

# Region gains 300 jobs in November

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The Norwich-New London area gained 300 jobs in November, helping propel the Connecticut labor force to a total increase of 4,600 positions last month, according to statistics released today by the state Department of Labor.

It was the fourth straight monthly gain for the region, and finally pushed Norwich-New London into positive jobs territory throughout the year. The region, which has been one of the nation's hardest hit in terms of job recoveries after the Great Recession, was the last of the state's labor markets to see a year-over-year increase in jobs, having gained 300 since November of last year.

“This report is another positive sign that we are making progress in our effort to create good paying jobs with good benefits for residents,” Gov. Dannel P. Malloy said in a statement released immediately after the report came out. “Labor force participation is up. We are seeing growth in nearly every sector of the economy.”

The gains came with one cost: a higher unemployment rate of 6.5 percent — a tenth of a point above last month's rate. But the jobless rate is still a full percentage point below the level of November 2013.

Andy Condon, director of the state Department of Labor's Office of Research, said jobseekers are apparently beginning to notice Connecticut's recent string of significant job gains and, with more hiring going on, are being encouraged again to look for work.

"Holiday hiring appears to be above average," Condon said in a statement. "We are also starting to observe some much improved estimates of private sector wage growth that may be encouraging labor force participation as well."

Over the past year, average weekly earnings are up nearly \$58, according to the report.

Connecticut as whole has now recovered 93,200 jobs lost during the Great Recession, according to the latest report, which represents more than 78 percent of the positions that were lost. The private sector in Connecticut is doing even better, having recovered 92 percent of the jobs that disappeared during one of the nation's worst economic downturns in history.

The state has added 23,600 jobs so far this year. That's significantly ahead of the 16,300 jobs gained over the same period last year.