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HOUSTON AREA EMPLOYMENT UP IN SEPTEMBER AS REGION BREAKS RECORD FOR YEAR-OVER-YEAR JOB GROWTH

(HOUSTON) The Houston area added nearly 14,000 jobs in September as teachers and support staff returned for the start of a new school year, according to figures released Friday morning by Workforce Solutions-Gulf Coast.

The Government sector grew 5.1% last month, adding 19,600 workers. But those gains were partially offset by seasonal job losses in Trade, Transportation, & Utilities (primarily retail) and the Leisure & Hospitality sectors as summer workers returned to the classroom. Workforce Solutions economist Parker Harvey says hiring in other employment sectors was essentially flat in September, but that's not where the story is.

"The real story is that since this time last year the Houston area has added 128,700 jobs. That is record-breaking growth for a one-year period," he said. "Remember, we were dealing with lower oil prices and the after effects from the flooding brought on by Hurricane Harvey. Since then, however, the Houston economy has really revved up."

Harvey notes that 10 out of 11 employment sectors show growth year-over-year, with the biggest expansion coming in Professional and Business Services, Construction, and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (which includes the retail subsector). "Some of the growth in both the Construction and Trade sectors can be attributed to storm recovery as people rebuild their homes and buy new furnishing to replace what was lost."

"Business and Professional services, which has added 33,200 jobs in the last year, has been driven primarily by the stabilization of oil prices at a level that allows that sector of the economy to staff up," he said.

The unemployment rate for September fell two-tenths of a point to 4.1%, nearly one-percent lower from where it stood one year ago.

The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment numbers for October 2018 on November 16.

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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.