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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AREA SEES RECORD-BREAKING EMPLOYMENT FOR MARCH FOLLOWING GOVERNOR'S DECISION TO END COVID RESTRICTIONS IN TEXAS

(HOUSTON) Houston-area employers added a record-breaking 34,200 workers to their payrolls in March, the largest ever one-month gain in the month of March, and the not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate dropped slightly to 8.0 percent according to data released this morning by Workforce Solutions.

Governor Greg Abbott's decision to end all COVID-related restrictions as of March 10, and stabilization of oil prices at around \$60 per barrel, appears to have jump started hiring in several crucial industry sectors including Leisure & Hospitality, Professional & Business Services, and Construction. "I think we're seeing the release of a lot of pent-up demand in the Leisure & Hospitality sector," said Parker Harvey, lead economist at the regional workforce development agency. "During the height of the pandemic and after, when restaurants and bars were at half capacity, a lot of patrons stayed away, which kept employers from hiring additional staff. Now it looks like they're bringing those workers back as more and more people feel safe enough to venture out."

Oil price stabilization is drawing more workers in the Professional & Business Services sector back into the office as well. The sector added 9,400 jobs in March, the majority of which were in administrative services and architectural and engineering subsectors. "These are the so-called white-collar jobs in the oil & gas industry which could indicate firms are feeling confident enough to begin planning new projects," Harvey said.

Additional labor market information including the detailed March report can be found at wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment data for April on May 21, 2021.

Pent-up demand for recreation and entertainment has created abundant summer job opportunities! Hundreds of positions are available, and Workforce Solutions can help teens and young adults find them quickly. Text #GetPaid2021 to 40691 to learn more. Standard messaging and data rates may apply.

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ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: Workforce Solutions is dedicated to keeping the Gulf Coast region a great place to do business, work, and live. Our employer-driven, people-focused approach elevates the economic and human potential of the region to attract and retain the best employers, afford everyone the dignity of a job, and remain indispensable to the global economy. As the public workforce system for 13 counties in the Houston-Galveston region, we work in tandem with the Texas Workforce Commission and the statewide Workforce Solutions network.

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