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**SKILLED TRADES SEE STRONG JOB GROWTH IN DECEMBER AS
EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS EXPAND IN THE HOUSTON AREA**

(HOUSTON) Houston area employers filled more than 20,000 jobs in December, data released today by Workforce Solutions shows. Skilled trades jobs in the construction sector, along with manufacturing and oilfield support positions, accounted for more than one-third of all new jobs added during the month, slightly outpacing hiring in the retail and logistics subsectors tied to the holiday season.

“The construction sector saw its largest ever gain in December, adding 3,200 jobs,” said Workforce Solutions regional economist Parker Harvey. “We typically lose construction jobs in December and November and instead we added them. While I’m cautious until I see final numbers in March, it points to improvement in this sector that’s long overdue.” Manufacturing contributed an additional 2,500 with upstream oil and gas jobs adding 2,300 to December’s overall job growth.

This month, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board unveils its new *Workforce Solutions Index (WSI)*, an indicator designed to track the balance between the availability of jobs and the number of unemployed workers in our region. “We compare the number of unique job ads posted by employers across hundreds of job boards and websites to the number of unemployed workers in the region,” Harvey explained. The December WSI is 4.41, indicating that the balance between job availability and jobseekers continues to shift in favor of the latter. “Employer demand for workers has been outpacing supply in recent months with much of this being driven by “The Great Resignation,” he said.

Additional labor market information including the detailed December report can be found at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release January employment data including annual benchmark revisions on March 11, 2022, followed by February data on March 25th.

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ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: Workforce Solutions is dedicated to keeping the Gulf Coast region a great place to do business, work, and live. Our employer-driven, people-focused approach elevates the economic and human potential of the region to attract and retain the best employers, afford everyone the dignity of a job, and remain indispensable to the global economy. As the public workforce system for 13 counties in the Houston-Galveston region, we work in tandem with the Texas Workforce Commission and the statewide Workforce Solutions network to maintain the state’s largest job-match database – www.WorkInTexas.com.

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