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Statement of

Kathleen P. Utgoff
Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Nonfarm payroll employment edged up by 75,000 in May, and the unemployment rate, at 4.6 percent, was essentially unchanged. From January through April of this year, payroll employment growth averaged 164,000 per month.

Within the service-providing sector, health care employment continued to expand, rising by 19,000 in May. Within professional and business services, employment increased in computer systems design. Wholesale trade added 14,000 jobs in May; employment in this industry has grown by 108,000 in the past year. Over the month, employment continued to trend up in financial activities.

Retail trade employment fell by 27,000 in May, following an even larger decline in April. Over the year, however, retail trade employment has changed little, on net. The information industry shed 13,000 jobs in May;

losses were concentrated in motion picture and sound recording industries. Employment in leisure and hospitality was little changed over the month.

In the goods-producing sector, manufacturing employment edged down by 14,000, largely offsetting an increase in April. Over the month, manufacturing hours declined by 0.1 hour, and factory overtime was unchanged.

In May, construction employment was flat across all component industries--residential and nonresidential building, heavy construction, and specialty trade contractors. Following substantial gains in January and February, the number of jobs in construction has not changed significantly in the past 3 months.

Elsewhere in the goods-producing sector, job growth in support activities related to oil and gas operations continued to keep mining employment on an upward trend.

Average hourly earnings for private sector production and nonsupervisory workers edged up by 1 cent over the month, following a 10-cent increase in April. Over the year, average hourly earnings have risen by 3.7 percent.

In May, the unemployment rate was 4.6 percent, down from 5.1 percent a year earlier. Over the month, the civilian labor force participation rate held at 66.1

percent. Since April 2005, the participation rate has shown little change, ranging from 66.0 to 66.2 percent.

In summary, nonfarm payroll employment edged up by 75,000 in May, and the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 4.6 percent.