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RETAIL, WAREHOUSING AND RESTAURANTS DRIVE DECEMBER EMPLOYMENT

(HOUSTON, TX) The final month of 2022 posted strong hiring across all employment sectors, with both retail sales and related logistics and warehousing subsectors posting big gains, according to data released this morning by Workforce Solutions. Restaurants and bars also celebrated going into the new year, with the sector posting its second-largest December gain on record by adding 3,700 new jobs.

“As part of the Leisure & Hospitality sector, the growth in restaurants and bars suggests pent-up demand for outside dining, travel and lodging despite growing fears of a recession as we approach the third anniversary of the COVID-19 global pandemic,” said Parker Harvey, manager, Regional Economic Analysis. “Over the last year, more than 49,000 jobs have been created in this sector alone,” he added.

The Trade, Transportation & Utilities sector grew by 6,100 jobs last month, with more than half (4,100) occurring in the transportation and warehousing subsectors related to the holiday shopping season. Retail sales contributed another 3,000 while employment in the wholesale trade lost 1,000 jobs during the month.

“Keep in mind, many of these jobs tend to go away after the new year,” Harvey noted.

Payrolls in both the Construction and Manufacturing sectors also increased by a combined 2,400 additional jobs in December.

“The 1,000 jobs added in Construction, mainly among Specialty Trade Contractors, was a welcome gain after three consecutive months of job losses between September and November; however, with elevated interest rates for the foreseeable future and a potential economic slowdown, December’s gains are likely to be an anomaly,” Harvey added.

Houston’s *not-seasonally-adjusted* unemployment rate in December fell to 3.9 percent, a rate last seen at the start of the pandemic in February 2020. The *seasonally-adjusted* unemployment rate in November at 4.3 percent marked the lowest rate since February 2020’s 3.8 percent.

Additional labor market information, including the detailed December report, can be found online at: wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release January employment data on March 10, 2023.

ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: [Workforce Solutions](http://WorkforceSolutions.com) is dedicated to keeping the Texas 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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