

NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK

STATE OF MONTANA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, June 20, 2014

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Montana's Unemployment Rate Drops to 4.6%

HELENA – Montana's unemployment rate dropped 0.2 percentage points over the month for a rate of 4.6% in May. Montana's employment growth continues to be very strong. The U.S. unemployment rate held steady at 6.3%.

"Montana's unemployment rate continues to drop due to strong employment growth in 2014," Governor Steve Bullock said. "Montanans can enjoy these summer months with confidence in a growing economy and a state government that is doing everything it can to facilitate continued growth into the future."

"Montana's unemployment rate is now below average levels, which will drive wage growth during the next year," said Labor Commissioner Pam Bucy. "The Department of Labor and Industry continues to work to train workers that are still unemployed so the benefits of the economic recovery are felt by all Montanans."

Total employment, which includes payroll employment plus agricultural and self-employed workers, added 1,326 jobs in May. Montana has added over 10,000 jobs since the beginning of the year, and since May 2013 has had an annual growth rate of 2.1%. In comparison, Montana's average growth rate is roughly 1% annually. The labor force increased by 341 workers, more than adding back the slight losses that were posted last month. Payroll employment estimates indicate smaller job gains over the year of roughly 5,000 jobs, with only 300 private sector jobs added in May.

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.4% in May after increasing by 0.3% in April, raising concerns that inflation may be on the rise. Inflation has been extremely low during the recession, but is expected to increase due to faster economic growth. A 0.4% increase is still within moderate levels. The price increase was broad-based across many goods, with the food index rising by 0.5%. Core inflation, measured by the all items less food and energy index, rose by 0.3 percent, the largest increase since August 2011.

Audio: [1](#)

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*** Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau at 1-800-541-3904.*

The next Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, July 18, 2014.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******



Visit our website at www.lmi.mt.gov for additional information and analysis, including industry employment levels, background on the unemployment rate, and annual employment data for Montana's Indian Reservations. **This month's Economy at a Glance article looks at the employment and wage success for graduates from the Montana University System.** County unemployment rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted and should be compared to the unadjusted statewide unemployment rate of **4.1** percent. County labor force information can be found by using this link:
<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/databrowsing/?PAGEID=4&SUBID=205>.

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