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NEWS RELEASE

North Carolina's injury and illness rate drops to all-time low

North Carolina's private industry workers have never been safer according to the annual nonfatal injury and illness figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the N.C. Department of Labor.

Injuries and illnesses in North Carolina dropped from a rate of 4.0 injured workers for every 100 full-time employees to 3.7 in 2007 for private industry employers.

"This is good news for employers and employees," Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry said. "We were anticipating good numbers after learning that North Carolina's workers' comp insurance rates were going to decrease, but this is even better news than we expected."

The rate broke through the 4.0 ceiling, where it had remained for 2005 and 2006. North Carolina was one of 12 states that improved their injury and illness rates from 2006 to 2007.

Both construction and manufacturing, two of the states most hazardous industries, also improved. Construction's injury and illness rate dropped from 4.9 in 2006 to 4.0 in 2007, and manufacturing's rate dropped from 5.1 in 2006 to 4.4.

Berry credits the drop in part to the safety minded employers and employees in North Carolina.

"From the mountains to the coast we are witnessing a greater emphasis on workplace safety programs," Berry said. "The state is reaping the rewards from their hard work."

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