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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October Retail Hiring Softens **RETAIL EMPLOYMENT GAINS FALL 21% FROM YEAR AGO**

CHICAGO, November 7, 2016 – Despite largescale hiring announcements from numerous major retailers, the number of October employment gains in the sector declined 21 percent from a year ago to 154,600. That was the fewest job gains to kick off the holiday hiring season since 2012, according to an analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data by global outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

This year's decline follows two consecutive years of record job gains in October. In 2015, BLS data show that retail employment grew by 194,800, which represents the largest number of October job gains for the sector on record. That bested the previous record, set the year before, when retailers added 182,800 new workers in October.

It is worth noting that record October job gains in 2014 and 2015 did not lead to record retail hiring throughout the holiday season. In fact, both years saw overall holiday hiring decline. In all, 749,100 retail job were added in the final three months of 2014, which was 5 percent fewer than 2013. Last year, the number of retail jobs added fell another 1.4 percent to 738,800.

“The shrinking number of jobs added during the holiday season does not necessarily mean that the retail industry is shrinking. As of October, there were 15,994,000 Americans employed in this sector. That is up from 15,759,000 a year ago and represents the highest October employment level ever recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

“A few trends could be contributing to the fall off in holiday hiring. First, stronger hiring throughout the year and advances in retail technology may mean that stores do not have to hire as many extra workers during the busy holiday shopping season. Secondly, increased online shopping could be shifting the holiday job gains away from retailers toward warehousing, fulfillment, and transportation operations,” Challenger added.

Indeed, seasonal hiring announcements tracked by Challenger provide strong evidence of this shift. Over the last five years, holiday hiring plans announced by the likes of Amazon.com, UPS and FedEx have grown significantly. Meanwhile, hiring announcements from retailers have remained relatively flat or declined.

Employer	2012	2016	Change
Amazon.com	50,000	120,000	+140%
UPS	55,000	95,000	+73%
FedEx	20,000	50,000	+150%
Macy's	80,000	83,000	+3.8%
Target	88,000	70,000	-20%
JC Penney	40,000	40,000	Unchanged

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

“A third factor that may be leading to the decline in holiday hiring is a lack of available candidates. In a growing number of metropolitan areas, the unemployment rate has fallen below 3.5 percent, which means that the pool of available labor is relatively shallow. Promises of higher wages and steep discounts on store products may not be enough to attract new workers,” said Challenger.

One recent [MSN](#) news story cites a survey of retailers nationwide conducted by NBC News found that they expect to pay an average of \$14 per hour to their seasonal workers this year, up from \$10 per hour last year.

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JOBS ADDED IN RETAIL TRADE October, November, December, 2005-2016

	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	182,800	412,200	154,100	749,100	-4.8%
2015	194,800	409,500	134,500	738,800	-1.4%
2016	154,600				
AVERAGE	129,917	390,555	147,718	665,945	

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., with data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Amazon	50,000	70,000	80,000	100,000	120,000
UPS	55,000	55,000	95,000	95,000	95,000
Macy's	80,000	83,000	86,000	85,000	83,000
Kohl's	52,700	53,000	76,970	79,160	69,000
Target	88,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	77,500
Walmart	50,000	55,000	60,000	60,000	
FedEx (Transportation)	20,000	20,000	50,000	55,000	50,000
Toys R Us	45,000	45,000	45,000	40,000	
JC Penney	40,000	35,000	35,000	30,000	40,000
GameStop	17,000	17,000	25,000	28,000	
Nordstrom	N/A	N/A	N/A	11,800	11,400
Sports Authority	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,500	
Best Buy	14,000	N/A	N/A		
Meijer	12,000	9,000	10,000		
Radial					20,000
Party City					35,000
The Bon-Ton Stores					13,500
Gap	N/A	N/A	63,000		
Versant Supply Chain					2,000
Opryland					300
L Brands					4,000
Hickory Farms (Food)	5,225	6,000	N/A		
TOTAL	528,925	518,000	695,970	657,460	620,700