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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2015 Holiday Hiring Declines **NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER FAIL TO MATCH OCTOBER'S RECORD PACE**

CHICAGO, January 12, 2016 – Once again, after getting off to a strong start in October, holiday hiring among retailers fizzled in November and December. Overall, seasonal employment gains were 1.2 percent lower than in 2014, making it the second consecutive year in which holiday hires declined.

Retail employment grew by 745,800 workers in the final three months of 2015, according to an analysis of non-seasonally adjusted government employment data by global outplacement consultancy Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. The holiday hiring total was down from 755,000 workers added in 2014, which was 4.0 percent lower than a year earlier, when nearly 787,000 seasonal workers were added to retail payrolls.

“Several factors may be contributing to slower holiday hiring. Just as in many other industries, technology is making it possible for retailers to meet higher demand with fewer workers,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

“The other factor may be the shift in Christmas shopping from brick-and-mortar to click-and-order. The continued growth in online purchases means that retailers need fewer bodies on the sales floor while more workers are needed by warehouses, fulfillment centers and shipping companies, such as FedEx and UPS,” he added.

Retailers also appear to moving their hiring timetable up a bit. While the bulk of the employment gains are still recorded in November, job gains in October are definitely on the rise. Over the last two holiday seasons, retail employment increased by an average of 190,400 in October. From 2010 through 2013, retailers added an average of 145,600 in October.

Even with downward adjustments in hiring figures by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment gains recorded among retailers in October were still the highest on record for that month, in data going back to 1939.

“The earlier hiring gains, coupled with the fact that Black Friday has lost some of its punch in recent years, means that retailers simply do not have to add as many workers in November and December as they used to,” said Challenger.

“Retailers are offering more deals online and at different times throughout the holiday season. As a result, more and more shoppers are learning that they no longer have to endure the crowds and mayhem at 5am on the Friday after Thanksgiving to get a good deal,” he added.

January and February are likely to see a significant decline in retail employment. Since 2010, non-seasonally-adjusted employment in the sector has fallen by an average of 787,000 jobs in the opening two months of the year. That surpasses the number of seasonal jobs added during that period, which averaged 715,000.

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JOBS LOST IN RETAIL TRADE

January, February, 2010-2015

	Jan	Feb	TOTAL
2010	-572,800	-167,700	-740,500
2011	-559,700	-166,500	-726,200
2012	-562,100	-214,700	-776,800
2013	-604,400	-185,800	-790,200
2014	-668,700	-218,800	-887,500
2015	-624,500	-174,400	-798,900

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., using non-seasonally adjusted data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics

JOBS ADDED IN RETAIL TRADE
October, November, December, 2005-2015

	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	% Change
2005	122,300	392,700	196,600	711,600	0.2%
2006	150,600	427,300	169,000	746,900	5.0%
2007	87,900	465,400	167,600	720,900	-3.5%
2008	38,600	213,600	72,700	324,900	-54.9%
2009	45,100	317,100	133,600	495,800	52.6%
2010	149,800	339,200	158,600	647,600	30.6%
2011	134,200	390,600	154,500	679,300	4.9%
2012	138,700	485,400	99,600	723,700	6.5%
2013	159,600	443,100	184,100	786,800	8.7%
2014	185,700	414,300	155,000	755,000	-4.0%
2015	195,100	405,000	145,700	745,800	-1.2%
AVERAGE	127,964	390,336	148,818	667,118	

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., using non-seasonally adjusted data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics