

Alabama's Unemployment Rate Now at 6.9%

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Monday announced Alabama's preliminary unemployment rate for January 2013 is 6.9 percent, marking the second month the state's unemployment rate is below 7% when factoring in revised figures from December.

“The long-term trend in Alabama's unemployment rate is encouraging news,” Governor Bentley said. “We have seen a steady decline in unemployment over time. Dozens of industries are choosing to build and expand in Alabama, and the result is more people are going back to work. There is still much work left to be done, however, until Alabama reaches full employment, and our efforts to recruit more jobs will continue.”

January's rate represents 148,724 unemployed persons, compared to 145,613 in December and 158,040 in January 2012.

The rate is up slightly from December 2012's revised rate of 6.8%. December 2012's preliminary rate was originally announced as 7.1%. January 2012's revised rate was 7.3%.

“This is certainly a positive trend,” Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees said. “However, we still have more than 140,000 Alabamians who want to work, and we have to remain focused on helping them find and keep a job.”

Additionally, revisions conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a division of the U.S. Department of Labor, indicate that 10 months of 2012 actually had lower unemployment rates than were initially reported. August and October 2012 both saw decreases of a full percentage point. The preliminary rate for August was 8.5%, which was revised to 7.5%, and October's preliminary rate was 8.1%, which was revised to 7.1%.

“The revisions point to conclusions that we've been advocating for a while,” Surtees said. “We have seen a pattern of lower initial unemployment compensation claims, increased numbers of active job orders on our jobs database, and fewer companies are reporting layoffs. These factors all contribute to a better employment picture in the state.”

Initial unemployment compensation claims remain below 2009 levels. In January, initial claims numbered 34,560, compared to 61,033 in 2009. In 2008, the figure was 35,766.

Active job orders placed by employers on the state's online jobs database www.joblink.alabama.gov numbered 15,253, which remain at an all-time high.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 5.4%, Blount County at 6.4% and Madison County at 6.6%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 17.4%, Lowndes County at 14.5% and Bullock, Perry, and Dallas Counties at 13.9%.

February's unemployment rate will be released on Friday, March 29, 2013.

###

The Governor's Press Office can be reached at 334-242-7150.