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MANUFACTURING, WAREHOUSING LEAD JOB GROWTH DURING AN OTHERWISE QUIET DECEMBER

(HOUSTON) Houston-area employers added just 3,700 jobs overall in December, marking a quiet conclusion to a strong year of hiring, according to numbers released today by Workforce Solutions.

Among the highlights, warehousing and distribution jobs grew the most with about 3,900 positions added, “Year-to-year, this subsector has added 8,500 jobs,” said Parker Harvey, lead economist at Workforce Solutions. “And just since September, the region has seen sharp growth in hiring here, corroborating anecdotal evidence of a surge of warehousing and distribution activity.”

Durable goods manufacturers, too, have added to their employment rolls, hiring 1,900 people in December. Harvey believes some of this may be due to a stabilization in oil prices, “The rig count in Texas has remained steady over the last four weeks, so this could indicate that oil and gas firms are placing orders for new or replacement parts and equipment as oil prices have settled at around \$50 per barrel.”

Construction jobs, on the other hand, have fallen sharply since August, especially in the pipeline construction industry. “This is most likely due the steep decline of oil prices in the fall,” Parker explained.

The region’s unemployment rate ticked up a tenth of a point to 3.9 percent.

Special note: The federal government shutdown occurred after the December employer survey was completed and is not reflected in this month’s report.

Additional labor market information can be found at wrksolutions.com/for-employers/workforce-economy-statistics. The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment numbers for January 2019 on March 8, 2019.

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ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: Workforce Solutions, the public workforce system in the 13-county Houston-Galveston region, helps employers meet human resource needs and area residents build careers so both can better compete in the global economy. Offering placement, career counseling and financial aid services, Workforce Solutions operates multiple community-based career offices to help residents find employment or advance their careers. As part of the statewide Texas Workforce Solutions network, we partner with the Texas Workforce Commission and other workforce boards in the largest job-matching database in the state - WorkInTexas.com.