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SEASONAL HIRING RINGS UP POSITIVE NOVEMBER JOB GROWTH

(HOUSTON) Retailers, and their suppliers across the Houston-area, are feeling confident this holiday season, bringing on more than 10,000 workers in November and driving the region's job growth for the month, according to data released Friday by Workforce Solutions.

"Retail stores hired 6,600 new employees while warehousing and transportation services contributed to the remainder of last month's growth in this sector," said Parker Harvey, senior economist at Workforce Solutions-Gulf Coast. "Earlier this year, the National Retail Federation forecast strong holiday sales and it appears that November's employment growth is reflective of that expectation," he added.

Harvey notes that many employment sectors show signs of having reached peak job growth at various points during 2018 and the recent drop in oil prices, tied to oversupply concerns, bears watching. "Oil & gas extraction and durable goods manufacturing have yet to establish a trend of slowing job growth. If prices stabilize at around \$50 per barrel, or fall even further in 2019, these two sectors will be among the first to feel the impact," he said.

Overall, Houston-area employers added 16,600 new workers last month with most employment sectors again seeing positive job growth. The unemployment rate remained unchanged from October, standing at 3.8%

Additional labor market information can be found at wrksolutions.com/for-employers/workforce-economy-statistics. The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment numbers for December 2018 on January 18, 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.