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Monthly Initial Claims Increase for Second Consecutive Month

In November 21,260 initial claims were filed in Nevada, compared to 21,086 in November 2011. That is less than a 1 percent increase over the year, which is the second month in a row that initial claims have increased from their 2011 level. Since the beginning of the recession initial claims peaked at 36,414 in December 2008, and the low point for initial claims was 13,932 in September 2012.

This is the first time that initial claims have increased in consecutive months since 2009, said Bill Anderson, chief economist for Nevada's Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR).

"This may be an indication of the end of the downward trend that Nevada experienced as claims fell from their recessionary peak," Anderson said. "Though initial claims declined in eight of the first nine months of 2012, the pace of the declines had been noticeably smaller than in 2010 or 2011. This summer, initial claims saw their largest declines of the year, but that changed in October and November."

While the increases in initial claims have not been large, they are further indication that unemployment benefit activity may be stabilizing at a somewhat higher level than in the past. This is evidence that while Nevada's economy is recovering, it is not yet returning to the economic boom of the years preceding the recession, Anderson said.

An initial claim represents the first stage of filing for unemployment benefits, and is therefore most closely related to the number of people entering into unemployment. Initial claims tend to increase on a seasonal basis during the fall and winter months, and then fall during the spring and summer. Other measures of unemployment claim activity, including the number of initial claims that qualified for payment, the number of weekly claims, and the number of people exhausting available benefits all declined in November.

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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 provide training and job placement services to job seekers and to assist employers in hiring practices.