



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

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Alabama's March Unemployment Rate Drops to 9.2%

MONTGOMERY -- Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's March unemployment rate fell to 9.2%, down from February's rate of 9.3%.

March's rate represents 195,374 unemployed persons, down from 196,714 last month and significantly down from the 215,067 recorded in March 2010.

"A decrease in the unemployment rate is always better than an increase," said Surtees. "However, we can't get too excited because there are still nearly 200,000 Alabamians out of work. Another positive is that we are beginning to see some stabilization in unemployment compensation trends that are beginning to show a return to some sense of normalcy."

"For example, March's initial claims data continues to remain below the levels of both 2010 and 2009, the years that bore the brunt of the recession. The same holds true for the number of weeks claimed, and the amount of benefit payments. We are also seeing high numbers of people coming off of the unemployment rolls. This means that fewer people are entering the system, while more are coming out – this trend will help to bring the unemployment rate down."

Initial claims for March 2011 were 23,890, compared to 28,601 in March 2010 and 45,257 in March 2009. The number of weeks claimed in March 2010 was 164,683, compared to 273,448 in March 2010 and 349,207 in March 2009. The amount of benefit payments in March 2010 was \$37,067,545, compared to \$52,229,706 in March 2010 and \$65,587,095 in March 2009. The number of exhaustees (those who stopped receiving unemployment compensation benefits) in March was 5,525, compared to 7,186 in March 2010 and 5,783 in March 2009.

The counties with the lowest unemployment rates in March were: Shelby at 6.7%, Coffee

at 6.9%, and Madison and Pike Counties at 7.5%. The counties with the highest unemployment rates were: Wilcox at 20.0%, Monroe at 16.0%, and Perry at 15.8%.

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