

States show increase

# Employment rates rise

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Unemployment improved in two-thirds of the states during the 12-month period that ended in July, the Labor Department reported Wednesday, with only seven states showing over-the-year increases of 1 percentage point or more.

West Virginia, at 17.4 percent, had the highest jobless rate by a wide margin for the month in unadjusted data by the department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, while Laredo, Texas, remained as the highest metropolitan area at 26.2 percent.

Edinburg, Texas, at 21.1 percent was second highest and Johnstown, Pa., third at 19.3 percent.

At the other end, North Dakota was the lowest state at 4.3 percent, and Sioux Falls, S.D., the lowest metropolitan area at 3.9 percent, followed by Bryan-College Station, Texas, and Stamford, Conn., both at 4 percent.

The data compares to an unadjusted nationwide rate of 9.4 percent in July.

The national unadjusted rate fell to 9.2 percent in August, while the seasonally adjusted rate, which takes into account weather, school closings and other factors, was 9.5 percent in both July and August.

Largest declines among states came in New Hampshire, 9.1 percent to 5.6 percent, and Massachusetts, 9.6 percent to 6.2 percent, with 13 other states experiencing drops of between 1 percentage point and 2 percentage points.

In contrast, the department said only seven states increased

joblessness by 1 percentage point or more, with the largest occurring in states where energy extraction activity was curtailed — West Virginia, up from 14.1 percent to 17.4 percent; Wyoming, up from 5.9 percent to 8.7 percent, and Oklahoma, up from 6 percent to 8.6 percent.

Other states with hikes of 1 percentage point or more were Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Utah.

Among the 225 metropolitan areas reporting for July — no local figures were reported for Michigan and Kentucky — jobless rates fell by 2 percentage points or more in 35 areas, with the largest in New Bedford, Mass., down from 15.4 percent to 9.1 percent, and Manchester, N.H., down from 11.8 percent to 6.1 percent.

Of 15 areas showing increases of 2 percentage points or more, eight were in Texas where local economies depend on oil production and related products or trade at the Mexican border. Laredo had the largest over-the-year jump, from 14.2 percent to 26.2 percent.

# Ex-Reagan official suggested for post

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — A former Texas campaign coordinator for President Reagan is now a candidate for a presidential appointment as assistant interior secretary in charge of the Pacific Island territories.

Richard Montoya, 35, of Las Cruces, N.M., has been a deputy assistant interior secretary since February and became acting assistant secretary of territorial and international affairs after Pedro Sanjuan resigned, Aug. 18.

Sanjuan, 53, who had served in the post for two years, be-

came director of political affairs for the United Nations after his resignation from the Interior Department Sept. 6.

Reagan may choose a permanent successor to the \$67,200-a-year job this week, an Interior Department source said Tuesday. The nomination must be confirmed by the Senate.

Before coming to Washington this year, Montoya was executive director of regional development for Gov. Bill Clements.

Montoya was also Clements' senior adviser on international affairs, international trade and

industrial development and deputy campaign manager in the governor's unsuccessful bid for re-election last year.

In 1980, Montoya was regional campaign coordinator for Reagan and Vice President George Bush in south and west Texas.

He was deputy secretary representative for the Secretary of Commerce in 1976-78, covering Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. In 1971-76 he served as assistant regional director for the U.S. Small Business Administration in Dallas.

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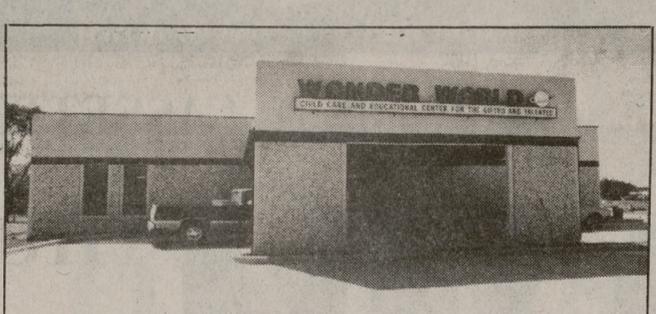
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# \$1 million escort costs described as slush fund

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — A Senate staff member calls it "black bag money." Other critics describe the \$1 million that Defense Department escort officers spend on meals, lodging and transportation for members of Congress on overseas trips as a slush fund.

For many of the same items,

House and Senate members collect daily allowances from an unlimited congressional travel account.

Nathaniel Pollard, a State Department accounting supervisor who reviews congressional expense vouchers, said he can recall no instances in which a congressman returned any of his daily ex-

pense fund of \$75 or more when escort officers paid for items.

Military officials reluctantly acknowledge the expenditures, but say it is all above-board.

In a look at foreign travel, United Press International and non-profit Better Government Association found the Defense Department will pay at least \$1 million of the \$14 million in million spent on congressional trips this year.

"It's obviously a form of bribe to make a good impression on Congress," says Kingman Brewster, former ambassador to England and expresident of Yale University.

"It's not the military's fault, said an administration official familiar with the Pentagon's carpet treatment of House and Senate members. "It's the congressional brass' fault. They demand a lot of being repaid by lawyers, travel agents and other officials."

There are few controls over Pentagon courtesies and no central accounting.

Even if congressmen take commercial flights, military escorts accompany them.

Most escorts also are armed with stashes of money. The escorts do not list expense vouchers the congressmen who accept their hospitality.

Capt. Michael Perini, an Air Force spokesman, said 45 Air Force escorts have spent \$400,000 on such services so far in 1983.

Army spokesman Margaret Tackley said in fiscal 1982 the Army escorts spent \$400,000 in fulfilling their duties.

Lt. Dennis Sawyer said the Navy spent \$100,126 in fiscal 1982 on similar escort functions on congressional trips.

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# Farmers' insurance available

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Wheat farmers who idle acreage under a year's farm program will be eligible for greater federal crop insurance protection against crop loss, the Agriculture Department said Wednesday.

Farmers who participate in the wheat program will get higher yield guarantees, which represent the amount of production the Federal Crop Insurance Corp. will promise to insured farmers in the event of crop losses.

"The increase in yield guarantee is automatic for insured farmers participating in the acreage reduction programs and involves no increase in premium," said Merritt Sprague, manager of the department's crop insurance corporation.

In August, the Reagan administration announced that there would be a second year of a payment-in-kind program for wheat because wheat supplies remain large after one year of the program in which farmers got commodities in exchange for idling acreage.

Agriculture Secretary John Block has said there will be a payment-in-kind program for wheat because this year's crop was severely reduced by drought.

If an insured farmer participates in the minimum wheat program that calls for a 30 percent acreage reduction, the crop insurance agency would automatically increase the yield guarantee by 10 percent, Sprague said.

If a farmer put 30 percent of his acreage into the program and 70 percent into the payment-in-kind program, he would get an 8 percent increase in yield guarantee. Putting 20 percent of acreage into payment-in-kind would be replaced with a 10 percent increase in yield guarantee.

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