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RETAIL SALES & LOGISTICS KICK OFF HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON *Record-setting hiring in September revised higher, momentum carries over into October*

(HOUSTON, TX) Houston-area retailers and related warehousing and transportation firms, otherwise known as the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector, added 6,300 workers to their payrolls last month as the holiday shopping season gets underway. Hiring in the sector was second only to the Government sector, which added 6,400 new jobs during the month, primarily in public and post-secondary education, according to figures released Friday by Workforce Solutions.

Overall, area employers added 16,400 new jobs last month with seven out of eleven sectors expanding their payrolls. Meanwhile, September's report was revised higher by 2,300 adding to an already record-setting 22,000 hires for the month. "One of the sectors we see continued volatility is the Professional & Business Services sector," explained Parker Harvey, lead economist with Workforce Solutions. "2023 started relatively strong, but has been weakening since mid summer." Harvey said if not for a big upward revision for September (the sector originally reported a loss of 800 jobs, but was revised upward to +1,100), October would have marked four straight months of job losses in a row. "had it not been for the revision," Harvey said.

Unemployment in the Houston area fell nearly half a percentage point last month to 4.1 percent on a not seasonally adjusted basis. Seasonally adjusted unemployment for September was unchanged from August's 4.5 percent. Both indices remain above both Texas' unemployment and the nation overall.

Looking ahead to 2024, Harvey expects hiring to be slower, but still respectable, based on several factors including upcoming federal elections, few if any additional interest rate hikes from the Federal Reserve, and a tapering off of the post-pandemic driven rebound.

Additional labor market information, including the detailed September report can be found online at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release November employment data on December 22, 2023.

ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: [Workforce Solutions](http://www.WorkInTexas.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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