

*Working Together
for Vermont*

<http://www.labor.vermont.gov>

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Commissioner's Message

Patricia A. McDonald, VDOL Commissioner

Farewell

It is with mixed emotions that I announce my retirement from state government effective May 31, 2006. While I am looking forward to the next chapter in my life, I will miss the people and challenges associated with running a state agency so closely linked to Vermont's workforce and economic wellbeing. While closing this chapter provides an opportunity to look back at some of the accomplishments of the past year and a half, it also serves as a time to reflect on VDOL's future:

On July 1, 2005, the Departments of Labor and Industry and Employment & Training merged to become the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL). The merger created a one-stop shopping for businesses, workers, and job seekers that includes worker safety and job training programs, job matching services, economic and labor market statistics, workers' compensation, job health and safety consultation, unemployment insurance, and wage and hour information. This "under one roof" concept has provided a number of efficiencies including program coordination and oversight.

As Vermont and the nation adjust to an era of complex workforce needs and demographic changes, VDOL will continue exploring ways to improve services to Vermont's businesses and workers including:

- Developing a new, user-friendly web site that will enable customers to access a comprehensive array of services and information related to business and individual needs.
- Developing an Internet-based employer reporting system for unemployment insurance and, in partnership with the Tax Department and Secretary of State, creating an Internet-based employer registration system. In addition the Unemployment Insurance and Wages Division is developing a cross-match program with the Social Security Administration to prevent identity theft and fraud.
- Enhancing state and business planning through a partnership between VDOL's Labor Market Information Division, the Department of Economic Development and others to identify critical Vermont-specific labor market information.

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The Edge

Apprenticeship is Alive and Well in Vermont

Vermont has an active and thriving apprenticeship program in more than 30 different occupations. Throughout the state, apprentices are engaged in on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction, all as part of the Vermont Registered Apprenticeship Program.

The electrical and plumbing trades, perhaps due to licensing requirements, have the largest number of registered apprentices. Currently, Vermont has over 350 electrical apprentices and over 230 plumbing apprentices. Individuals in the program receive 8000 hours of OJT in total, as well as 144 hours of classroom training each year. Classes are held in the areas around the state where the largest number of students live and work. This year, classes are being held through Vermont Technical College in Barre, Hartford, Rutland, Springfield and Williston. In addition, there are a limited number of classes supported directly by the Vermont Department of Labor in St. Johnsbury and Newport.

In addition to the plumbing and electrical trades, Vermont also has apprentices in child care, sheet-metal, line maintenance, police

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Commissioner's Message –

(continued from front page)

- Proactively reaching out to the business and education community with new VOSHA and workplace safety initiatives that will help ensure a safe and healthy work place for Vermont businesses and workers.
- Redesigning the Workforce Development Division's service delivery system to customers and reemphasizing its commitment to focus on and respond to employer needs.
- Engaging in a five-year effort to transform state government through the Strategic Enterprise Initiative. VDOL will use this formal process, which involves staff at all levels, to improve efficiency and services to customers within VDOL and across state government.

I would like to underscore the fact that these accomplishments and on-going initiatives would not be possible without the dedicated help of a committed staff.

Since 1991, I have had the honor of serving three governors and holding seven state leadership positions. This experience has allowed me to work closely with various administrations, state employees, legislators, and Vermonters across our great state.

Contact VDOL

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

I have been humbled by the opportunities these experiences have afforded me. Now, as I prepare to leave, I am confident that VDOL will continue to provide a customer oriented, continuous improvement approach to providing services to help businesses and individuals meet current and future workforce and workplace needs.

Patricia A. McDonald

The Edge - *(continued from front page)*

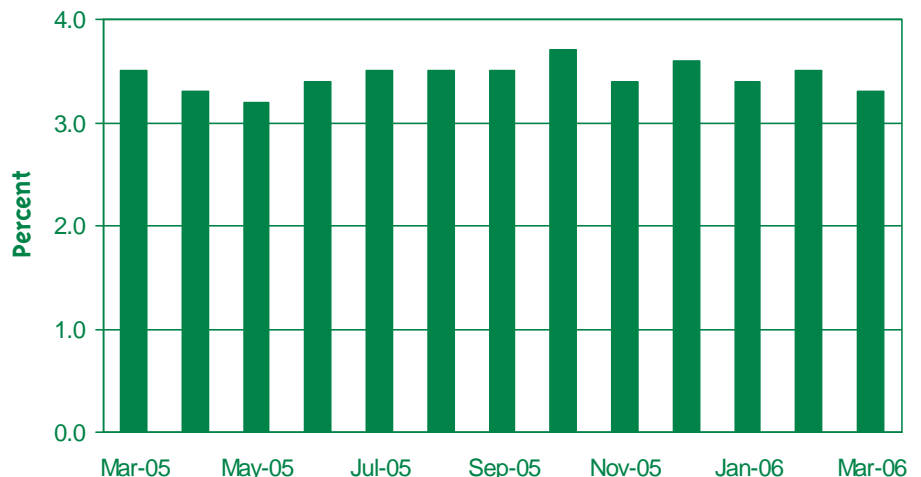
work, tramway maintenance, carpentry, construction laboring and several occupations in metal machining. In total, Vermont has over 800 registered apprentices.

Apprenticeship has many advantages to both apprentices and employer sponsors. Apprentices receive quality training while learning on the job; they also receive a nationally recognized "Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship" upon completion of the program. Employer sponsors reap the benefit of having a well-trained and committed workforce. Participation in apprenticeship also helps employers with retention of workers. It can be a useful recruitment tool because applicants know they will be involved in a structured training program.

The Department of Labor tracks the wage rates of apprenticeship graduates very closely. It is evident that apprentices enjoy very significant wage gains by the end of program. During the 2005 program year, a total of 133 individuals completed apprenticeship. The average annual wage across all trades was \$37,856.00. The occupation with the highest annual average wage rate was line maintenance.

If you are interested in finding out more about apprenticeship in Vermont, please visit our new web site at www.labor.vermont.gov.

Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



Vermont Unemployment Estimates Statewide *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

	Mar. '06	Feb. '06	Mar. '05	Changes from:	
				Feb. '06	Mar. '05
TOTAL LABOR FORCE¹	361,100	362,600	354,400	-1,500	6,700
EMPLOYED	349,000	349,800	341,900	-800	7,100
UNEMPLOYED	12,100	12,700	12,500	-600	-400
RATE (%)	3.3	3.5	3.5	-0.2	-0.2

¹Includes proprietors, professionals, and unpaid family workers.

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

AREA	Total Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Mar-06 Rate (%)	Feb-06 Rate (%)	Mar-05 Rate (%)
Barre-Montpelier	29,650	28,250	1,450	4.8	5.0	4.8
Bennington	12,550	12,050	500	4.0	4.1	4.6
Bradford	4,900	4,700	200	4.6	5.0	4.8
Brattleboro	25,000	24,050	850	3.5	3.5	3.5
Burlington-South Burlington	113,200	109,300	3,900	3.5	3.7	3.5
Hartford	19,000	18,600	400	2.2	2.2	2.5
Manchester	12,550	12,100	450	3.7	4.0	3.9
Middlebury	17,550	16,850	700	4.0	4.3	4.4
Morristown-Stowe	20,400	19,500	950	4.6	4.7	5.2
Newport	14,200	13,250	950	6.6	6.7	6.9
Randolph	8,250	7,950	300	3.8	4.5	4.1
Rutland	29,550	28,500	1,100	3.7	4.1	3.8
Springfield	12,650	12,150	550	4.2	4.2	4.0
St. Johnsbury	14,650	13,950	700	4.8	5.2	4.7
Swanton-Enosburg	14,500	13,550	950	6.5	6.5	6.2
Warren-Waitsfield	4,750	4,600	100	2.4	2.4	2.2
Woodstock	3,500	3,400	100	2.3	2.5	3.0
Vermont Total	359,150	344,900	14,250	4.0	4.2	4.1

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

Colebrook, NH-VT	3,750	3,600	150	4.1	4.3	4.1
Lebanon, NH-VT	45,100	44,050	1,050	2.3	2.5	2.3
Littleton, NH-VT	15,350	14,800	550	3.7	3.7	3.4
North Adams, MA-VT	16,900	15,850	1,050	6.3	6.5	6.0

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:	
	Mar. '06	Feb. '06	Mar. '05	Feb. '06	Mar. '05
Total - All Industries	306.2	306.0	305.0	0.2	1.2
Private Industries	252.9	252.7	252.0	0.2	0.9
Construction	16.4	16.4	16.3	0.0	0.1
Manufacturing	36.8	36.7	36.9	0.1	-0.1
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	59.9	59.8	59.4	0.1	0.5
Retail Trade *	40.9	40.8	40.4	0.1	0.5
Financial Activities	13.2	13.3	13.3	-0.1	-0.1
Professional & Business Services	22.2	22.2	21.9	0.0	0.3
Education & Health Care	54.9	54.8	54.0	0.1	0.9
Private Ed. Services*	12.4	12.5	12.4	-0.1	0.0
Health Care & Social Assistance*	42.5	42.5	41.4	0.0	1.1
Leisure & Hospitality	32.6	32.8	33.2	-0.2	-0.6
Other Services	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
Total Government	53.3	53.3	53.0	0.0	0.3

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

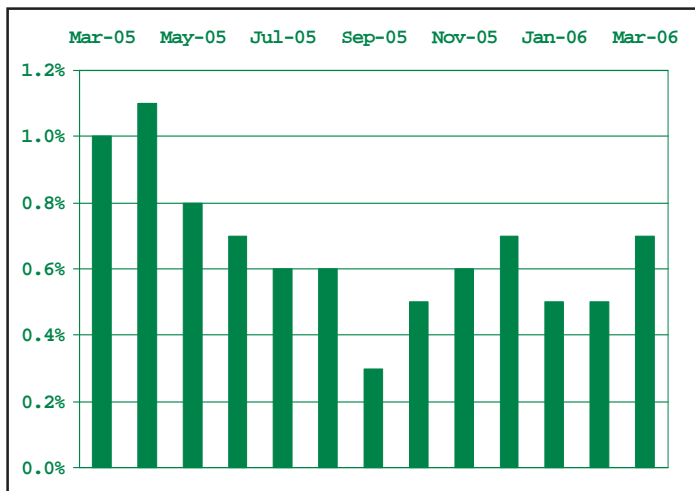
Note: Total - All Industries estimate is seasonally adjusted independently.

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

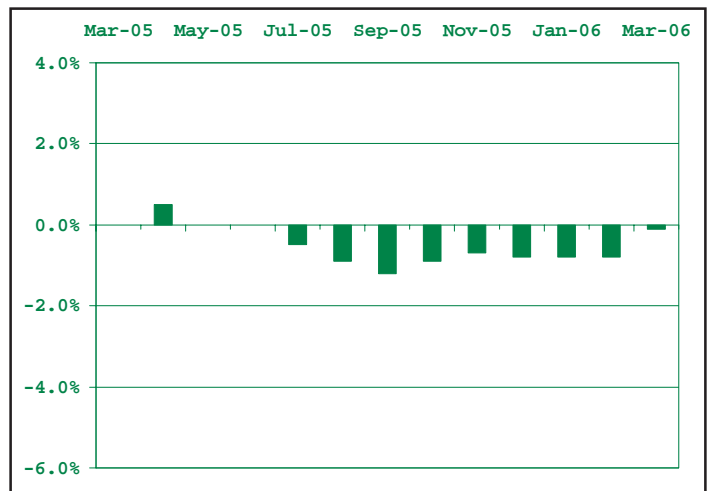
Produced by the Vermont Department of Labor in cooperation with the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless otherwise noted.

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:	
	Mar. '06	Feb. '06	Mar. '05	Feb. '06	Mar. '05
TOTAL NONFARM	305,650	305,700	303,450	-50	2,200
TOTAL PRIVATE	249,900	250,250	248,250	-350	1,650
GOODS PRODUCING	51,150	51,050	50,950	100	200
MANUFACTURING	36,350	36,300	36,400	50	-50
Durable Goods	26,350	26,250	26,200	100	150
Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg.	9,250	9,200	9,100	50	150
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	3,050	3,050	2,950	0	100
Machinery Mfg.	3,000	2,950	3,050	50	-50
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,450	2,450	2,400	0	50
Furniture & Related Product Mfg.	1,950	2,000	2,100	-50	-150
Non-Durable Goods	10,000	10,050	10,200	-50	-200
Food Mfg.	3,650	3,700	3,600	-50	50
CONSTRUCTION	14,100	14,050	13,800	50	300
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	700	700	750	0	-50
SERVICE-PROVIDING	254,500	254,650	252,500	-150	2,000
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	58,600	58,750	58,100	-150	500
Wholesale Trade	9,950	9,950	9,850	0	100
Retail Trade	39,900	40,000	39,350	-100	550
Food & Beverage Stores	9,450	9,400	9,300	50	150
General Merchandise Store	2,650	2,700	2,750	-50	-100
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	8,750	8,800	8,900	-50	-150
Utilities	1,700	1,700	1,700	0	0
Transportation & Warehousing	7,050	7,100	7,200	-50	-150
INFORMATION	6,350	6,300	6,250	50	100
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	13,100	13,050	13,100	50	0
Finance & Insurance	9,900	9,850	9,900	50	0
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	3,200	3,200	3,200	0	0
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	21,500	21,300	21,200	200	300
Professional, Scientific and Technical	12,900	12,800	12,750	100	150
Administrative, Support and Waste	8,350	8,250	8,150	100	200
EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES	55,300	55,100	54,150	200	1,150
Educational Services	12,900	12,950	12,850	-50	50
College, Universities and Professional	6,900	6,950	6,950	-50	-50
Health Care and Social Assistance	42,400	42,150	41,300	250	1,100
Ambulatory Health Care Services	15,600	15,550	15,800	50	-200
Hospitals	10,800	10,750	10,350	50	450
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	6,750	6,700	6,650	50	100
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	34,100	34,950	34,650	-850	-550
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3,200	3,250	3,400	-50	-200
Accommodation and Food Services	30,900	31,700	31,250	-800	-350
Accommodations	13,000	13,750	13,300	-750	-300
Hotel & Motels	12,150	12,850	12,400	-700	-250
Food Services and Drinking Places	17,900	17,950	17,950	-50	-50
OTHER SERVICES	9,800	9,750	9,850	50	-50
GOVERNMENT	55,750	55,450	55,200	300	550
Federal Government	5,950	5,950	6,050	0	-100
State Government Education	8,850	8,800	8,850	50	0
Local Government Education	24,400	24,350	24,200	50	200
Other State Government	9,500	9,450	9,200	50	300
Other Local Government	7,050	6,900	6,900	150	150



Teen Workers Safety

Teen workers can be an asset to your workforce. They are enthusiastic and eager to learn. However, injuries can have a lifelong impact, and on-the-job injuries to teens can be costly, even deadly.

According to NIOSH, each year about 70 teens die and about 77,000 are injured seriously enough to require hospital emergency department treatment. An estimated 230,000 working teens may be injured each year.

The Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Act requires that employers provide a safe and healthful work environment for employees and comply with Vermont occupational safety and health standards. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Employers must assess the hazards in their workplace, select the appropriate (PPE) personal protective equipment for their employees, (such as gloves, aprons, and foot protection) and have their employees use the PPE [1910.132(a)] and [1910.132(d)].
- Employers must make any employees exposed to hazardous materials aware of the hazards and train them to protect themselves from these hazards [1910.1200 Hazard Communication Standard].
- Employers must display a poster prepared by the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) informing employees of the protections of the Vermont Occupational Safety and Health and its amendments.

Employers should consider implementing the following:

- A review of the worksite to identify and eliminate hazards to ensure that jobs are as safe as possible.
- Provide **training** to ensure that adolescents recognize hazards and are competent in **safe work practices**. Training should include how to prepare for fires, accidents, violent situations, and what to do if they get injured. Teens need to know that if they get injured, they have the right to file a claim to cover their medical benefits and some of their lost work time.
- **Provide appropriate supervisors** for teens that can recognize hazards and be competent in safe work practices.
- Routinely verify through **supervision** that teens continue to recognize hazards and use **safe work practices**.
- **Stress safety**, particularly among first-line supervisors; they have the greatest opportunity to influence teens and their work habits.
- Implement a **mentoring or buddy system** for new youth workers. Have either an adult or experienced teen work with the teen to answer questions to help the inexperienced worker learn the ropes of a new job.

- Encourage teens to **ask questions** about tasks or procedures that are unclear or not understood.
- Remember that teens are not just “little adults.” Employers must be mindful of the unique aspects of communicating with teens.
- Ensure that equipment operated by teens is both legal and safe for them to use. Employers should label equipment young workers **are not allowed to** operate.
- Develop a drug-free workplace program. Abuse of alcohol and other drugs by workers of any age creates significant but avoidable workplace hazards. Drug-free workplace programs that educate employees about drug issues help improve workplace safety and health and send a clear, early signal to young workers that in order to work, they must be drug free.
- Develop a **safety and health program** in your facility to help prevent workplace injuries. A strong safety and health program involves all workers, supervisors, management, experienced workers, and teen workers.

**If you have questions
you can contact VOSHA at
802-828-2765
or
Project WorkSAFE
consultation at
1-888-SAFE YES.**

Youth Get Out of School and into Work

With the snow quickly disappearing, many families and employers are beginning to consider summer jobs for teenagers. In October 2003 the Department of Labor adopted new Child Labor Rules consistent with the federal child labor regulations adopted by the US Department of Labor. Vermont child labor regulations are promulgated in order to protect children from work in harmful and dangerous occupations. Child labor refers to work performed by youth under age 18. These guidelines primarily limit or restrict child labor in hazardous employment. The full text of these rules is available on our website at www.labor.vermont.gov.

The following is a very general summary of these rules relative to teenagers. For more detailed information, visit our website or call the Wage & Hour Program at (802) 828-0267.

Hazardous work prohibited.

The rules prohibit child labor in hazardous employment and identify specific hazardous jobs as follows

- 1) Manufacturing or storing explosives
- 2) Driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor vehicle
- 3) Coal mining
- 4) Logging and sawmilling
- 5) Power-driven wood-working machines
- 6) Exposure to radioactive substances and to ionizing radiations
- 7) Power-driven hoisting equipment
- 8) Power-driven metal-forming, punching, and shearing machines
- 9) Mining, other than coal mining
- 10) Meat packing or processing (including power-driven meat slicing machines)
- 11) Power-driven bakery machines
- 12) Power-driven paper-products machines

- 13) Manufacturing brick, tile, and related products
- 14) Power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears
- 15) Wrecking, demolition, and ship breaking operations
- 16) Roofing operations
- 17) Excavation operations

Additional restrictions for 15 and under

The rules establish time and job restrictions for youth age 15 and under. Time restrictions during the school year are 3 hours/day and 18 hours/week. When school is out of session, time restrictions are 8 hours/day and 40 hours/week. Work hours may run between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. (extended to 9 p.m. from June 1 – Labor Day). Additionally, youth aged 15 and under are prohibited from employment in the following:

- Baking
- Loading or unloading goods on off trucks
- Boiler or engine rooms
- Freezers or meat coolers
- Building repair or maintenance
- Operating deli meat slicers or grinders
- Window washing; on scaffolding
- Warehouse work
- Power driven mower, cutter
- Motor vehicle repair

Minimum age is 14 years.

The general rule is that children under the age of 14 are not permitted to work. There are, however, a few limited exceptions allowing for employment under the age of 14 including:

- Agricultural employment outside of school hours
- Newspaper delivery
- Actors or performers in motion pictures, theater, radio or television productions
- Employment by a parent (except for hazardous employment)

Child Labor Certificate Requirements

A child under age 16 may not be employed beyond the time frames or exceptions established by the rules, unless the commissioner issues a certificate approving of such employment.

Agricultural employment

The rules provide specific guidelines for child labor in agriculture and all branches of farming. Some highlights from these rules follow:

- **16-and 17 year-olds** may perform *any* agricultural job for unlimited hours.
- **15-year-olds and under** may perform non-hazardous agricultural work
- **15-year-olds prohibited** from performing agricultural work in the following:
 - operating or riding on a tractor
 - operating a bus, truck or automobile transporting passengers
 - operating or assisting to operate a corn picker, combine, hay mower, hay baler, forage harvester, feed grinder, conveyor or unloading mechanism, power post-hole digger, trencher or earthmoving equipment, fork lift or power saw.
 - working in a yard, pen or stall with a bull, boar, stud horse, sow with suckling pigs or cow with newborn calf.
 - felling, bucking, skidding, loading or unloading timber over 6 inches in diameter
 - working from a ladder or scaffold at a height over 20 feet.

A complete listing of child labor regulations and hazardous job restrictions is available on the Federal Department of Labor website at <http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/whd/hrq.htm#9>.

Additional Vermont Wage & Hour information is available on the Vermont Wage & Hour Program website at www.labor.vermont.gov or by calling the Wage & Hour division at (802) 828-0267.



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use \$300

Announcement

2 NEW Vermont Business Safety Publications

There is now a plain English resource that can help your business develop or fine tune an injury prevention management system at your workplace: ***“DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE SAFETY & HEALTH PROGRAM – Tips for Business Owners and Managers”***.

There is also a publication to help new businesses understand Workers' Compensation and VOSHA standards: ***“WORKPLACE SAFETY Q's and A's for VERMONT SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYERS”***.

These are available at: www.vtsbdc.org/regulatory.cfm, or you may request hard copies from: wpsafety@labor.state.vt.us.

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).