

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROBERT BENTLEY
GOVERNOR



STATE CAPITOL
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

STATE OF ALABAMA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016

Alabama's December 2015 Unemployment Rate is 6.2%

Year to Date Wage and Salary Growth 45,500, Greatly Surpassing Expectations

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Friday announced that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted December 2015 unemployment rate is 6.2%.

"In January 2015, economists predicted that wage and salary employment would grow in Alabama by 33,800 in 2015, and we surpassed that number by more than 10,000 jobs," Governor Bentley said. "Employers are hiring in Alabama, and these numbers prove it. We will continue our efforts to recruit and add jobs to the economy in 2016."

"Although a slight increase in the unemployment rate is never celebrated, this month's increase is attributed to the fact that the labor force increased by nearly 10,000, while people were out looking for work, seasonal or otherwise," Alabama Labor Commissioner Fitzgerald Washington said. "December's labor force count was on par with the summer months, which is traditionally when the most people are searching for work. Increases in the labor force represent increased confidence in the job market."

The civilian labor force measured 2,154,771 in December, up from 2,145,762 in November, and significantly up from 2,130,694 in December 2014 (seasonally adjusted).

Wage and salary employment increased by 45,500 from January 2015.

Over the past 12 months (December 2014 to December 2015), gains were experienced in the education and health services sector (+5,100), the leisure and hospitality sector (+4,800), the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+4,500), and the construction sector (+4,000), among others.

"The construction sector has experienced its best year in five years," Washington added. "Construction employment is a great indicator of economic health: construction doesn't drive the economy, but the economy drives construction."

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.1%, Elmore and Lee Counties at 4.9%, and Autauga, Cullman, and St. Clair Counties at 5.0%.

###

“Seasonal adjustment” refers to BLS’s practice of anticipating certain trends in the labor force, such as hiring during the holidays or the surge in the labor force when students graduate in the spring, and removing their effects to the civilian labor force.

The Current Population (CPS), or the household survey, is conducted by the Census Bureau and identifies members of the work force and measures how many people are working or looking for work.

The establishment survey, which is conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a division of the U.S. Department of Labor, surveys employers to measure how many jobs are in the economy. This is also referred to as wage and salary employment.