

For Immediate Release

Center for Economic Analysis and Policy

Strome College of Business, Old Dominion University

Civilian Labor Force Declined in September, Unemployment Rate Remained Unchanged

Newly released data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the overall size of the civilian labor force in the Hampton Roads region declined by 3,583 workers in September 2016 when compared to September 2015. The overall size of the civilian labor force declined from 830,561 workers in September 2015 to 826,978 workers in September 2016. Coupled with the decline in the civilian labor force of 7,962 workers in August 2016 relative to August 2015, the decline in September suggests that the civilian labor force continues to contract in Hampton Roads.

While the size of the civilian labor force declined in September 2016, the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the Hampton Roads region remained steady at 4.6% in September 2016 compared to September 2015. The unemployment rate in Hampton Roads in September 2016 also represents no change from the unemployment rate of 4.6% in August 2016. The number of unemployed workers in September 2016 remained relatively steady when compared to September 2015. In September 2016, 38,040 workers were unemployed compared to 38,098 workers in September 2015.

Data on the number of jobs released today by the Bureau of Labor Statistics also highlight a weak job market. Total nonfarm employee payrolls, or the number of jobs, in Hampton Roads in September 2016 were estimated to be 771,900 compared to 768,600 in September 2015. This represents a growth of 3,300 jobs or a yearly growth rate of 0.4% in total nonfarm payrolls from September 2015 to September 2016. Total nonfarm payrolls continued to remain below the peak of 775,500 observed in 2007 prior to the Great Recession.

Overall, we believe the data show a slowing of economic growth in Hampton Roads in the second half of 2016. While the 2015 real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth estimates recently released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis were unexpectedly high, we continue to expect that these numbers will be revised downward. For 2016, we continue to forecast real GDP growth of 1.38% for the Hampton Roads region.

The Center for Economic Analysis and Policy in the Strome College of Business at Old Dominion University undertakes a wide range of economic, demographic, transportation and defense-oriented studies. For sixteen years, the Center and its predecessors have produced the highly regarded State of the Region Report for Hampton Roads and economic forecasts for the region. For additional information, please contact: Dr. Barbara Blake-Gonzalez at 757 683 4834 or bblakego@odu.edu.