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Manpower Employment Outlook Survey Reveals U.S. Employers Plan to Conservatively Bolster Staff During Final Months of 2010

September 7, 2010

MILWAUKEE, Sept 07, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX News Network/ -- U.S. employers anticipate a slight gain in employment levels for Quarter 4 2010, the fourth successive quarter of modest to favorable hiring plans, according to the seasonally adjusted results of the latest Manpower Employment Outlook Survey, conducted quarterly by Manpower Inc.

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Survey data reveals a seasonally adjusted Outlook of +5% for Quarter 4 2010, up from -1% during the same period last year and stable compared to Quarter 3 2010.

Employers' hiring confidence nationwide experienced a noteworthy rebound in 2010 when compared to 2009:

- A positive overall hiring Outlook was reported all four quarters of 2010, which followed three quarters with a negative Outlook in 2009, according to seasonally adjusted survey results.
- Employers across all industries reported a mostly positive Outlook in 2010, whereas the Outlook within the majority of industry sectors was negative in 2009.
- Across the four geographic regions, all reported four quarters of positive hiring plans, while 2009 results were mostly negative.

"Clearly there are signs of a softening labor market, but when we consider what we are hearing from our clients and by looking at our own business, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic," said Manpower Inc. Chairman and CEO Jeff Joerres. "The hiring intentions for the fourth quarter are not enough to break through the labor market sound barrier that we're all eagerly anticipating, as 71 percent of employers indicate no change in hiring."

Of the more than 18,000 employers surveyed, 15% anticipate an increase in staff levels in their Quarter 4 2010 hiring plans, while 11% expect a decrease in payrolls, resulting in a Net Employment Outlook of +4%. When seasonally adjusted, the Net Employment Outlook improves slightly to +5%. Seventy-one percent of employers expect no change in their hiring plans. The final 3% of employers indicate they are undecided about their hiring intentions.

"After a period of very negative hiring sentiment in 2009, we have seen greater stability for the employed throughout 2010, although with only modest increases in hiring plans. This stability is an important platform to establish for more robust labor market growth in 2011," said Jonas Prising, Manpower president of the Americas. "Looking back at where we were in 2009, the employment environment is more promising now, however many employers are still unsure about how the economy will fare and how robust the recovery will be. Until we move beyond this uncertainty, we are unlikely to see employers hire in a meaningful way, and this is evident in their consistently modest hiring plans."

Employers in 11 of the 13 industry sectors surveyed have a positive Outlook for Quarter 4 2010: Mining (+13%), Wholesale & Retail Trade (+13%), Professional & Business Services (+10%), Leisure & Hospitality (+9%), Durable Goods Manufacturing (+7%), Information (+7%), Nondurable Goods Manufacturing (+6%), Financial Activities (+4%), Education & Health Services (+4), Other Services (+3%) and Transportation & Utilities (+2%). The October - December 2010 Outlook is negative for two of the surveyed industry sectors: Government (-6%) and Construction (-8%). Employers in one sector, Education & Health Services, anticipate an increase in quarter-over-quarter hiring.

"As we enter a very busy retail quarter, it's encouraging to see that Wholesale & Retail Trade employers anticipate a healthy Outlook of 13%," continued Prising. "This represents a moderate increase compared with fourth quarter 2009."

Compared to one year ago, employers in all four U.S. geographic regions surveyed anticipate hiring increases. Employers in the Northeast and South have the most upbeat hiring intentions, with a Net Employment Outlook of +6%. Employers in the West are the most reserved, with an Outlook of +1%. When adjusting for seasonal variations, Northeast employers anticipate the strongest shift compared to one year ago at this time, with a considerable increase in hiring confidence year-over-year. Compared to Quarter 3 2010, employment prospects are stable in the Midwest and South, while employers in the Northeast and West expect hiring to decrease slightly in Quarter 4 2010.

The **Net Employment Outlook, often shortened to simply Outlook or NEO, is derived by taking the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting a decrease in hiring activity.*

About the Survey

An innovative workforce solutions company, Manpower Inc. releases the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey quarterly to measure employers' intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. It is the only forward-looking survey of its kind, unparalleled in size, scope, longevity and area of focus.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is conducted using a validated methodology in accordance with the highest standards in market research. In the U.S., the survey is conducted by an independent, third-party research firm and includes a select sample of more than 18,000 U.S. employers. This sample represents the top 100 Metropolitan Statistical Areas based on business establishment count and all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The mix of industries within the survey follows the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Supersectors and is structured to be representative of the U.S. economy. With this number of interviews, the overall U.S. survey carries a margin of error of +/-0.61%, with a 90% confidence index.

The complete U.S. results of the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey are available at press.manpower.com, where you will also find survey results for the 100 MSAs, 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

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