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Unemployment Call Center and Nevada JobConnect Employees Exempt from Furloughs

Due to the continued rise in unemployment, the state has exempted some employees at the Nevada Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation (DETR) from having to take one day a month off without pay, said Cindy Jones, DETR Deputy Director and Administrator for the Employment Security Division.

“With a 12 percent unemployment rate, we receive over 27,000 calls per week in our two call centers and send out 127,000 unemployment benefit payments per week,” Jones said. “We are doing everything within our power to keep up with the growing demands placed on our agency during this tough economic climate. We appreciate the Board of Examiners recognizing the dire need we have to maintain a full staff at all times to handle the extraordinary number of unemployment insurance claims we have.” The Unemployment Insurance program impacts the welfare of benefit recipients and their families and is a key economic stabilization tool for Nevada's economy as a whole.

Just since January, the number of people receiving unemployment benefits has increased by 50 percent, Jones said. The Nevada JobConnect office staff has also been exempt from the legislatively mandated furloughs, as well Jones said. The offices continue to see a tremendous increase in the number of people seeking employment services, she said.

“In response to the rising number of jobless residents, DETR has made several improvements to manage the unemployment insurance program,” Jones said. “Employees continue to work overtime. Also, we have more than doubled our staff and the number of phone lines to handle claimant calls. The wait times are averaging about 40 minutes, which is a significant improvement from earlier in the year, when the average wait time was about 1.5 hours. We truly appreciate everyone’s patience and cooperation as we continue to make even more improvements where possible in order to get people their benefits as quickly and efficiently as we can.”

Beginning this month, the maximum weekly amount for unemployment insurance benefits has been raised to \$400. It was previously \$392, Jones said. The average amount paid is \$320, which does not include the additional \$25 that each recipient is receiving from Stimulus Funding. With the federal extensions and the state extension, a person could potentially qualify for up to 79 weeks of unemployment benefits, Jones said.

Claimants are still reminded to utilize the website to file unemployment benefit claims, www.expressclaim.org.



DETR is comprised of the Employment Security Division, Equal Rights Commission, Rehabilitation Division, the Information Development and Processing Division and the Research and Analysis Bureau.

DETR works in partnership with the Nevada JobConnect System to connect businesses and workers.

