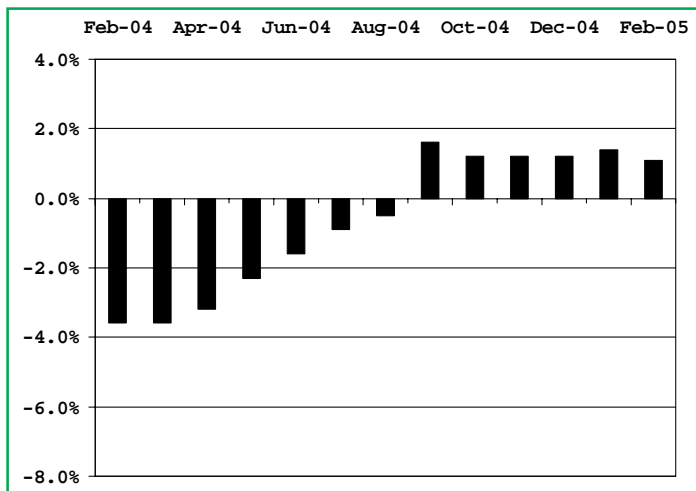
Produced by the Vermont Department of Employment & Training in cooperation with the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless otherwise noted.

## Vermont Annual Job Growth Not Seasonally Adjusted Data

### All Industries



### Manufacturing



# Nonfarm Employment In Vermont *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

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

INDUSTRY BY NAICS	Prelim. Feb. '05	Revised Jan. '05	Revised Feb. '04	Changes From:	
				Jan. '05	Feb. '04
<b>TOTAL NONFARM</b>	<b>305,850</b>	<b>304,100</b>	<b>300,600</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>5,250</b>
<b>TOTAL PRIVATE</b>	<b>250,650</b>	<b>250,550</b>	<b>246,300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,350</b>
<b>GOODS PRODUCING</b>	<b>52,300</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>1,300</b>
MANUFACTURING	36,850	36,700	36,450	150	400
Durable Goods	26,600	26,400	26,050	200	550
Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg.	9,200	9,200	9,100	0	100
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	2,950	2,900	2,850	50	100
Machinery Mfg.	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	0
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,400	2,400	2,300	0	100
Furniture & Related Product Mfg.	2,150	2,100	2,100	50	50
Non-Durable Goods	10,250	10,300	10,400	-50	-150
Food Mfg.	3,700	3,800	3,800	-100	-100
CONSTRUCTION	14,700	15,050	13,750	-350	950
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	750	750	800	0	-50
<b>SERVICE-PROVIDING</b>	<b>253,550</b>	<b>251,600</b>	<b>249,600</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>3,950</b>
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	58,050	58,550	57,450	-500	600
Wholesale Trade	10,150	10,150	10,150	0	0
Retail Trade	39,300	39,750	38,700	-450	600
Food & Beverage Stores	9,300	9,450	9,100	-150	200
General Merchandise Store	2,800	2,950	2,700	-150	100
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	8,600	8,650	8,600	-50	0
Utilities	1,700	1,700	1,700	0	0
Transportation & Warehousing	6,900	6,950	6,900	-50	0
INFORMATION	6,300	6,250	6,350	50	-50
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	13,400	13,350	13,100	50	300
Finance & Insurance	10,100	10,050	10,000	50	100
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	3,300	3,300	3,100	0	200
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	20,500	20,450	20,050	50	450
Professional, Scientific and Technical	12,300	12,150	12,300	150	0
Administrative, Support and Waste	7,950	8,000	7,450	-50	500
EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES	54,200	53,500	52,750	700	1,450
Educational Services	13,000	12,250	12,900	750	100
College, Universities and Professional	7,050	6,350	7,050	700	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	41,200	41,250	39,850	-50	1,350
Ambulatory Health Care Services	16,200	16,100	15,600	100	600
Hospitals	10,550	10,600	10,100	-50	450
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	6,750	6,800	6,600	-50	150
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	35,850	35,900	35,550	-50	300
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3,350	3,300	3,300	50	50
Accommodation and Food Services	32,500	32,600	32,250	-100	250
Accommodations	14,400	14,600	14,400	-200	0
Hotel & Motels	13,250	13,500	13,300	-250	-50
Food Services and Drinking Places	18,100	18,000	17,850	100	250
OTHER SERVICES	10,050	10,050	10,050	0	0
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>55,200</b>	<b>53,550</b>	<b>54,300</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>900</b>
Federal Government	6,300	6,300	6,250	0	50
State Government Education	8,800	7,450	8,550	1,350	250
Local Government Education	24,000	23,700	23,750	300	250
Other State Government	9,450	9,450	9,150	0	300
Other Local Government	6,650	6,650	6,600	0	50

# Labor & Industry



Laura Collins, L&I Commissioner

## It's all about risk

By Scott Meyer, WorkSAFE Program Director

A lot is happening in Vermont and from my view, most of it is heading in the right direction. It's a bit alarming to me to think about, but I have been doing occupational health work for the state since 1988, first as a Health Compliance officer for the Health Department's contribution to VOSHA. In 1995 I left that program and joined the Consultation Program. Finally a few years ago, I became the director of that program, now called Project WorkSAFE. I work with, and am surrounded by, a great staff of well-educated professionals who bring occupational health and safety topics to Vermont companies. Over the past 5 or so years, we have partnered with a lot of organizations and associations to deliver training and educational opportunities to VT business and their employees. It is very nice to know that we have witnessed a big turn around in the attitudes of companies which are now embracing workplace safety and health. This cultural movement can be hard to quantify, but the feeling is there.

As I was driving down Route 100 today (keep in mind it is a snowy day and there is an underlying coating of ice on the road), I began to think about ideas for this newsletter article. The most obvious idea was to speak about risk and especially risk as it applies to the workplace. Everyday tasks at work have risk. While there are many different opinions as to how to define "risk", I believe that as a community we are able to come to agreement on what is acceptable risk. There are guidelines and rules we can all follow that leave room for some of the variables. The biggest asset for many of these guidelines and rules is that they were developed by evaluating past accidents, exposures, illnesses, and experiences of near misses. Most of the OSHA regulations were built on correcting job tasks that resulted in injuries, illnesses and death. The next time you are told that an OSHA regulation covers a particular job, think before you become overwhelmed. Some person or group has already been down this road; someone got hurt and a host of individuals got together and developed a standard to reduce or eliminate that risk. This was done so future employees would not have to go through the pain of losing a leg or arm, developing an occupational illness, or becoming otherwise injured.

We have all heard the benefits of developing safety and health programs, conducting Job Hazard Analysis, following standards,

saving in workers compensation costs, and making employees. These are all incentives that drive our behaviors. We all have a responsibility as employers and employees, family members and friends, and even strangers to try to reduce the risks and prevent workplace accidents.

This year Vermont has seen quite a number of accidents in the workplace that have resulted in employees suffering irreversible injury. Some of these accidents have resulted in loss of life. Why? Accidents are typically caused by poor choices in training and/or external unanticipated hazards. We all need to think before we act on a task, if not for us for our friends and families.

Many Vermont companies have stood up to the plate to reduce risk at their places of employment. They have thought through the issues and worked hard to prevent injuries and illnesses. On March 16<sup>th</sup> Governor Douglas gave two Vermont companies the Governor's Workplace Safety Award for outstanding achievements. This was a first for Vermont. Though it was a rather small event, it was a huge step for Vermont employers and employees. There were two awards presented, one to a smaller employer (fewer than 20 employees) and another to a larger employer. These awards are important. They are given to companies who value their employees enough to go beyond government regulations

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Labor & Industry -

(continued from page 6)

to make sure their workplaces are safe. The list of companies nominated for these awards were:

### Chroma Technology

Corporation, Rockingham  
Cianbro Corporation, Alburg  
DEW Construction Company,  
Williston

### Energizer Batter

Manufacturing Inc.,  
Bennington

### GPI Construction Corp.,

Brattleboro

### HP Hood LLC, Barre

### Injury and Health

Management Solutions,  
Winooski

### Pike Industries, Inc., Barre

### Pizzagalli Construction

Company, South Burlington

### Vermont Electric Power

Company, Rutland

### Wright Construction Co., Inc.,

Mount Holly

*The winner of the “smaller” employer category (20 employees or fewer) is GPI Construction Company, Inc., Brattleboro. Some of the safety highlights for GPI Construction Company, Inc were:*

- High hazard work - construction
- 16 full time employees
- Management and worker commitment to safety
- NO lost time injuries for the past couple of years
- Utilizing safety and training in many forms: safety committee, safety briefings,

training videos, pre-job safety briefings, weekly safety tips and newsletters

- NO serious injuries in 30 years of construction.

*The winner of the “larger” employer category (over 20 employees) is DEW Construction Company, Williston. Some of the safety highlights for DEW were:*

- Has an all-volunteer safety committee made up of primarily “field” workers.
- Has achieved laudatory SHARP (Safety & Health Achievement Recognition Program<sup>1</sup>) status and did so as the first Vermont construction company.
- Workforce of 120.
- DEW’s core value is that “our employees are our greatest resource”.
- Unlimited safety budget. The company puts no cap on the amount of money spent on safety and health.
- Maintains a comprehensive fleet safety program.
- Extends safety requirements to the many subcontractors the company works with, thus engendering a safety culture

beyond its own work force.

- Promulgates and enforces specific training and requirements for all equipment, forklifts and boomlifts.
- Consistently outperforms in terms of incidence and lost workday rates.

Representatives of both companies were able to thank Governor Douglas for their recognition. They also thanked their staff for being part of the team and providing the backing for an improved safety culture. The Governor’s Workplace Safety Award will be awarded again next year. We would encourage all Vermont companies to try for this prestigious award.

**Accidents do and will continue to happen, but we can reduce the rate if we try and use better judgment. The Labor and Industry web page has two sources of information under the VOSHA and Project WorkSAFE program to help you reduce your risk. Take a few minutes and visit us at [www.state.vt.us/labind](http://www.state.vt.us/labind)**

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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 Department of Employment & Training 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:

**June 8, 2005 - Killington**  
Cortina Inn & Resort  
103 US Route 4

**June 22, 2005 - Burlington**  
Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center  
870 Williston Rd.

**September 14, 2005 - Springfield**  
Howard Dean Center  
307 South Street

**September 28, 2005 - Lyndonville**  
Charles Carter Business Resource Center  
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 [kjacobson@det.state.vt.us](mailto:kjacobs@det.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

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