



ILLINOIS UNEMPLOYMENT HITS 7.3%

The Illinois unemployment rate hit 7.6% in December, the highest since 1993 and up 0.3 points in November. The rate was 5.3% a year earlier, the Illinois Employment Security Department said Friday. The state lost 36,000 jobs in December from a month earlier, marking the seventh consecutive month of job loss. Year-over-year, non-farm payroll dropped by 100,700 jobs. In November and December, the state lost a combined 73,600 jobs, the largest two-month decline since record-keeping began in 1990. The jobless rate in December exceeded the nation's 7.2% rate. During the month, the total number of unemployed in Illinois was 505,300, exceeding 500,000 for the first time since February 1992. The state lost 13,400 jobs in construction in December from a month earlier. The sector shed 28,300 jobs in the last four months, representing more than 10% of the total construction work force. The trade & transportation sector lost 8,600 jobs, 15,900 from a year earlier. Manufacturing lost 5,200 jobs, 18,200 since December 2007.

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