



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: January 29, 2009

Unemployed Alabamians Now Qualify for an Additional 13 Weeks of Benefits

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that unemployed Alabamians are now eligible for an additional 13 weeks of Unemployment Compensation benefits.

Because of the unemployment rate increases over the past three months, federal legislation passed in November 2008 allows for unemployed Alabamians to receive the additional benefits. In November, Alabama qualified for an extension of 20 weeks. The two extensions combined result in an additional 33 weeks of benefits added to the existing 26 weeks of regular benefits.

In order to qualify for this second extension, a state's three month average unemployment rate must equal or exceed six percent. Alabama's current three month average is 6.1%.

"Hopefully, this extension will help to alleviate some of the financial burden for those who remain unemployed," said Surtees. "During such faltering economic times, many workers may feel there is nowhere to turn. Alabama's Career Centers stand ready to help those workers meet these challenges."

Approximately 12,000 Alabamians may currently be eligible for the additional benefits. The extension becomes effective February 15, 2009. Claimants who qualify for the additional benefits will need to begin certifying for them on February 22, 2009.

Workers who may qualify will be notified by mail with filing instructions. Current and future claimants who exhaust their regular benefits will automatically be continued on the extended benefits as long as they qualify.

More information concerning unemployment benefits and filing instructions can be found on the Department's website: www.dir.alabama.gov.

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