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Alabama's October Unemployment Rate Drops to 6.3%

Wage and Employment Grew by More Than 33,000 Over the Year

MONTGOMERY—Governor Robert Bentley on Friday announced that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted October unemployment rate is 6.3%, down from September's rate of 6.6%. October's rate represents 133,470 unemployed persons, compared to 140,555 in September.

"The October unemployment rate is good news for Alabama," Governor Bentley said. "We are seeing healthy growth in the number of jobs our economy is supporting, and that is a testament to our efforts to recruit quality companies that bring good jobs to Alabama. We have not seen this many jobs in more than five years, before the recession hit Alabama, and I am confident this trend will continue."

Wage and salary employment, totaling 1,948,600 in October, increased by 9,800. Monthly gains were seen in the professional and business services sector (+2,900), the government sector (+2,700), and the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+2,400), among others.

Over the year, wage and salary employment increased by 33,100. This also represented the largest percentage gain in job growth (1.73%) since June 2006, in addition to being the largest year-over-year gain during 2014. Yearly gains were seen in the leisure and hospitality sector (+12,100), the professional and business services sector (+10,100), the manufacturing sector (+7,500), and the construction sector (+3,200), among others.

The last time that wage and salary employment was at or above 1,948,600 was December 2008, when wage and salary employment totaled 1,964,400.

"We continue to see more than 20,000 job orders coming in monthly on JobLink, which tells us that employers are hiring," continued Washington. "Additionally, all of our unemployment compensation benefits data is also trending in the right direction, with the amount paid in benefits this month down by over 30 percent from last year."

The amount paid in unemployment compensation benefits in October was \$16,309,161, compared to \$24,218,041 in October 2013.

JobLink, the state's online free jobs database (www.joblink.alabama.gov), registered 20,912 active job orders in October. The Help Wanted Online (HWOL) data showed 51,538 total job ads were placed online in Alabama. The most advertised careers continue to be: truck drivers, retail supervisors, and registered nurses.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.1%, Lee County at 4.6%, and Cullman, Cherokee, and Blount Counties at 4.7%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 12.9%, Bullock and Lowndes Counties at 12.1%, and Dallas County at 11.2%.

“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.