



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: June 19, 2009

Alabama's Unemployment Rate Rises to 9.8% *Weekly Benefit Amount to Increase in July*

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's unemployment rate for May rose to 9.8%. This is an increase from April's rate of 9.0%.

May's rate represents 208,917 unemployed persons. Wage and salary employment totaling 1,915,500, was virtually unchanged for the month, with an increase of 100 jobs. Sectors experiencing gains in May were leisure and hospitality, education and health services, trade, transportation, and utilities, and professional and business services. Sectors experiencing losses were manufacturing, construction, government, financial activities, and information.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rate were: Shelby at 6.6%, Madison at 6.9%, and Coffee at 7.4%. Counties with the highest unemployment rate were: Wilcox at 23.9%, Lowndes at 18.0%, and Dallas at 17.7%.

“Since last month's rate held steady at 9.0%, we had hoped that we would continue to see a stabilization in Alabama's unemployment rate. Unfortunately, the nation is still gripped in a serious recession, and Alabama is not immune to its effects,” said Surtees. “We are pleased to announce that the maximum weekly benefit amount will increase next month for new claimants. Hopefully, those extra dollars combined with the additional \$25 a week federal benefit, will help our unemployed citizens get through these tough economic times.”

Alabama's maximum weekly benefit amount is scheduled to increase by ten dollars, from \$255 a week to \$265 a week, on July 5. This is the second of two scheduled increases that were passed into law by the legislature in 2008.

Only new claims filed on or after July 5, 2009 will be eligible for the additional \$10. All claimants currently receiving unemployment compensation benefits are eligible for the \$25 a week additional federal benefit, which was included the Federal Stimulus Package.

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