

A force for positive change in the design / construction industry

08/03/2018 – Overall Employment Remains Strong; Construction Industry Sours to Virtually Full-Employment Levels

Today, the Department of Labor released data for July 2018 employment reflecting an increase of some 157,000 new jobs (while slightly above the generally accepted estimate that it takes approximately 130-150,000 new jobs per month just to absorb the expanding workforce, it comes on the heels of two prior months [May & June] of upward revised totals in new job creation). *Non-seasonally* adjusted unemployment figures for construction collapsed to nearly full-employment levels at **only 3.4 percent** [which is an eye-popping 1.3 percentage points lower than just last month (June 2018), and a very substantial (1.5%) better than a year ago in July 2017 when it stood at 4.9%].

Overall unemployment slipped down one-tenth to 3.9 percent (“unemployed persons” dropped to 6.3 million as the government counts). The “labor force participation” rate remained steady at 62.9 percent. [This stat measures percentage of the eligible civilians in the labor force. At the *end of the recession* (June '09) this rate stood at a healthier 65.7%. **NOTE:** The “labor force participation” rate works *inversely* to the overall unemployment figures, meaning: as it deteriorates, it actually is counted as improving unemployment (i.e., people leaving the workforce are no longer viewed as unemployed by the DOL)]. The “employment to population ratio” improved one-tenth to 60.5 percent, and the long dormant hourly wage-earning figure again ticked-up, to a yearly rate of plus 2.7%.