



## Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

### News Release

For Immediate Release: March 11, 2009

### **Alabama's January 2009 Unemployment Rate Rises to 7.8%** *Alabama's Rate Remains Below Those of Neighboring States*

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's unemployment rate for January 2009 rose to 7.8%. This is up from December 2008's revised rate of 6.5%. The rate represents 167,774 unemployed Alabamians.

"The important thing to realize right now is that the recession has hit the entire country hard," said Surtees. "Alabama is fortunate in that our rate is still a good bit lower than the rates of our neighboring states. Thanks to the increase in economic development over the past six years, Alabama has so far been able to weather the recession a little better than others."

Although January's rate shows an increase in the number of people unemployed in Alabama, the rate remains well below those of neighboring states. Mississippi reported a rate of 8.7%, while Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee reported rates of 8.6%.

Employment declined by 40,700 over the month of January, with most of the job losses occurring in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector and the professional and business services sector.

The counties with the lowest unemployment rates are Shelby, at 5.5%, Madison, at 5.7%, and Coffee, at 6.2%. The counties with the highest unemployment rates are Wilcox, at 19.5%, Chambers at 17.9%, and Dallas at 17.3%.

For 2008, Alabama's average unemployment rate was 5.0%, below the national yearly average of 5.8%.

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*Members of the media seeking more information should contact Public Information Officer Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.*