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Manpower Employment Outlook Survey for Second Quarter Reveals Strongest U.S. Job Prospects Since Beginning Months of 2001

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MILWAUKEE, March 16 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- U.S. employers expect the seasonally adjusted hiring pace from April to June to be stronger than it has been since the first quarter of 2001, according to the latest Manpower Employment Outlook Survey, conducted quarterly by Manpower Inc.

Of the 16,000 U.S. employers that were surveyed, 28% said they plan to increase hiring activity for the April - June period, while 6% expect a decrease in employment opportunities. Another 62% of employers foresee no change in hiring, and 4% are uncertain of their staffing plans. When the seasonal variations are removed from the data, the outlook for the second quarter is more positive than it was last quarter and is nearly twice as strong as it was last year at this time. This marks the third consecutive quarter of increased hiring activity.

"Based on the hiring intentions that were reported across a majority of the companies surveyed, it is clear that demand for their products and services has finally surpassed the capacity and productivity of the current workforce," said Jeffrey A. Joerres, Chairman & CEO of Manpower Inc. Hiring is expected to improve across each of the four U.S. regions and in all 10 industry sectors surveyed, compared with survey results from last quarter and a year ago.

"Employers in the much-watched manufacturing sectors project notable increases in hiring activity. Construction employers are particularly confident about job opportunities in the second quarter, predicting the strongest employment outlook since 1978," said Joerres.

The job picture is strongest in the South. With the exception of last quarter's survey, employers in the South have been among the most optimistic in their hiring plans since the second quarter of 2002. The fewest job opportunities for the April - June period are anticipated in the Northeast.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey results by sector are as follows:

Construction: Second quarter job prospects in Construction are the strongest of all of the industry sectors. Construction employers are more optimistic about hiring than they have been since the late 1970s, according to the seasonally adjusted data. For the third consecutive quarter, a moderate increase in hiring is expected, and job prospects are considerably better than a year ago at this time. Hiring expectations are strongest in the South and weakest in the Midwest.

Education: Second quarter hiring intentions for the Education sector show a continued pattern of steady job growth. According to the seasonally adjusted data, employers plan slight increases in the hiring pace compared to last quarter and a year ago. Jobs are expected to be most plentiful in the South and fewest in the Midwest and West.

Finance, Insurance & Real Estate: Finance/Insurance/Real Estate employers report hiring plans similar to those issued the last two quarters and predict some job gains for the second quarter. Employers in this sector expect a slight increase in hiring over last quarter and a moderate increase compared with a year ago. Job prospects are most promising in the West, with the Northeast and South not far behind. Midwest employers report the weakest hiring intentions in this sector.

Manufacturing - Durable Goods: When seasonal variations are removed from the data, Durable Goods Manufacturers expressed their strongest hiring intentions since the first quarter of 2001. Employers expect a moderate increase in jobs over last quarter and considerable growth compared with a year ago. The strongest hiring activity for this sector is expected in the South, and employers in the Northeast anticipate the fewest job opportunities.

Manufacturing - Non-Durable Goods: According to the seasonally adjusted data, Non-Durable Goods Manufacturers plan to hire at a steady pace during the second quarter. This marks the highest expectations in job market growth in three years for the Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing sector. Employers report a moderate increase in jobs over last quarter and last year at this time. Estimated employment levels are strongest in the Midwest and weakest in the Northeast.

Mining: On a seasonally adjusted basis, Mining employers anticipate steady job gains. The hiring pace is expected to be consistent with last quarter but more upbeat than a year ago at this time. For the second quarter, hiring intentions among Mining employers are most optimistic in the South. The least promising job outlook for the Mining sector is in the Northeast with significant job losses anticipated.

Public Administration: Hiring plans among Public Administration employers have fluctuated during the last two years, and predictions for the coming quarter continue the pattern. Modest job gains are expected when seasonal variations are removed from the data, with more hiring expected over last quarter and last year. The strongest hiring activity is expected in the South, while the fewest job opportunities are anticipated in the West.

Services: The employment outlook for the Services sector suggests healthy job market growth not seen since the second quarter of 2001. Employers are more positive in their hiring intentions than they were last quarter and a year ago. According to seasonally adjusted data, employment opportunities will be most plentiful in the West. Employers in the Midwest and Northeast anticipate the fewest job openings.

Transportation & Public Utilities: When the seasonal variations are removed from the data, job opportunities in Transportation/Public Utilities are expected to return to levels last seen during the second quarter of 2001. Hiring projections are up from last quarter, and significantly more optimistic than last year. Employers in the South and West anticipate the strongest hiring activity, while those in the Midwest expect to hire at a slower pace than the other U.S. regions.

Wholesale & Retail Trade: On a seasonally adjusted basis, the employment outlook in the Wholesale/Retail Trade industry is healthier than it has been in the last three years. Hiring expectations continue their steady climb in the second quarter. A modest increase in job prospects from last quarter is anticipated, as is significant job growth over last year. There is little variation in the employment outlook across the regions. The most job opportunities are predicted in the South, and similar gains are expected in the Midwest and West. Slightly less hiring activity is estimated in the Northeast.

About the Survey

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is conducted 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 its size, scope longevity and area of focus. The survey has been running for more than 40 years and is one of the most trusted surveys of employment activity in the world. The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is based on interviews with more than 35,000 public and private employers worldwide and is considered a highly respected economic indicator.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is currently available for 19 countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. The program began in the United States and Canada in 1962, and the United Kingdom was added in 1966. Mexico and Ireland launched the survey in 2002, and 13 additional countries have been added to the program in 2003. New Zealand joined the program in 2004. For more information, visit the Manpower Inc. Web site at www.manpower.com and enter the Press Room.

About Manpower Inc.

Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN) is a world leader in the employment services industry, offering customers a continuum of services to meet their needs throughout the employment and business cycle. The company specializes in permanent, temporary and contract recruitment; employee assessment; training; career transition and organizational consulting services. Manpower's worldwide network of 4,300 offices in 67 countries and territories enables the company to meet the needs of its 400,000 customers per year, including small and medium size enterprises in all industry sectors, as well as the world's largest multinational corporations. The focus of Manpower's work is on raising productivity through improved quality, efficiency and cost-reduction, enabling customers to concentrate on their core business activities. In addition to the Manpower brand, the company operates under the brand names of Right Management Consultants, Jefferson Wells, Elan, Brook Street and Empower. More information on Manpower Inc. is available at www.manpower.com.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Manpower Employment Outlook Survey data is available for more than 460 U.S. markets across the country. Local findings can be obtained by contacting Lisa Tagliapietra at 414.906.6540 or lisa.tagliapietra@na.manpower.com. In addition, the survey is conducted in 17 other countries around the world. Those results are available in the Manpower Press Room on our Web site at www.manpower.com/meos. All graphs from the full report are available to be downloaded for use in publication or broadcast from the Manpower Online Visual Library, also located in the Press Room on <http://www.manpower.com/library>.

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