ALABAMA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR JANUARY IS 4.0 PERCENT

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, March 6, 2008 . . . . Alabama's first unemployment rate of 2008 is a January figure of 4.0 percent, an increase from a revised rate of 3.7 percent in December. The state posted a 3.4 percent unemployment rate in January 2007.

"Wage and salary employment decreased by 26,500 from December to January, with the majority of the monthly decline due to seasonal losses of 12,000 in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector, " says Tom Surtees, Alabama Department of Industrial Relations director. "January's 4.0 percent jobless rate represents 89,356 unemployed persons, compared to 82,248 in December, and 73,018 in January 2007."

The comparable national unemployment rate for January released last month is 4.9 percent, a decline from December's rate of 5.0 percent. The national rate in January 2007 was 4.6 percent.

Over the year, there was a net gain of 23,700 wage and salary jobs in Alabama. The majority of the annual growth occurred in trade, transportation, and utilities (+8,100); government (+5,800); professional and business services (+5,100); educational and health services (+2,800); leisure and hospitality (+2,800); and construction (+2,800).   The majority of job losses were recorded in manufacturing (-4,300).

The lowest county unemployment rates for January are: Shelby (2.9 percent), Madison (3.3 percent), and both Limestone and Blount (3.5 percent). The highest county rates for January are: Wilcox (11.2 percent), Perry (9.0 percent), and Bullock (8.9 percent).

The Alabama unemployment rate for February is scheduled for release March 28.

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County unemployment rates, Metropolitan Area Unemployment Rates, and an Alabama map of county unemployment rates, are available at: http://dir.alabama.gov. Click on "Alabama Labor Market Information Division" under "Quick Links" & follow prompts.