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Montana's Unemployment Rate drops to 3.9 Percent
Wages Increased by 3.5 Percent in 2014

HELENA – Montana's unemployment rate declined to 3.9 percent in May, down 0.1 percentage points from April. Employment levels in Montana are now over the half million threshold for the first time ever. The U.S. unemployment rate increased by 0.1 percentage points to 5.5 percent. New data from the Montana Department of Labor & Industry also showed that the state's average annual wage increased to \$38,875 in 2014, a 3.5% increase over last year.

"Montana added roughly 1,500 more jobs last month," Governor Steve Bullock said. "Our strong growth and low unemployment are driving up wages, meaning more Montanans are working and putting more money in their pockets on payday."

"Strong employment growth in the first five months of 2015 has pushed Montana's employment level to more than half a million jobs," said Labor Commissioner Pam Bucy. "The Montana Department of Labor and Industry is committed to identifying and training more Montana workers to increase this number even further."

Montana's total employment levels continued to grow, increasing by 1,469 jobs in May, for a total of 11,989 jobs added over the last twelve months and total employment of 504,195. Total employment estimates include payroll employment, plus agricultural and self-employed workers. Payroll employment did not increase over the month, but posted a larger than average gain of 1,900 jobs in April.

Annual wage data for 2014 is now available, indicating that the average annual wage in Montana increased 3.5 percent last year to \$38,875. Inflation in 2014 was only 1.6 percent, meaning that Montana workers experienced real wage growth above the rate of inflation.

Also new this month, the Montana Department of Labor and Industry has expanded its local labor market information to provide monthly unemployment rates for each of Montana's seven reservations. The reservation employment and unemployment rates are produced using the same data and methodology as the county unemployment rates, making the data comparable to other

counties, the state, or other regions. Like the county data, the reservation data is not seasonally adjusted and will vary month to month due to both seasonal changes and underlying trends in the economy. The monthly publication of comparable unemployment rates for Montana’s reservation areas will assist these areas with economic development and research. Reservation unemployment rates will be available in the tables below and in the data search tool at www.lmi.mt.gov.

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.4 percent in May on a seasonally adjusted basis, mostly due to a spike in gasoline prices. The index for all items less food and energy, also called core inflation, rose 0.1 percent in May.

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*** Statewide 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 0.5 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 for the month of June 2015 will be released on Tuesday, July 21, 2015.

******* 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 wage rates by occupation. This month’s Economy at a Glance provides information on Montana’s wages compared to other states.

******* COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATES *******

The unemployment rate and ranking for each of Montana’s 56 counties is provided below for your convenience. County unemployment rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted and should be compared to the unadjusted statewide unemployment rate of **3.4%**.

Rank	County	Unemployment Rate		Employment	
		Current Unemployment Rate	Change over Year	Current Employment	Job Change from Last Year
1	Sheridan County	1.5	-0.8	2,141	31
2	Fallon County	1.7	-0.2	2,193	109
3	Daniels County	1.8	-0.4	974	9
3	McCone County	1.8	0	1,161	34
5	Powder River County	2.0	-0.9	1,122	45
6	Sweet Grass County	2.1	-1.3	1,815	48

7	Chouteau County	2.2	-0.7	2,671	31
7	Liberty County	2.2	-0.6	1,037	37
9	Valley County	2.3	-0.3	4,464	136
10	Dawson County	2.4	-0.1	4,977	198
11	Garfield County	2.5	0.5	778	10
11	Richland County	2.5	0.1	7,487	381
13	Carter County	2.6	-0.3	702	3
13	Custer County	2.6	-0.1	6,574	-2
13	Toole County	2.6	-0.1	2,366	16
13	Yellowstone County	2.6	-0.7	80,275	2,904
17	Judith Basin County	2.7	-0.6	994	11
17	Lewis and Clark County	2.7	-0.6	34,652	526
17	Wibaux County	2.7	-0.3	582	35
20	Gallatin County	2.8	-0.8	56,866	2,407
20	Stillwater County	2.8	-0.5	5,039	77
22	Beaverhead County	2.9	-0.4	4,845	37
22	Carbon County	2.9	-0.7	5,495	219
22	Jefferson County	2.9	-1.2	5,541	98
25	Deer Lodge County	3.0	-0.8	5,215	72
25	Teton County	3.0	-0.3	2,979	98
27	Missoula County	3.1	-0.8	59,858	1,464
28	Cascade County	3.2	-0.6	37,199	0
29	Fergus County	3.3	-0.2	5,688	-9
29	Golden Valley County	3.3	-0.7	407	18
29	Madison County	3.3	-1.7	3,651	192
29	Meagher County	3.3	-0.5	917	-6
33	Hill County	3.4	-1.9	7,588	2
33	Musselshell County	3.4	0	2,416	112
33	Petroleum County	3.4	0.4	310	17
33	Silver Bow County	3.4	-1.1	16,318	39
33	Wheatland County	3.4	-0.9	815	15
38	Prairie County	3.5	-1.2	529	20
39	Pondera County	3.6	-1	2,877	62
40	Blaine County	3.7	-1.6	2,417	-45
41	Lake County	3.9	-1.1	12,281	67
41	Park County	3.9	-1.1	7,901	227
41	Powell County	3.9	-0.8	2,884	39
41	Rosebud County	3.9	-0.4	4,197	-95
45	Roosevelt County	4	-0.7	4,700	21
46	Broadwater County	4.1	-1.7	2,454	78
46	Phillips County	4.1	-0.8	1,990	29
48	Ravalli County	4.3	-1.1	18,481	494
49	Flathead County	4.7	-1.1	41,737	713
50	Granite County	4.9	-2.1	1,488	115
51	Treasure County	5.4	1.6	365	8
52	Big Horn County	5.5	-3.6	5,327	167
53	Mineral County	6.1	-1.3	1,659	30
54	Sanders County	6.5	-1.4	4,445	144

55	Lincoln County	7.8	-2.2	7,363	178
56	Glacier County	8	-1.5	5,328	-113

******* RESERVATION UNEMPLOYMENT RATES *******

The unemployment rate and ranking for each of Montana’s seven reservations is provided below for your convenience. Reservation unemployment rates and employment levels are not seasonally adjusted and should be compared to the unadjusted statewide unemployment rate of **3.4%**. Reservation areas overlap with county areas, meaning that unemployed individuals living on a reservation will be included in both the reservation and county totals.

Rank	Reservation	Unemployment Rate		Employment	
		Current Unemployment Rate	Change over Year	Current Employment	Job Change from Last Year
1	Flathead Reservation	4.3	-1.1	12,049	95
2	Fort Peck Reservation	4.9	-0.8	4,247	31
3	Crow Reservation	8.5	-5.1	2,664	84
4	Fort Belknap Reservation	8.9	-2.9	796	-13
5	Northern Cheyenne Reservation	9.6	-2.1	1,473	-5
6	Rocky Boy’s Reservation	9.6	-4.5	1,120	5
7	Blackfeet Reservation	11.0	-2.1	3,788	-70