

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Initial Unemployment Claims Decline to Lowest Point Since 2007, Annual Average Claims Drop to 13-Year Low as Wisconsin Economy Improves

Weekly initial UI claims remain below 8,000 for first five-week stretch since 2005

MADISON – In another sign of Wisconsin's improving economy, initial claims for Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance benefits have fallen below 8,000 for five consecutive weeks. Wisconsin has not had five straight weeks with initial claims below 8,000 since 2005.

"Initial and regular weekly claims have been declining for some time, but the initial claims total in the latest weekly report is especially welcome news," DWD Secretary Reggie Newson said. "This is another sign of Wisconsin's improving economy under Governor Walker's leadership, and there is much more work to be done to create more jobs and prepare workers with the skills needed to fill those jobs."

Wisconsin weekly initial claims first dipped below 8,000 in the week ending July 20, 2013, marking the **first time they've been less than 8,000 since September 2007**. The number has remained below 8,000 through the week ending August 17, totaling 7,625 for that week. This is the **first time Wisconsin has seen five straight weeks with initial claims below 8,000 since 2005 and only the second time since 2000**.

In addition, as of the end of July, the year-to-date average number of Wisconsin weekly initial Unemployment Insurance claims is at a **13-year low**, at 10,778.

The drop in claims data is consistent with the growth in actual jobs that Wisconsin has experienced since 2011. Last week, DWD released the latest available actual job growth data, which it submitted to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for its Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) reports. The data showed:

- **Wisconsin added 24,124 private-sector jobs from March 2012 to March 2013.**
- The net job gain from March 2012 to March 2013 includes an increase of **over 3,500 construction jobs, which represents a 4.4 percent jump.**
- **Wages** by covered **private-sector employers grew by 2.5%** year over year.
- **Actual job counts through March 2013 are in line with gains made in 2011-12.** Key highlights:
 - Wisconsin added over 62,000 private sector jobs in 2011-12 following the loss of about 134,000 private sector jobs during the previous four years.
 - The private sector job gains under Governor Walker are the **best two-year gains under any Governor in over a decade.**
 - Wisconsin created more manufacturing jobs in the last two years than in either of the last two Governor's terms.
 - Wisconsin had the **largest growth in construction jobs in 13 years during 2011-12.**

Other indicators that help illustrate the state of Wisconsin's economy include:

- Department of Revenue state revenue collections through June: up by 4.4 percent in fiscal year 2013.
- Department of Financial Institutions new business formation: up 2.9 percent through June compared to the first six months of 2012.
- A decline this calendar year in initial and weekly DWD Unemployment Insurance claims.