



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

For Immediate Release: May 16, 2014

Alabama's April Unemployment Rate is 6.9%

Wage and Salary Employment Up by 10,000

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted April unemployment rate is 6.9%, up from March's rate of 6.7%, and above April 2013's rate of 6.5%. April's rate represents 147,341 unemployed persons, compared to 144,447 in March and 139,322 in April 2013.

"Seasonal adjustment certainly played a role in this month's unemployment rate increase," said Surtees. "The state data did not meet seasonal expectations, while at the same time, only one of Alabama's 67 counties showed an increase in their rate this month. The state data *are* seasonally adjusted while the county data are *not*. However, this is an estimate and will probably be revised as the seasonal factors become more quantifiable as the year goes on."

Only Greene County registered an increase in their unemployment rate, while all other counties saw declines ranging from .4% (Winston County) to 1.2% (Perry County).

Wage and salary employment increased in April by 10,000, rising to 1,920,600. Monthly gains were seen in the leisure and hospitality sector (+4,700), the professional and business services sector (+2,900), and the construction sector (+600), among others. Over the year, wage and salary employment increased 15,200, with gains in the leisure and hospitality sector (+6,200), education and health services sector (+3,900), and the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+3,300), among others.

"Other facts are more promising: there is a significant increase, both over the month and over the year, in the number of jobs employers are reporting, we are registering record numbers of job orders on JobLink, online job ads are up over 17%, and initial unemployment compensation claims and payments remain at five year lows," Surtees continued. "All of these things point to a much healthier job market than we have seen in some time."

JobLink, the state's online free jobs database (www.joblink.alabama.gov), registered a record 23,691 active job orders in April. The Help Wanted Online (HWOL) data showed 57,396 total job ads were placed online in Alabama, up 17.8% from March. The most advertised careers are: heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, first line supervisors of retail workers, and registered nurses.

There were 15,024 initial unemployment compensation claims and benefit payments totaled \$22,821,948, the lowest amounts in five years.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.2%, Lee County at 4.9%, and Cullman County at 5.1%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 15.5%, Greene County at 12.7%, and Perry County at 11.9%.

###

Members of the media seeking more information should contact Communications Director Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.

“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.