

Punching in and punching out . . . twice

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Dana Hanley, who works as a secretary in the emergency rooms at Rhode Island Hospital and Roger Williams Medical Center, has two jobs because she needs to.

Kerri Arnold, a high school teacher in Pawtucket who works as a waitress on Friday and Saturday nights, has a second job so she can afford a better life, whether it means paying for her wedding, going to Red Sox games, or being able to book a flight to Florida when her mom got sick.

And Jeff Latham, who works as a lawyer during the week and does the weather on Channel 10 during weekends, has his second job because he still loves meteorology, and welcomes the chance to keep his hand in the profession.

Whatever the reasons, figures from the state Department of Labor & Training show that 6.9 percent of employed Rhode Islanders ages 16 and older had more than one job as of 2006. This represented a slight increase from 2005, when the rate was 6.5, and is the highest percentage of multiple jobholders here since 2001, when the percentage was 7.2 percent.

It's also higher than the national average of 5.2 percent. Within New England, though, Rhode Island falls somewhere in the middle, with a lower percentage of multiple jobholders than Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire but a higher percentage than Massachusetts and Connecticut. South Dakota and Nebraska tied for the highest percentage of multiple jobholders in the country, at 9.9 percent. Georgia and West Virginia have the lowest rates, at 3.5 percent.

Latham, 50, grew up in Maryland and graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a degree in geography and meteorology in 1981. He worked at Channel 10 as a meteorologist and reporter from 1983 to 1992, then moved to Springfield, Mass., where he worked at WGGB-TV. While in Springfield, he started going to law school at night.

Why the move from meteorology to law?

"The TV business is not the best career as you get older," Latham said. "I was married, with kids, and I was looking for something with more stability."

Near the end of his law studies, Latham got inquiries about coming to Channel 6, so he returned to Rhode Island and worked at Channel 6 while finishing his law degree. He

began practicing law in 2000, and is now a partner in Tate & Latham, specializing in medical malpractice defense. In 2002 he returned to Channel 10, where he does weather on the weekends.

“I still love meteorology, I enjoy doing TV.... Now that it’s not my full-time job, there’s no career pressure. It’s more fun for me,” he said. “And it never hurts to have the extra income.”

Kerri Arnold, 31, teaches English at Tolman High School in Pawtucket. On Friday and Saturday nights, she’s a waitress at the Atwood Grill in Johnston. She said she has the second job in order to afford a better lifestyle. She’s getting married in July, and the extra income will allow her and her fiancé to pay for the wedding. Her goal after the wedding, she said, is to keep working at both jobs and pay her car off early so she can afford to take a year off when the couple has a baby.

“Sometimes I do hate working the second job because I feel like I miss out on events and getting to go out on weekends,” Arnold said in an e-mail. “At 31, I don’t have the energy that I used to. However, I feel like the second job is a safety net. It allows me to face surprises that otherwise create financial disasters. When my mom, who lives in Florida, became sick, I was able to book a flight to visit her that evening and not worry about how I was going to pay for it.”

Hanley, 37, said she has three kids to support, and needs to work two jobs, although she would prefer to cut back to just one. She said she works 32 hours a week at Rhode Island Hospital and 25 to 30 hours a week at Roger Williams Medical Center.

Some days she has to work both jobs, spending from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Rhode Island Hospital and then going to Roger Williams to work from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. “I’m exhausted right now from working all these hours,” she said during a phone interview last week.

She said she has every other weekend off, and uses that time to spend with her family. “As long as I know ahead of time what I’m doing, then I can plan accordingly,” she said.

Among economic analysts, there’s no agreement about what changes in the rate of multiple jobholders means.

Francis Horvath, an economist for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, said the national percentage of multiple jobholders has declined in the past 10 years, dropping from 6.1 percent in 1997 to 5.2 percent in last year. Horvath said the percentage of multiple jobholders does not move up or down with the unemployment rate or other indicators of economic health.

In 2001, the federal government polled people about why they work multiple jobs. About 28 percent said more than one job was necessary to meet expenses or pay off debt. About 35 percent said it was to earn extra money, although the income might not be strictly

necessary to meet their basic needs. An additional 17.4 percent did it because they enjoyed the second job, while 4.6 percent did it to build a new business or gain experience in a new occupation. (The remainder of the answers are lumped under “other reasons” or “reason not available.”)

Sometimes people’s reasons change over time. John Mitchner, 55, works two jobs, one as a technician testing software for Rite Aid, the other as a direct care professional at a group home for the mentally challenged in North Smithfield. Twenty years ago, Mitchner said, he had two jobs because he had to. “As time went on, I wanted to do it,” he said. “I fell in love with the job, working with the people.”

The 2001 survey reported that people increasingly work a second job for enjoyment as they get older — 30.5 percent of the women and 24 percent of men 55 and older, as opposed 8.9 percent of women and 9.8 of men aged 16 to 24.

Linda Katz, policy director for the Poverty Institute at Rhode Island College, said the multiple job holding rate in Rhode Island is an indication that there are not enough jobs that pay well enough to support a family, so that people need to take on extra work just to get by. The problem is particularly acute for people with low skill levels, she said, and the rise in multiple job holders here sends a message that the state needs a more educated work force.

Brian Bethune, an economist for Global Insight, an economic forecasting and consulting company based in Lexington, Mass., said it’s possible to take either a “glass half empty” or “glass half full” approach to multiple jobs. Empty glass: people are struggling just to get by on inadequate wages from one job. Full glass: the economy is generating enough jobs to supply people who want to work with additional sources of income.

Randall Hansen, who runs a career site on the Internet called Quintessential Careers (www.quintcareers.com) says working multiple jobs from necessity can create mental and physical stress. Working long hours, he said, can take a physical toll, particularly when it leads to a lack of sleep.

Mentally, he said, knowing you need two jobs to get by can be stressful — and it’s more difficult to look for a better job because you just don’t have time. Finally, holding more than one job can create family problems if the multiple job holder is frequently absent and unable to take part in family activities.

MULTIPLE JOBHOLDERS							
>	R.I.	Conn.	Mass.	Maine	N.H.	Vt.	U.S.
2006	6.9%	5.9%	5.6%	8.2%	7.3%	9.3%	5.2%
2005	6.5%	5.5%	5.8%	7.8%	6.3%	8.3%	5.3%
2004	5.8%	5.3%	5.4%	7.7%	6.4%	8.5%	5.4%
2003	6.4%	4.9%	4.9%	7.9%	6.2%	8.9%	5.3%

2002	6.2%	5.9%	4.9%	7.2%	6.5%	8.9%	5.3%
2001	7.2%	6.4%	4.8%	7.1%	7.0%	7.8%	5.4%
2000	7.8%	6.5%	5.8%	8.6%	6.3%	9.2%	5.6%
1999	8.1%	5.9%	5.9%	8.0%	7.1%	8.7%	5.8%
1998	7.0%	5.1%	6.1%	8.0%	7.3%	8.8%	6.0%
1997	7.0%	5.3%	6.4%	8.8%	8.0%	8.9%	6.3%
1996	6.8%	6.1%	7.2%	7.9%	7.8%	8.6%	6.4%
1995	7.5%	5.4%	6.8%	6.7%	8.9%	8.5%	6.3%
1994	6.8%	6.1%	6.5%	6.5%	7.3%	7.9%	6.0%

SOURCE: Labor Market Information Unit, R.I. Dept. of Labor and Training.

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