

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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STATE OF ALABAMA

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Alabama's September Unemployment Rate Remains Unchanged at 5.4%

Manufacturing Employment at Nearly Eight-Year High

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Governor Robert Bentley announced today that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted September unemployment rate is 5.4%, unchanged from August's rate, and significantly lower than September 2015's rate of 6.1%. September's rate represents 117,125 unemployed persons, compared to 116,296 in August and 130,259 in September 2015. The number of employed persons in September is 2,048,257, up from 2,040,517 in August, and well above the 2,011,146 recorded in September 2015.

"Our unemployment rate held steady this month, remaining at its lowest point during my administration, which also happens to be its lowest point in more than eight years," said Governor Robert Bentley. "We are continuing to see record low numbers of people who are unemployed, with September's count marking the second lowest number of unemployed since 2008. We are continuing our efforts to ensure that every Alabamian who wants a job has one, and these numbers show we are having success in that endeavor."

The last time that the unemployment rate was at or below 5.4% was in May 2008, when it was 5.2%. September's count of 117,125 unemployed persons is slightly higher than August 2016's count of 116,296, which marked the lowest number of unemployed since May 2008, when the number was 113,343.

"Another highlight from this month's jobs numbers is the fact that our manufacturing employment is nearing pre-recession levels," said Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary of the Alabama Department of Labor. "Manufacturing has long been a strong industry in Alabama, and most of these jobs have higher than average salaries. August and September of this year are nearing our highest levels of manufacturing employment."

Manufacturing employment measured 263,000 in September and 263,500 in August. The last time this number was higher was in December 2008, when it measured 271,300.

Over the year, wage and salary total employment increased by 18,000, with gains in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+6,200), the education and health services sector (+4,500), and the manufacturing sector (+4,300), among others.

Wage and salary total employment increased in September by 300. Monthly gains were seen in the government sector (+5,800), the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+2,000), and the education and health services sector (+300), among others.

“On a more local level, 11 out of 12 metro areas and 87% percent of Alabama’s counties saw either no change or an improvement in their rates since last year,” continued Washington.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.2%, Lee and Elmore Counties at 4.8%, and Cullman and Cherokee Counties at 4.9%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 13.4%, Clarke County at 10.5%, and Lowndes County at 10.3%.

Major cities with the lowest unemployment rates are: Homewood and Vestavia at 3.6%, Hoover at 4.1%, and Alabaster and Madison at 4.3%. Major cities with the highest unemployment rates are: Bessemer at 10.1%, Selma at 9.9%, and Prichard at 9.4%.

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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.