



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: October 22, 2010

Alabama's Unemployment Rate Drops to 8.9%

Fifth Consecutive Month of Decline

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's September unemployment rate fell to 8.9%, down from August's rate of 9.2%. This rate is also significantly below last year's September rate of 10.7%. The last time Alabama's unemployment rate was at or below this level was February, 2009, when the rate was 8.7%.

September's rate represents 188,644 unemployed persons, down from 192,539 in August, and 224,486 in September 2009.

"This is the fifth month in a row that Alabama has seen a decline in its unemployment rate," said Surtees. "Once again, our rate is below the national average of 9.6%, and we recently had some good news that several of our Metro Areas have experienced some of the largest drops in unemployment in the nation."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that five of the nation's top 10 metropolitan areas with the biggest declines in unemployment are located in Alabama. These Metro Areas are: Florence-Muscle Shoals, Decatur, Anniston, Gadsden, and Tuscaloosa.

"In addition to all this good news, our statistics are looking pretty good, too. Our first-time claims are at the lowest point in two years, and our benefit payments are the lowest we've seen this year," Surtees continued.

Initial claims for September were 23,770, compared to 28,403 in September 2009, and 24,174 in September 2008. Benefit payments were \$31,558,816 in September, compared to this year's high of \$52,229,706.

Wage and salary employment increased 3,800 over the month with the majority of the

upturn resulting from seasonal gains in the educational component of state and local government.

The counties with the lowest unemployment rates were: Shelby County at 6.8%, Madison County at 7.1%, and Coffee County at 7.2%. The counties with the highest unemployment rates were: Wilcox County at 20.9%, Greene County at 19.8%, and Dallas County at 17.2%.

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