



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: September 18, 2009

Alabama's Unemployment Rate Rises to 10.4%

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's unemployment rate for August 2009 rose to 10.4%, up from 10.2% in July.

August's rate represents 217,306 unemployed persons. Wage and salary employment decreased by 11,100 over the month. Most of the monthly downturn occurred in the sectors of hospitality and leisure, financial activities, trade, transportation, and utilities, and construction. Monthly gains occurred in the educational and health services sector, and the professional and business services sector.

“While every state in the country continues to struggle with high unemployment, I want the unemployed in Alabama to know that there is help available to them,” said Surtees. “There are many unemployment compensation extension programs and even more job training programs available. I'd like to encourage those who need help to take advantage of these opportunities.”

Over the past several months, Congress has passed two unemployment compensation benefit extensions, and last month, Governor Riley signed a law entitling qualified unemployed Alabamians to up to an additional 20 weeks of unemployment compensation benefits. This means that Alabamians are now eligible for up to 79 weeks of unemployment compensation benefits.

Claimants can file for unemployment compensation benefits online at www.dir.alabama.gov or by calling 1-866-234-5382.

The Alabama Career Center System also provides services free of charge to the unemployed and underemployed, as well as to employers. Career counseling, job search assistance, and training assistance are only some of the programs available at any of Alabama's 43 Career Centers.

The counties with the lowest unemployment rate were: Shelby and Madison at 7.6%, Coffee at 8.5%, and Baldwin and Lee at 8.7%. The counties with the highest unemployment rate were Wilcox at 25.4%, Dallas at 21.3%, and Conecuh at 19.9%.

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