



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

For Immediate Release: March 29, 2013

Alabama's February Unemployment Rate is 7.2%

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's preliminary February unemployment rate is 7.2%, up from January's rate of 6.9%, and equal to February 2012's adjusted rate. February's rate represents 154,885 unemployed persons, compared to 148,663 last month, and 155,673 last year.

"While we did experience a slight uptick in the unemployment rate this month, we also saw an increase in the number of people working, both over the past month and the past year," said Surtees. "We've also seen an increase in the number of people in the labor force. This tells us that some people are regaining confidence in the job market and are looking for work again."

The number of people employed in February was 2,002,810, up from 1,999,493 in January, and also up from 2,000,021 in February 2012.

The Civilian Labor Force (CLF), increased in February to 2,157,695, up from 2,148,156 in January. It is also above the 2,155,694 recorded in February 2012. The CLF is made up of people who have a job or are seeking a job.

"Going hand in hand with the increases in the number of employed, we are also seeing increases in the number of jobs in several sectors, including manufacturing and leisure and hospitality," continued Surtees. "Additionally, initial unemployment compensation claims were down by more than fifty percent from last month. This represents stabilization in initial claims as the expected loss from seasonal hiring and temporary shutdowns begins to wane."

Wage and salary employment increased 15,300 over the month. Increases were seen in the following sectors: government, professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, educational and health services, manufacturing, and construction, among others. The only sector to lose jobs over the month was financial activities.

There were 17,108 initial unemployment compensation claims in February, compared to 34,560 in January. This is also below the 18,289 initial claims reported in February 2012.

The counties with the lowest unemployment rates in February are: Shelby County at 5.6%, Lee County at 6.4%, and Blount County at 6.5%. The counties with the highest unemployment rates in February are: Wilcox County at 17.6%, Lowndes County at 14.5%, and Dallas County at 13.8%.

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Members of the media seeking more information should contact Communications Director Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.