



ManpowerGroup™

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Long-Awaited Hiring Slowdown Lies Ahead, According to Manpower Inc

MILWAUKEE, Feb. 23 /PRNewswire/ -- A long-awaited decline in new hiring activity among employers throughout the nation appears ahead for the second quarter, according to results of the Employment Outlook Survey conducted quarterly by Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN), the world's leading employment services firm.

In the poll of nearly 16,000 companies, 28% indicated plans for additional hiring, 8% expected staff decreases, 59% intend no change and 5% are undecided. In the same quarter of last year, 32% anticipated additions, 6% foresaw decreases, 58% planned to remain unchanged and 4% were uncertain. While the results one year ago were unsurpassed for any second quarter since 1978, the present outlook is below those of like periods in the past three years. All industries and regions shared in the decline, but Durable Goods Manufacturing and Wholesale & Retail Trades were the hardest hit.

"We have seen remarkably consistent demand for new workers for more than three years and very substantial hiring remains to be done," said Jeffrey Joerres, Manpower President and Chief Executive Officer, "but the slowdown now on the horizon is considerably greater than seasonal variation alone." Joerres said while this early retraction of activity represents a halt to the protracted employment crisis, it was "too early to identify a longer term trend." He said that while decline prevailed in all regions, that results in the West, which had led the nation throughout 2000, represented a slightly steeper drop than other regions. Joerres said that Construction and Services firms, which are frequently strong at this season, are again the leading industries, but at reduced levels from the year-ago period. He noted less decline in the fields of Education and Public Administration, where he said "budgets are usually quite firm and profit production is not a requirement as is the case in the private sector."

By industry:

CONSTRUCTION: Although it is the leading industry in the nation, the Construction sector is less optimistic than in any like quarter since 1993 as 35% will continue to add workers and 7% expect personnel declines.

MANUFACTURING-DURABLE GOODS: Declines in three previous quarters have been largely seasonal, but the present level exceeds seasonal patterns with 30% increasing recruiting, but a high 12% trimming back.

MANUFACTURING-NON-DURABLE GOODS: The buoyant optimism expressed throughout last year has faded somewhat as 26% plan additions, while 8% foresee cutbacks.

TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES: For the first time in more than a year, the outlook is less bright than the like quarter of the previous year as 24% anticipate further hiring and 7% expect staff decreases.

WHOLESALE & RETAIL TRADES: Seasonal variations have been the only barrier to aggressive hiring since late 1996, but present plans fall considerably below those expectations with 28% still searching for people, but an unusually high 10% anticipating declines.

FINANCE, INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE: The present level exceeds those recorded before the recent four-year boom, but is now considerably eroded as 23% project workforce increases and 7% plan decreases.

EDUCATION-PUBLIC AND PRIVATE: Further recruiting remains a priority among 20%, but only 5% find it necessary to cut back as the end of the school year approaches.

SERVICES: Although a bit below seasonal expectations, Services firms express one of the strongest outlooks with 30% adding staff and 5% indicating reductions.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: The appetite for additional workers remains strong as many government units continue to operate with budgets yet unfettered by economic fears. Now 26% anticipate employment increases and 3% say they will trim down.

THE EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SURVEY

Manpower Inc. conducts the Employment Outlook Survey on a quarterly basis. It is a measurement of employers' intentions to increase or decrease the permanent workforce, and during its 25-year history has been a significant indicator of employment trends. The survey is based on telephone interviews with nearly 16,000 public and private employers in 488 U.S. markets. Manpower Inc., global provider of workforce management services and solutions, annually provides employment to more than 2 million people through 3,700 offices in 59 countries. For more information, visit Manpower's Web site at www.us.manpower.com . SOURCE Manpower Inc.

/NOTE TO EDITORS: The following story planned for release on Monday, February 26 has appeared in a major publication and subsequently, in other news services and publications. The story is therefore now available for immediate release./