

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
APRIL 6, 2007

Industry Payroll Employment (Establishment Survey Data)

In March, nonfarm payroll employment rose by 180,000 to 137.6 million, after seasonal adjustment. This increase followed gains of 162,000 in January and 113,000 in February (as revised). Over the year, total nonfarm employment rose by about 2.0 million. In March, construction employment rose sharply, following a large decline in the prior month. A sizable job gain also occurred in general merchandise stores in March, and job growth continued in health care and in food services. Manufacturing employment continued to trend down over the month.

Construction employment increased by 56,000 in March, mostly offsetting a decline of 61,000 in February. Unusually adverse weather likely contributed to February's decline. Overall, the construction industry has shown no net growth since employment peaked in September 2006. Over this span, job gains in the nonresidential components of construction have been more than offset by losses in the residential components.

Within retail trade, employment in general merchandise stores rose by 36,000 in March and by 81,000 in the first quarter of this year. Despite the recent growth, employment in general merchandise stores was little changed over the year. Elsewhere in retail trade, employment in building material and garden supply stores has declined by 15,000 since reaching its peak in October 2006.

Employment in health care continued to increase in March with a gain of 30,000; over the year, the industry added 348,000 jobs. In March, offices of physicians and hospitals added 9,000 jobs each, while nursing and residential care facilities added 7,000. Food services and drinking places also continued to add jobs in March (+19,000). Over the year, employment in the industry grew by 335,000.

Professional and business services employment was essentially unchanged in March and over the first quarter of 2007. The industry added half a million jobs in 2006. **In March, employment continued to expand in computer systems design and in management and technical consulting services, but those job gains were offset by small job losses in accounting and bookkeeping and in employment services.**

Manufacturing employment continued to trend down over the month (-16,000), with declines in furniture and related products (-4,000), computer and electronic products (-4,000), textile mills (-2,000), and paper and paper products (-2,000).

Weekly Hours (Establishment Survey Data)

The average workweek for production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls increased by 0.1 hour to 33.9 hours in March, seasonally adjusted. The manufacturing workweek increased by 0.2 hour to 41.1 hours, and manufacturing overtime increased by 0.1 hour to 4.3 hours. (See table B-2.)

The index of aggregate weekly hours of production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls increased by 0.6 percent in March to 107.3 (2002=100). The manufacturing index was up by 0.2 percent over the month to 95.2.