

***Focused on Our Mission with Strategic Efficiency***



**Alabama Department of Industrial Relations**  
**2007 Annual Report**

## Letter to the Governor

**The Honorable Bob Riley**  
**Governor of Alabama**



It is my privilege to provide an overview of the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations in 2007 for the first time since my appointment as director in September. It was a year marked by efforts to address daunting operational, financial and organizational challenges. Spurred by continuing decreases in funding, priority was given to finding ways to function more efficiently, while maintaining or improving our level of service.

A review of operations systems in place (in some cases, for many years) at Industrial Relations was undertaken to determine if improvements and/or automation were possible, thereby making personnel available to transfer into other areas in need of additional assistance. Alabama New-Hire became the first program to go under the microscope. The examination (prior to scanning) of manual reports from employers identifying newly hired and recalled workers was eliminated in lieu of being forwarded directly to the scanning process. That single move allowed four employees to be reassigned. Change for the sake of efficiency was underway.

Office lease agreements totalling over \$2 million per year were closely scrutinized. As a result, starting in Tuscaloosa, Industrial Relations began the process of relocating field deputy tax offices into Career Center offices in the same city. With Career Centers having plenty of room to co-locate, the moves to eliminate costly rental space will continue in 2008.

The Industrial Relations organizational chart changed significantly with realignments to help streamline operations. Upon the retirements of the directors of our two largest divisions, I took over as Interim Employment Service Director, while Don Fisher, Industrial Relations Assistant Director, assumed Interim Unemployment Compensation Director duties. In addition, responsibilities of both the Internal Security Division and Planning and Systems Analysis Division were rolled into the Unemployment Compensation Division.

While challenges faced by Industrial Relations are enormous, the opportunities may be even more so. Our dedicated employees take pride in making a difference in the lives of Alabama's jobseekers and unemployed. They are up to the task of laying the foundation for optimizing operations, with a continuing emphasis on internal productivity, that will have a profound impact on our agency and customers for many years to come.

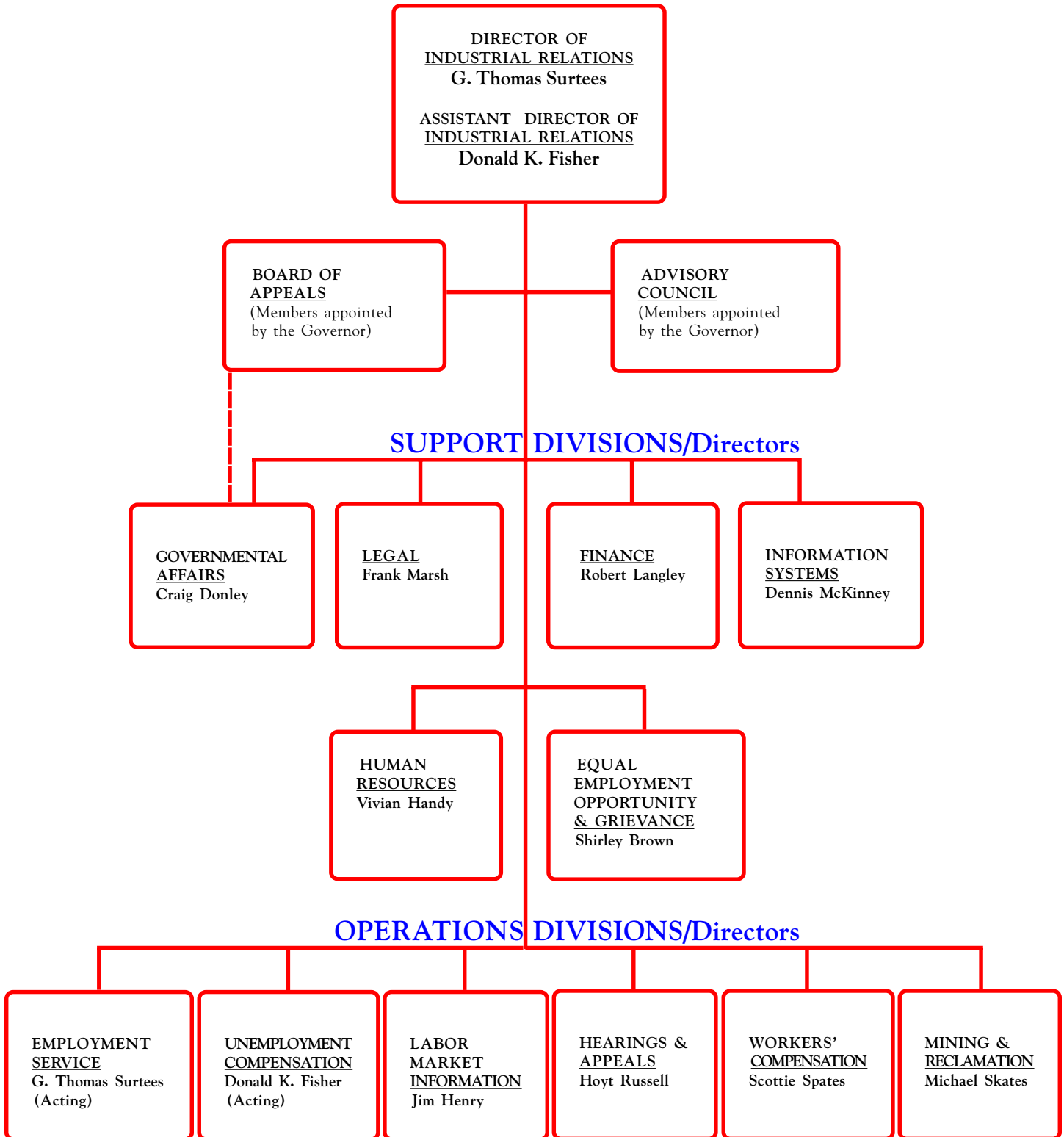
I am pleased to present this annual report that includes milestones from 2007. As always, your support of past successes and future accomplishments is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Thomas Surtees".

G. Thomas Surtees  
Industrial Relations Director

**STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
ORGANIZATION CHART**



*The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations is an umbrella organization of state government which administers:*

- Employment Service**
- Unemployment Insurance**
- Workers' Compensation**
- Labor Market Information**
- Abandoned Mine Reclamation**
- Mine Safety & Inspection**
- Surface Mining of Non-Fuel Minerals**

## **Board of Appeals**

**Public-At-Large: Vacant**  
**Employers: Don Jones**  
**Labor: Charlotte G. Flowers**

*Members of the Board of Appeals are appointed by the Governor to staggered six-year terms in accordance with the Code of Alabama, 1975. The Board of Appeals adjudicates decisions on appeals of contested unemployment compensation claims and certain matters relating to mine and industrial safety.*

**Front Cover Photos of Industrial Relations Executive Office Directors and Operations Divisions Directors:** (Center photo, from left) Tom Surtees, Industrial Relations director & acting Employment Service director, and Don Fisher, Industrial Relations assistant director, & acting Unemployment Compensation director. (Lower left photo, from left) Jim Henry, Labor Market Information director, and Hoyt Russell, Hearings and Appeals director. (Lower right photo, from left) Scottie Spates, Workers' Compensation director, and Michael Skates, Mining and Reclamation director,

# **Contents**

2007 Highlights	pages 4-5
Employment Service	pages 6-10
Unemployment Insurance	pages 10-12
Workers' Compensation	pages 13-14
Mining & Reclamation	pages 15-17
Labor Market Information	page 17-19
Hearings & Appeals	page 19
Equal Opportunity & Grievance	page 20
Finance	page 20
Governmental Affairs	page 20
Human Resources	page 21
Internal Security	page 21
Legal	page 21
Career Center System Directory	page 22
Central Office Directory	page 23



*“The mission of the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations is to effectively use tax dollars to provide state and federal mandated workforce protection programs promoting a positive economic environment for Alabama employers and workers and to produce and disseminate information on the Alabama economy.*”

THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. PROGRAM AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

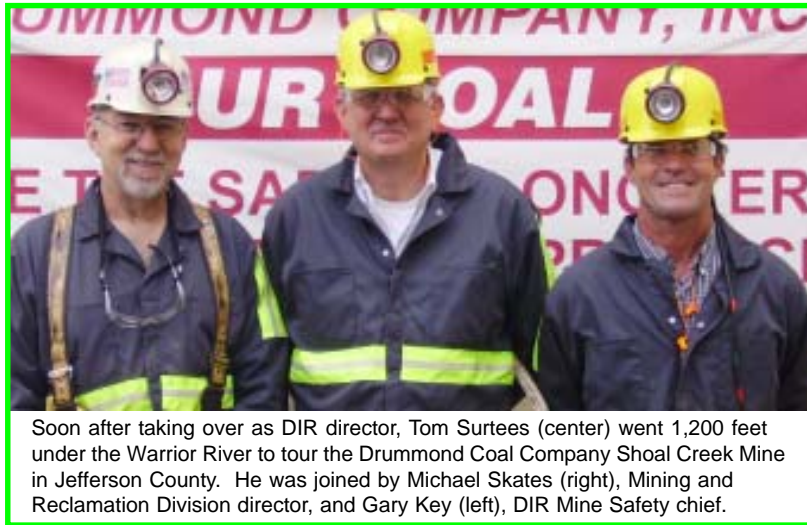
# 2007 Industrial Relations Highlights

*"I want all of us to look for ways to reduce costs, while becoming more efficient or improving our service level. I am challenging everyone to not just perform tasks, but ask why a task is needed, or how can I do it more efficiently."*

**Tom Surtees, Industrial Relations director**

## ---Surtees Appointed as New Industrial Relations Director---

Governor Bob Riley appointed Tom Surtees as Alabama Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) director, succeeding Phyllis Kennedy, who retired from the position in which she had served since 2003. Surtees had been Alabama Department of Revenue commissioner since 2004, before changing Cabinet posts. "Prior to working for Revenue, he had almost 30 years in the private sector in human resources management, where he handled many of the same issues he will face at DIR: unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, and workforce development," said Riley. Surtees became the 23rd director in the history of DIR.



## ---DIR Selected for Prestigious Honors---

DIR was the recipient of the 2007 Strategic Services on Unemployment & Workers' Compensation (UWC) *UI Integrity Award*. The honor was for "demonstrated courageous commitment to preserving the integrity of the unemployment system." According to Doug Holmes, UWC president, the award "recognizes a connection between workforce services and UI oversight." DIR's successful implementation of a user-friendly Web site for initial unemployment claims in 2006 was cited by the Auburn University Montgomery (AUM) Center for Government and Public Affairs. The *Innovative Alabama Government Award* was presented to the Information Systems Application Development Team by Dr. John Veres, III, AUM chancellor, and Dr. Matthew Duke, Center for Government and Public Affairs senior director.



Displaying the "Innovative Alabama Government Award," from left: Dennis McKinney, Information Systems Division director, Trent Hollon, senior programmer analyst, and Tim Burke, associate programmer analyst.



### **---DIR Offers Online Filing of Weekly Unemployment Claims---**

Unemployed workers with a current unemployment insurance claim in Alabama were given the option to file weekly certifications for benefits online. It provided an alternative to using the telephone to file, and followed on the heels of claimants being able to file new, additional and reopened claims electronically through the DIR Web site a year earlier.

### **---DIR Launches Foreign Labor Program Telephone Service---**

DIR made it easier to obtain information on Alabama's Foreign Labor Program through an automated telephone system, accessible daily around the clock. By accessing a "telephone tree," details are available on various aspects of the Foreign Labor Program, including the current status of Prevailing Wage requests, as well as H-2A and H-2B labor certification cases.

### **---DIR Proactive in Addressing Potential Pandemic---**

To brace for a potential pandemic, DIR launched an educational campaign associated with a flu pandemic, which can occur when a new influenza virus emerges among humans and spreads easily from person to person. The campaign addressed various methods for employees to reduce the spread of viruses and germs. While the occurrence of a pandemic is infrequent, DIR found it important to insure the safety of employees, while heading off the interruption of vital public services provided by the agency.

### **---DIR Hosts Alabama Government Officials---**

Governor Bob Riley conducted a Cabinet Meeting in the DIR Central Office for the first time in four years. About 40 persons were in attendance. Meanwhile, DIR also hosted six Alabama lawmakers during a "Drop-In New Legislators' Luncheon." The Labor Market Information Division provided attendees with information that included the Local Employment Dynamics "On the Map" interactive mapping application, a (labor market) Supply Report, and an Underemployment Report.



Seated from left during the Cabinet meeting held at DIR: Dave Stewart, Chief of Staff, Jim Main, Finance Director, and Governor Bob Riley.

### **---Mine Rescue Competition Marks Significant Milestone---**

A State of Alabama team was the winner for the first time in the 31-year history of the "Alabama Mine Rescue, First Aid, Benchman, and Pre-Shift Competition." Six of the eight members on the winning team were DIR employees. Participating teams also included another State of Alabama team, eight teams from private companies in Alabama, and a team from Kentucky. DIR is required by state and federal law to maintain two state mine rescue teams. Through a cooperative agreement with DIR, Beville State Community College in Sumiton coordinates the training of the two teams under the direction of DIR. The competition was held at Beville State.

# EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Alabama's Public Labor Exchange flourished in 2007, as record numbers of job seekers and employers sought work or workers during a period of strong economic expansion and record low unemployment. Driving Alabama's labor exchange and contributing to the state's economic development is Alabama JobLink (AJL), an Internet-based, customer-driven workforce service delivery system, featuring self-service options for job seekers and employers. AJL dominated the state's workforce landscape in 2007, with over 75,000,000 hits to the Web site, facilitating over 1,000,000 automatic e-mail job match notifications to job seekers, and over a quarter-million automatic notifications to employers.



Since implementation in 2005, almost half a million citizens have established job seeker accounts to search for first jobs, next jobs or better jobs through AJL, with almost 200,000 entering resumes into the system. During this same time, about 52,000 employers seeking qualified workers to meet their economic expansion needs in the state increasingly turned to the system as a growing source of qualified worker talent to fill over 400,000 job openings. Over 70 companies, including Mercedes Benz, Honda, Hyundai, Toyota, and most recently ThyssenKrupp, either relocating or expanding operations in the state, used AJL to recruit workers for training through Alabama Industrial Development Training.

For job seekers, AJL offers around-the-clock access for registration, employment services, the opportunity to create a resume online, receipt of automatic e-mail notification when skills match employer openings, and, in some instances, direct employer contact. For employers, AJL is available to post and manage their own job openings, search for qualified workers, and receive automatic e-mail notification when job requirements match job seeker skills. Over 800,000 notifications have been e-mailed to employers and over 2,000,000 notifications of job matches have been e-mailed to job seekers, since AJL went online.

***"I like this (AJL) site because it seems to be the most popular for employers in Alabama. Other sites don't have as many jobs." Job Seeker Comment***

Empowerment of the users of Alabama's Labor Exchange system (AJL) to self-direct their job and worker searches has opened access of the system to the public for the first time, making it truly a "customer demand-driven" system. Success of this paradigm shift in service delivery is borne out, not only in the record numbers of job seekers and employers served, but in the fact that six of 10 (61.0%) labor force registrations were self-registered, and over half (51.6%) of the services accessed were self-service. Of the more than 5,000 new Employers Accounts established in AJL in 2007, four in 10 (42.3%) were self-service. This streamlining of the delivery of labor exchange services continues to position the Employment Service (ES) as the "Gateway" to Alabama's job and labor markets. Over 420,000 job seekers sought and received labor exchange services last year, representing 19% of the state's 2.2 million workers.

AJL "Job Spidering" offers expanded labor exchange service, gaining access to millions of jobs from sources such as Monster, Hotjobs, Careerbuilder, Craigslist, *New York Times* and Fortune 500 corporate Web sites. Spidering also draws from thousands of other sources as well, including small industry-specific job boards, local newspapers and associations. Labor exchange services are available through 34 points of service strategically located throughout the state, and delivered through the Alabama Career Center System. Employment Service, in addition to Internet-based self-service available in Career Center Resource Rooms, also offers staff-assisted service, if needed.

Over 150,000 unemployed job seekers entered employment in 2007 after receiving employment services. That represents almost two-thirds (62.7%) of the unemployed job seekers exiting the system during this period. An overwhelming 79.8% were still employed six months after exiting the system with a job. Average earnings for the six-month period were \$10,505, or \$10.10 per hour.

Adaptation to change serves only to further support and strengthen the mission of the Employment Service to achieve a customer-focused, technologically-advanced, outcome-driven, workforce delivery system, providing high standards of customer service and satisfaction.

***"We were provided great resumes and applicants for our opening. We did not have to go to any expense for outside advertising to fill this position, which was a great benefit to our company. Thank you for the assistance." Employer Comment***

# **EMPLOYMENT SERVICE**

## **---ES and the Alabama Career Center System---**

Employment Service services are delivered through the Alabama Career Center System. ES, along with other workforce development partners, has worked diligently to build a customer-friendly system, providing job seekers and employers with a full range of seamless employment and training services in collocated One-Stop Career Centers throughout the state. All centers have Resource Rooms equipped with computers with high speed Internet access for self-service job seekers. These computers also have resume preparation software and tutorials for a number of job-related subjects. Online assistance and information are available 24/7 through the ES Web site, [JobLink@alabama.gov](mailto:JobLink@alabama.gov).

Staff-assisted personal service continues to be available for applicants and employers needing assistance in accessing available workforce-related services from partners in the Career Center System. As a partner in the Career Center System, ES continues to pursue opportunities for workforce reform, leading to more effective and efficient service through leveraging and sharing of resources, integration of activities, and commitment to a common goal with Office of Workforce Development partners. This commitment was manifest in 2007 with the opening of a new Career Center in Dothan and implementation of a pilot “single on-site management strategy” in Eufaula.

AJL, in addition to its proven ability to serve the labor exchange needs of Alabama’s job seekers and employers, presents Career Center partners the opportunity to participate in an “open-shared information system” that assures the coordinated delivery of partner services, tracking of co-registered client progress, and successful exit through an integrated workforce delivery system that better serves customers.

## **---WIRED Initiative---**

The Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative is a new effort by the Department of Labor to integrate economic and workforce development activities built on strong regional economies that maximize talent and innovation. Alabama has two designated WIRED areas: West Alabama/Eastern Mississippi and North Alabama/South Central Tennessee. Alabama’s Employment Service is engaged in planning and support of these initiatives.

## **---Claimant Assistance Program---**

The Claimant Assistance Program is designed to reduce the duration of joblessness for Unemployment Compensation claimants. This is accomplished through quick intervention by local offices with claimants to assess their needs and offer services designed to return them to work as quickly as possible. Among these services are Employability Development Plans, Job Search Plans, Job Search Workshops, and intensified job development and placement services provided by the Employment Service. During the most recent year, more than 38,000 claimants were helped in finding jobs, thus creating a significant savings to the Alabama Unemployment Trust Fund.

## **---Employer Satisfaction is 91 Percent---**

Over 17,000 personal contacts were made by Alabama Career Center Employment Service staff with Alabama employers in 2007. Countless other contacts were made by fax, mail, or e-mail. Employers were apprised of assistance available through the Career Center System to help them in meeting their workforce needs. In turn, employers provided valuable feedback on how they could be better served. The most recent survey conducted to determine employer satisfaction, as mandated in the Workforce Investment Act, yielded an employer satisfaction score of 91%.

A vital part of the Employment Service’s Customer Satisfaction Program is the Alabama Employer Services Committee (AESC). This committee, made up of business owners and leaders from throughout the state, voluntarily serves in an advisory capacity to make recommendations to enhance Industrial Relations services. The organization comprises 38 local community committees, representing approximately 2,500 employers, who work with local Career Center Employment Service staff throughout the state. AESC members are also actively involved in Alabama’s Career Center System.



# **EMPLOYMENT SERVICE**

## **---Dislocated Worker Program---**

The Dislocated Worker Program, funded under a contract with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, coordinates Rapid Response activities when there are layoffs or plant closings in the state. This includes arranging for employee groups to meet with appropriate local and state agencies and, when feasible, scheduling on-site Job Search Workshops.

During 2007, the Rapid Response team assisted workers from 65 major plant closings and/or layoffs, which affected more than 10,000 dislocated workers.

## **---Food Stamp Program---**

During the program year, 24,738 clients were referred to the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program. Of the clients referred, 18,020 were placed in job search and were provided with training in job-seeking skills. Approximately 2,178 Food Stamp clients were either placed on jobs by the Employment Service or obtained employment after being referred to the program.

## **---Employer Tax Credits---**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) program reduces an employer's cost of doing business and requires little paperwork. Success of this federal income tax credit for private-sector employers depends on a strong public and private sector partnership. Helping those most in need find and retain jobs and gain on-the-job experience benefits all employers and increases America's economic growth and productivity.

The Employment Service is responsible for administration of the eligibility determination and certification process of WOTC. Alabama employers received tax credits totalling more than \$8,000,000 in 2007.

## **---Services to Rural Residents---**

In addition to the base offices located in the more densely-populated Metropolitan Areas of the state, ES also operates seven base offices and eight branch and itinerant offices. These locations facilitate access to workforce delivery services through the Career Center System in the state's rural areas.

As a part of this service, the Employment Service coordinates the activities of the Agricultural Placement Program, Agricultural Clearance Program, and H-2A Program for non-immigrant Aliens. The Employment Service is also responsible for conducting agricultural crew leader registration, overseeing the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) Outreach Program, as well as performing pre-occupancy housing inspections for H-2A dwellings that totalled 57 in 2007. These dwellings represented 35 different H-2A certifications.

Two local offices received full on-site monitoring reviews in 2007, and all local offices received monthly reports and data analysis reviews concerning agricultural workers. Migrant and seasonal farm workers were offered all services provided to other applicants and referred to other community agencies as needed. Bilingual MSFW Outreach workers helped to coordinate this process.

## **---Foreign Labor Certification---**

The Employment Service, through its Foreign Labor Certification Unit, works directly with the employer, his agent or attorney, to ensure that labor certification applications meet regulations and guidelines mandated by federal and state laws, and U.S. Department of Labor and Employment Service guidelines. During Fiscal Year 2007, over 300 temporary nonagricultural applications were received, and during this same period, 264 temporary non-agricultural applications were processed.

In addition, ES provides prevailing wage determinations for certifications. A total of 1,300 prevailing wage determinations were issued in Fiscal Year 2007.

# EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

## ---Jobs and Training for Returning Veterans---

In 2007, one of every 15 individuals using the Alabama Job Link automated system was a U.S. Armed Forces veteran. Many logged on prior to their transition from active duty, often from overseas assignments or demobilization locations at U.S. bases or posts across the United States. The Employment Service assisted over 22,000 veterans with individualized job search services and referrals to training providers in the Alabama Career Center System. U.S. Department of Labor reports for 2007 show that two-thirds of all veterans using AJL entered employment into new civilian jobs or careers within 90 days of services. Newly separated military veterans using the Alabama Career System showed an entered employment rate of 70%.

***“I wasn’t sure how my [military] skills translated to a civilian position,” commented an Alabama veteran, whose remarks were featured in a newspaper article about veterans’ employment services provided through the Alabama Career Center System. The veteran, now a director of human resources for a supply chain management company, gave credit to the veterans’ staff for landing her new job. She also said the Local Veterans’ Employment Representative helped her focus on employment opportunities suited to the experience, training and education she obtained while serving in the Air Force. “My military experience is why I got the job,” she said.***

Special activities to assist returning troops and veterans included the Employment Service partnerships with veterans’ service organizations, other state and federal agencies, and community and faith-based groups to conduct Homeless Veterans “Stand Down” events in Mobile, Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Opelika-Auburn, and rural areas. ES used partnerships to sponsor several large job fairs for demobilizing troops and returning veterans.

In 2007, Alabama veterans’ employment representatives provided 48 Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops at military installations located across the state to assist separating military service members and their spouses and families in coping with the shift from military to civilian jobs.

Alabama currently has three TAP sites: (1) Maxwell Air Force Base, hosted by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Air Wing Family Services Program. (2) Redstone Arsenal (U.S. Army), hosted by the Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP). (3) U.S. Army Aviation Center at Fort Rucker, hosted by ACAP.

In 2007, Alabama’s Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives provided TAP workshops and services to over 1,200 separating military and eligible spouses.



(Left photo): Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees meets with Veterans Employment Representatives in the Montgomery Career Center in announcing Governor Bob Riley’s proclamation to focus Alabama on meeting the employment and training needs of veterans. From left, Herschel Henderson, Surtees, Charlene Bazzle, and LaVughn Williams. (Right photo): TAP involves a partnership among the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Labor, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS). Marking the annual signing of the Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB) TAP memorandum of understanding, from left: Al Hinson, executive coordinator, Operation Grateful Heart, George Register, Employment Service Field Services director, John Harris, Family Services director, Maxwell AFB, and Tom Karrh, Alabama director, VETS.

# EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

## ---Operation Grateful Heart---

Under a special grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service, the Employment Service funds the Alabama Operation Grateful Heart employment assistance project. The goal is to coordinate a statewide, volunteer-driven program of services and assistance to returning Alabama National Guard and Reserve service members, and their families, and other recently separated veterans returning to Alabama.



Operation Grateful Heart works with the Office of the Governor, the Alabama State Department of Veterans Affairs and other major state agencies, Military Family Services, local community leaders, the media, and business organizations, to develop and expand employment openings for veterans. Another aspect of the effort is to find ways to improve the quality of life for current and exiting service members and their families, and to actively engage employers and communities in promoting the hiring of veterans.

# UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The Unemployment Compensation (UC) Division's work is based on the principle that workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own, deserve some financial assistance. Providing monetary benefits to qualified unemployed workers not only assists these individuals in meeting basic needs, but also helps employers by helping keep their workforce together during short-term layoffs. In the event of a recession, benefits paid to unemployed workers also help stabilize the state's economy.

Unemployment Compensation taxes (SUTA) paid by Alabama employers are deposited into the UC Trust Fund, from which benefits are then paid to qualified unemployed workers. Administration of the State's UC Program is entirely funded by federal unemployment taxes (FUTA).

## ---Claimant Paper Checks Eliminated---

UC eliminated the practice of issuing benefits through paper checks to claimants. As a result, the payments may be received through direct deposit or debit cards, based on the claimant's preference. The elimination of paper checks is saving taxpayers \$1 million dollars a year in administrative costs. It also benefits claimants by expediting payments to them, especially when they utilize direct deposit payments.

## ---Internet Filing of Claims Implemented---

UC implemented online filing through the Internet of both new claims and weekly re-certifications for unemployment compensation. Online filing of claims speeds the process by which claimants can file, since they do not have to wait for the next operator when filing by telephone through Alabama's UC Call Centers. This new option has been well received, as shown by claimants who noted their appreciation in a customer service survey. They cited the convenience and the ability to confirm their answers before submitting their claim. The Internet Initial Claims project was developed entirely by DIR employees, and received an award for innovation by the Auburn Montgomery Center for Government and Public Affairs.

## ---Benefit Payment History Available on the Internet---

Claimants were given the opportunity to view their last five benefit payments via the Internet. This payment information is provided as needed in securing services from other state agencies or for job loss insurance. This enhancement allows a claimant access to this information without the time and effort previously required to make a request to UC, and the time needed for UC to provide the material to a claimant.

# UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

## **---Automation Helps Make Up for Fewer Employees---**

UC is operating with a leaner staff made possible due to strides in automating several procedures. These measures have streamlined operations and are providing improved and expedited services to claimants and employers. These actions have also enabled UC to make wiser use of taxpayer dollars. The Mobile Unemployment Claims Call Center was consolidated into the bigger, more modern Montgomery Call Center, thereby reducing the number of brick and mortar facilities needed to operate, while making more efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Since the claims are telephone-based, this does not hinder a claimant's ability to file a claim. UC has made online requests for separation information available to employers, in an effort to more fully automate the process, making it more user-friendly. This option streamlines and expedites the process for employers, and thus, claimants.

## **---Process for Crediting Claimants' Accounts Automated---**

UC purchased a software package called "CheckLook" to image remittances for unemployment overpayments and automate the process for crediting claimants' accounts. This new procedure helps claimants by keeping a more accurate and more easily accessible record of their payments. For employers, it reduces their overpayment balance and expedites the crediting process.

During the year, a grant was secured to upgrade several personal computers, replacing some outdated equipment that could not support modern imaging software. The funds were secured through a federal grant, and the resulting upgrade has allowed for more efficient processing.

## **---Grant Helps Operations Continue During Catastrophe---**

In order to prevent Alabama from experiencing the multitude of unemployment compensation-related problems which arose in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, a \$2.4 million grant was secured from the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant funds various measures to ensure that UC can continue to function in the event of a large-scale, catastrophic event. Over \$1 million was spent for these improvements during Fiscal Year 2007. When fully implemented, these measures will ensure that unemployment compensation benefits can continue to be issued, should a future emergency occur. These measures are positively impacting local economies throughout Alabama by securing products and services through the state's competitive bidding process.

## **---Employers Filing Online Quarterly Returns Continues to Rise---**

Since 2004, the State's employers have had the option of filing quarterly returns electronically via the Industrial Relations Web site. Employers can manually enter or upload wage data to the system instead of filing through a paper form. This system automatically calculates the filing data and calculated the total amount due. Since its implementation, the number of employers utilizing the system has steadily increased. In the first three quarters of 2007, there was an increase of 46 percent of employers filing online.

# UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

	<b>Fiscal Year 2007</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2006</b>	<b>Net Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<u>STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION INITIAL CLAIMS</u>				
New	164,939	155,421	9,518	6.1
Additional	81,895	75,213	6,682	8.9
Weeks Claimed *	1,339,634	1,263,422	76,212	6.0
Weeks Compensated	1,228,287	1,159,276	69,011	6.0
Gross Benefits Paid	\$226,556,704	\$209,326,244	\$17,230,460	8.2
<u>FEDERAL EMPLOYEES INITIAL CLAIMS</u>				
New	728	753	(25)	-3.3
Additional	178	193	(15)	-7.8
Weeks Claimed *	4,301	4,557	(256)	-5.6
Weeks Compensated	3,946	4,136	(190)	-4.6
Gross Benefits Paid	\$800,769	\$795,949	\$4,820	0.6
<u>EX-SERVICEMEN INITIAL CLAIMS</u>				
New	1,266	1,344	(78)	-5.8
Additional	151	169	(18)	-10.7
Weeks Claimed *	12,076	13,238	(1,162)	-8.8
Weeks Compensated	11,512	12,676	(1,164)	-9.2
Gross Benefits Paid	\$2,618,362	\$2,773,660	(\$155,298)	-5.6
<u>TRADE READJUSTMENT ALLOWANCE **</u>				
New	2,188	2,383	(195)	-8.2
Additional	67	32	35	109.4
Weeks Claimed	36,408	23,034	13,374	58.1
Weeks Compensated	36,089	22,842	13,247	58.0
Gross Benefits Paid	\$7,533,668	\$4,684,807	\$2,848,861	60.8
<u>ALTERNATIVE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE</u>				
Initial Claims	138	74	64	86.5
Weeks Claimed	4,644	2,123	2,521	118.7
Weeks Compensated	4,644	2,123	2,521	118.7
Gross Benefits Paid	\$536,943	\$227,712	\$309,231	135.8
<u>DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE (DUA 1687)</u>				
Initial Claims	26	646	(620)	-96.0
Weeks Claimed	109	7,929	(7,820)	-98.6
Weeks Compensated	107	8,331	(8,224)	-98.7
Gross Benefits Paid	\$14,732	\$968,430	(\$953,698)	-98.5

\* Excludes Interstate Claims data received through Internet System.

\*\* Includes retroactive payment activity.



# WORKERS' COMPENSATION

## ---Workers' Compensation Has Variety of Duties---

The main function of the Workers' Compensation Division is to insure that necessary medical attention and compensation benefits are provided to employees injured on the job, or, in case of death, their dependents. The division also provides information and services to claimants, employers, insurance companies, attorneys, judges, legislators, labor and management groups, government agencies and other parties. Other functions include gathering statistics on accidents, enforcing reporting requirements, monitoring claim payments, auditing all claim settlements, and taking corrective action on incorrect settlements or improper reporting procedures. The division is also responsible for gathering information on fraudulent claims or employers, which includes reacting to tips received on the fraud hotline: 1-800-WC FAKED, or 1-800-923-2533.

Ombudsmen mediate disputes through the benefit review conference process. The most frequent issue involves requests for information/assistance concerning the law or specific medical topics. The ombudsmen also provide assistance to employees, employers, attorneys, insurance carriers, and third party administrators, via telephone, seminars and speaking engagements.

The division conducts employer inspections for compliance with the Workers' Compensation Law. The division offers both a formal and informal medical dispute resolution process for any party that may dispute a medical service that has been conducted or that is requested.

As of May 23, 2007, the State of Alabama's average weekly wage was determined to be \$682.09 for the calendar year 2006. This resulted in the following changes, effective July 1, 2007: The minimum weekly compensation payable increased from \$179 to \$188; and the maximum benefits payable on fatalities increased from \$325,500 to \$341,000.

## ---Fiscal Year 2007 Workers' Compensation Totals---

Group Fund Certificates Issued	5,725	Voluntary Mediations Resolved	1,695
Group Fund Certificates Canceled	4,423	Court Ordered Mediations	215
Self-Insurance Certificates Issued	3	Court Ordered Mediations Resolved	131
Self-Insurance Certificates Canceled	30	Utilization Management/Bill Screening Certificates Issued	41
Self-Insurers Audited	508	Drug-Free Workplace Certificates Issued	223
Compliance Inspections	26,888	Medical Disputes	472
Employers in Noncompliance	1,596	Medical Dispute Resolutions	45
Continuing Education Seminars	5	Third Party Administrators Certified	8
Seminar Attendees	1,166	Professional Employer Organization Certificates Issued	185
Continuing Education Certificates	1,166		
Voluntary Mediations	2,032		

# WORKERS' COMPENSATION

## ---Fiscal Year 2007 Self Insurance Activity---

The Workers' Compensation Division administers the rules and regulations for both the Individual Self-Insurers and Group Self-Insurers.

<u>Individual Self-Insurance</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2006</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Certificates Issued	3	12	-75.00
Certificates Canceled	30	27	11.11
Total Individual Self-Insurers	331	372	-11.02
<u>Group Self-Insurance</u>			
Certificates Issued	5,725	4,972	15.14
Certificates Canceled	4,423	4,268	3.63
Total Employers	28,964	27,662	4.71
Total Number of Group Funds	17	17	0.00

## ---First Report of Injury Totals---

<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>	<u>Fiscal Year 2006</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
16,537	19,439	-15.0

## ---Compensation and Medical Benefits Paid for Calendar Year 2006---

Total Compensation	\$188,731,906
Total Medical Benefits	\$373,900,220
Total Administrative Costs	\$39,576,063
Total Legal Fees	\$17,918,426
Total Court Awards	\$52,480,415
Voluntary Market Compensation	\$102,191,327
Voluntary Market Medical Benefits	\$177,842,247
Voluntary Market Administrative Costs	\$27,077,525
Voluntary Market Legal Fees	\$7,073,994
Voluntary Market Court Awards	\$13,408,268
Individual Self-Insured Compensation	\$38,401,143
Individual Self-Insured Medical Benefits	\$70,976,223
Individual Self-Insured Administrative Costs	\$8,177,950
Individual Self-Insured Legal Fees	\$6,720,904
Individual Self-Insured Court Awards	\$20,770,318
Group Self-Insured Compensation	\$48,139,436
Group Self-Insured Medical Benefits	\$125,081,750
Group Self-Insured Administrative Costs	\$4,320,588
Group Self-Insured Legal Fees	\$4,123,528
<u>Group Self-Insured Court Awards</u>	<u>\$18,301,829</u>
Grand Total	\$672,607,030

# **MINING & RECLAMATION**

## **---Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program---**

The mission of the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Program is to restore land and water resources which have been adversely affected by past coal mining, and for which there is no continuing reclamation responsibility under state or federal law. The work is funded by annual grants from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining, which collects production fees from active coal operators at a rate of 35 cents per ton for surface-mined coal and 15 cents per ton for underground-mined coal. In addition to benefitting Alabama through removing mine-related safety hazards and improving the environment, the program impacts positively on local economies as reclamation dollars are expended on earth-moving, construction materials, revegetation supplies, and contractors utilizing local manpower to carry out the work. AML achievements during Fiscal Year 2007 were as follows:

- ▲ 7 abandoned mine land reclamation projects successfully completed.
- ▲ 88.5 acres of mine spoils and coal refuse material (considered wastelands) returned to productive use.
- ▲ 1 portal and 2 vertical openings permanently sealed by AML contractors.
- ▲ 10 dangerous highwalls (totaling 7,800 linear feet) along roads and near residential areas eliminated.
- ▲ 7 incidents of mine subsidence beneath urban areas corrected by AML's emergency program.
- ▲ 6 hazardous water bodies abated.

## **---Gob Fire Problem Addressed in Jefferson County---**

Work continued at the Gorgas Enhancement Project under an innovative "no cost" contract to eliminate a hazardous mine refuse impoundment overlooking the Black Warrior River in Walker County. Over 500,000 tons of waste coal was recovered and turned into electricity. The coal recovery at the site has been completed. Grading and revegetation of the property is underway. Removal of the coal fines protects the environment and will save AML approximately \$1 million in reclamation costs.

In December 2006, Mining and Reclamation was alerted to a gob fire problem in Jefferson County. The Mulga gob fire had surfaced for the fourth time since 1997. The fire abatement was started as an emergency project, but by April 2007, all emergency funding (\$500,000) had been spent. Mulga Gob Fire IV is now utilizing project construction funds. The Walker County Soil and Water Conservation District Board is still working on the fire.

Alabama's reforestation of abandoned mines is nationally recognized. However, during Fiscal Year 2007, as per landowners' requests, no tree planting operations occurred. Over seven million trees have been planted by Mining and Reclamation during its 30-year history.

A cost sharing partnership between Industrial Relations and Alabama Department of Environmental Management began to treat acid mine drainage being discharged from a 20 acre gob pile and 12 small underground mine portals into Cane Creek, a tributary of the Black Warrior River. Problems associated with acid mine drainage include toxicity to fish and other aquatic communities; corrosion to pipes, culverts and bridges; and undrinkable water supplies, requiring expensive treatment. Work on this Cane Creek IV Acid Mine Drainage Project continued throughout Fiscal Year 2007.

The Alabama AML Program completed its 151st emergency project on February 7, 2007 in Walker County. The emergency provision of Alabama's program allows Industrial Relations to respond to sudden, life-threatening abandoned mine land problems within 24 hours.

# **MINING & RECLAMATION**

## **---Surface Mining Measure Marks 30th Anniversary---**

August 3, 2007, marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). When Congress passed SMCRA, it presented a challenge: strike a balance between our country's need for the energy produced by coal and the protection of our environment. Through vital partnerships between the Office of Surface Mining, state governments, tribal governments, the coal mining industry, and environmental associates, the daunting goal of SMCRA was, and is, being achieved. Alabama has had primacy for its coal regulatory and abandoned mine land programs since 1982.

Fee collection for severance taxes on current coal production expired on June 30, 2006. A Continuing Resolution passed by Congress on June 1, 2006, temporarily extended all AML programs. On December 20, 2006, the Tax Relief and Healthcare Act was passed by Congress, extending funding for SMRCA and AML Programs through Fiscal Year 2021.

## **---Mining Safety and Inspection---**

The Mine Safety and Inspection Program inspects all mines statewide to ensure compliance with state laws which protect the safety of persons working in the mining industry. This section also coordinates rescue efforts in the event of a mine disaster and investigates mine accidents.

During Fiscal Year 2007, 3,763 miners were employed in the coal industry, producing 19.6 million tons of coal. An additional 2,500 miners were employed in open pits and quarries, producing approximately 80 million tons of non-fuel minerals. A total of 2,587 inspections (698 at coal mines, 1889 at open pit and quarry operations) were completed. During the fiscal year, three fatalities and five non-fatal accidents were investigated.

A continuing program provided education and training for mine foreman and underground blasting certification. Two underground certification examinations were administered, resulting in the issuance of 41 underground mine foreman certificates. Also, 37 surface foreman certificates, 29 electrical and 51 hoist certificates were issued. Mine rescue training continued to be provided by Bevill State Community College, under contract with Industrial Relations.

Alabama's two mine rescue teams, which includes seven Industrial Relations employees, and much of our Mine Safety staff, responded promptly and effectively to an underground mine accident at Drummond's Shoal Creek Mine in Jefferson County on June 27, 2007. The rescue teams worked on shifts around the clock in an extreme and potentially lethal environment through July 11, 2007, in the exploration and recovery of the mine. Their efforts, along with those of the entire Mine Safety staff, helped to restore safe working conditions for over 500 coal miners at Shoal Creek.

Mine safety funding increased from \$1.1 million to \$2.1 million in 2007. This increase allowed the department to hire and fully equip six additional mine safety inspectors, for a total staff of 20 inspectors and two administrative assistants. For the first time ever, the Mine Safety Program is sufficiently staffed and equipped.

## **---Surface Mining of Non-Fuel Minerals---**

Non-fuel minerals are mined in all 67 Alabama counties and contribute greatly to the state's economy. Examples of non-fuel minerals mined in Alabama are: sand, gravel, granite, clay, bauxite, and shale. Mine Safety and Inspection makes certain that lands mined for those minerals are reclaimed in accordance with the Alabama Surface Mining Act of 1969. In addition, mining permits are issued to ensure that mine sites are properly bonded for reclamation purposes, periodic inspections are made, and bonds are released once sites have been satisfactorily reclaimed.

In Fiscal Year 2007, 407 permits (36 new permits, 370 renewals and one amendment) were issued to operators for the surface mining of non-fuel minerals. Meanwhile, efforts continued to bring all unpermitted surface mining operations into compliance. One inspector stationed in the Montgomery Central Office made 174 site inspections. Of that total, 10 inspections were made to verify locations of new permit areas, 83 inspections were made of active operations, 50 inspections were made of unpermitted sites, 11 inspections were made to investigate citizen complaints, and 20 inspections were made of operations with expired permits.

# MINING & RECLAMATION

Twenty-seven permits were amended to add acreage, 25 bonds were released for satisfactory reclamation, and six bonds were forfeited for failure to reclaim.

Other activities included telephone contacts with operators, surety companies, citizens, landowners, and other agencies. Letters were written to mining operators regarding results of site inspections and action needed to remain in compliance with the Alabama Surface Mining Act of 1969. Citizen complaints involving blasting at quarries, highwalls situated too close to property lines, sediment discharge from uncontrolled runoff, and lack of reclamation were promptly investigated. An estimated 10 sites were abandoned and left unreclaimed at year's end, with insufficient funds to complete any meaningful reclamation. Mining continues at approximately 350 permitted sites, with 98 sites being idle, abandoned, or in the process of being reclaimed.

A small increase in mining of aggregates (limestone, marble, sand, gravel, and crushed stone) is anticipated in Fiscal Year 2008. Road contractors have reacted to new hardness specifications for paving materials by opening new granite and sandstone quarries. As residential areas encroach on the sources of those minerals, increased citizen complaints will need to be addressed.

# LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division is responsible for the collecting, analyzing and disseminating data essential for evaluating the condition of the Alabama economy. What is the latest unemployment rate? What wages can be expected from a certain occupation? Which industries employ the most people? What occupations are in high demand? These are just a few examples of questions answered with labor market information. The LMI website, <http://dir.alabama.gov/lmi>, allows public and professional users access to the LMI data.





# LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

## ---LMI Works Closely With Bureau of Labor Statistics---

LMI operates five Federal-State cooperative programs in agreement with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a statistical branch of the United States Department of Labor. These core programs include:

- ▲ Current Employment Statistics (CES)
- ▲ Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)
- ▲ Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS),
- ▲ Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)
- ▲ Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)



The CES program is a monthly count of jobs, earnings and work hours among the state's nonfarm businesses, using survey data from over 19,000 businesses. CES publishes data on over 70 detailed industries at the state level, as well as industry detail for 11 metropolitan areas each month. These sample-based estimates are revised annually to re-anchor them back to the near universe counts of employment (QCEW). Through the diligent work of the CES staff, the Alabama revision was one of the lowest in the United States.

The LAUS program calculates and publishes civilian labor force, employment, unemployment, and an unemployment rate for the state, metropolitan areas, and counties each month. The LAUS unit is responsible not only for publishing the rates, but providing insight to the rates from an historical standpoint, along with explanations concerning the methodology involved in computation.

The MLS Program is a weekly survey of nonfarm businesses experiencing layoffs, including information from establishments about total separations, reasons for separations, recall expectations, and the movement of work. MLS data are published monthly.

The OES program surveys nonfarm establishments, collecting occupational employment data on workers by industry. Data collected produces estimations total employment by occupation for the state and selected areas. Two survey panels were conducted in 2007. Alabama's response rates from businesses participating in the survey were 83.99% and 83.22%, which placed Alabama's OES unit among the Top 10 in the United States.

The QCEW is a quarterly report which summarizes employment and wage data for workers covered by state unemployment insurance laws. QCEW provides the number of establishments, monthly employment, and quarterly wages, by NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) industry groups, for the state and counties. Along with the Industrial Relations Tax Unit and Information Systems Division, the QCEW successfully completed a State Operations Review conducted by Atlanta BLS Regional Staff. The BLS NAICS 2007 Revision was accomplished accurately and timely. New tools were incorporated into the QCEW, enhancing the ability to track predecessor and successor accounts. Furthermore, Deborah Conner, senior statistician and QCEW supervisor, received the "BLS Eminent Achievement Award for State Employees," for her contributions to the BLS/state team responsible for updated features incorporated into the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program.

## ---LMI Collects Statistical Data For Workforce Information System---

In addition to the five cooperative BLS programs, LMI also maintains the responsibility as the official statistical data collection and analysis manager for the Workforce Information System. This responsibility includes the analysis of workforce trends, providing data updates to the Workforce Information Database, and publishing reports to deliver quality workforce information to customers.

The 2007 accomplishments include:

- ▲ Developed and published State Short Term Occupational Projections 2006-2008.
- ▲ Updated and published Alabama Career Exploration Guide, providing counselors and students access to various types of occupational data in one publication.
- ▲ Partnered with Jim Vollman to publish and present a special report on Labor Supply in Alabama.
- ▲ Continued to update the Census Local Employment Dynamics (LED) with the most recent data available. Activated the "On The Map" module of the LED program, which provides detailed maps showing where people work and workers live, with companion reports on worker ages, earnings, industry distribution, and local workforce indicators.

# LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

- ▲ Began publishing Alabama Business Employment Dynamics (BED) data.
- ▲ Published report for Alabama's portion of the West Alabama East Mississippi (WAEM) Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic (WIRED) area.



- ▲ Presented Labor Market Information on the following stages:
  - Annual Career Technical Conference.
  - Workforce Development Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.
  - TBN Television Network on a local news broadcast.
  - Selma High School Annual request.
  - Alabama Legislators luncheon at Department of Industrial Relations.
  - Alabama Workforce Development Regional Planners Meeting.

Finally, the LMI Reports Section compiles weekly, monthly, quarterly, fiscal year, and annual statistical data on unemployment benefits, as well as 1974 Trade Act activities and Disaster Unemployment activities. In 2007, the Workforce Investment Act and Industrial Relations reporting of program participants were combined. This section also conducts economic research to provide estimates for Unemployment Compensation legislation, including the analysis of benefit costs, tax revenues and Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund adequacy.

## HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Hearings and Appeals is responsible for conducting due-process hearings for Industrial Relations. The majority of the hearings conducted involve contested unemployment compensation claims and tax issues. Hearings concerning unemployment compensation eligibility are promptly scheduled and conducted on a weekly basis by teleconference. These hearings conform with the legal requirements of due-process of law, but without the strict adherence to legal rules of evidence. Approximately 15,941 hearings were scheduled in 2007.

Hearings and Appeals has a staff of 11 administrative hearing officers conducting teleconference hearings by Voice Over Internet protocol. This method of conducting administrative hearings allows the hearing officer to contact the interested parties directly without using a third party to perform the connection. This gives the hearing officer the ability to have total control of the hearing process, which reduces delay time and cost. It also makes it much more convenient for interested parties involved in the hearing by eliminating the travel cost and time to appear at a Career Center location.

Unemployment compensation lower authority appeals must be filed in writing. The U.S. Department of Labor implemented new criteria for measuring lower authority appeals quality in 1996. Since that time, Hearings and Appeals has consistently received passing scores on all appeal cases randomly selected for each quarterly study. All cases selected and evaluated for 2007 have received a passing score.

2007 highlights include:

- ▲ The process of reducing appeal case files from paper to electronic files.
- ▲ Continuing development of software applications to allow the administrative hearing officer to digitally record testimony.
- ▲ Continuing to seek and develop software applications to allow employers and third parties participating in a hearing to provide pertinent appeal information by voice response through an automated call-in system.
- ▲ Consistently exceeded U.S. Department of Labor standards for quality in processing and deciding appeal cases.
- ▲ Continuing to provide a high-quality service during a period of decreased staffing in a cost-efficient manner.

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND GRIEVANCE

The Equal Employment Opportunity and Grievance Division is responsible for ensuring that the department complies with federal equal opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and regulations. The division conducts compliance reviews of departmental programs, activities, and services, and provides technical assistance as needed; receives, investigates, and/or mediates complaints and grievances filed by departmental employees or customers served by the department; and makes recommendations for corrective action, where appropriate.

2007 highlights include:

- ▲ Conducting 10 local office compliance reviews of departmental programs, services and activities throughout the state, and providing technical assistance, as needed.
- ▲ Reviewing and providing assistance, as needed, to proposed interview questions.
- ▲ Revising and updating appropriate posters and Industrial Relations memorandums, as needed, and distributing to all local offices.
- ▲ Revising the Parking Disability Policy and Disability Parking Request Form.

## FINANCE

As trustee of the taxpayers' dollars, the Finance Division controls spending throughout Industrial Relations to ensure that funds are used only as the law prescribes. Despite continuing cuts in federal funding, the department's finances are managed so as to continue service to the public, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Finance continues to assist in streamlining the system of local employment offices and unemployment call centers throughout Alabama. Negotiation of short-term building leases allowed the flexibility needed to make adjustments in response to funding changes, and selective consolidation of outlying facilities has resulted in cost savings for taxpayers. Subleasing of space to partner agencies helps keep offices open to provide nearby service in all areas of the state.

Division objectives include looking for ways to enhance the department's accounting process, while maintaining the appropriate accounting controls to ensure that expenditures are in compliance with all applicable regulations, as well as fiscal responsibility.

## GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Governmental Affairs Division is responsible for drafting and passing legislation relating to the efficient operation of Industrial Relations. The division is also responsible for drafting and passage of proposed administrative rules for the agency, as well as responding to elected officials at all levels of government.

The Board of Appeals is a statutorily created board, whose members are appointed by the Governor to hear contested unemployment compensation cases at the highest administrative level. The board holds hearings in seven different cities on a rotating schedule. Board hearings are held in Montgomery, Trussville, Gadsden, Mobile, Decatur, Tuscaloosa, and Dothan.

In 2007, the board processed approximately 2,907 appeals and held 572 hearings. The board continued to use Industrial Relation's PaperVision to review cases in the Birmingham Call Center, thus saving time and travel expenses.

# **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Human Resources (HR) Division provides personnel administration support to all Industrial Relations division directors, sections, units and employees of the agency. Administrative duties include processing and monitoring of employee hirings, transfers, separations, disciplinary procedures, Family and Medical Leave Act enforcement, donated leave program, military leave actions, leave management, performance appraisal process, and several other areas, including the development of departmental policies. HR also serves as the liaison with the State Personnel Department for information, updates and changes, as well as information that warrants dissemination throughout Industrial Relations.

Training activity is a very important and active section within HR. The coordination and approval for all training activity is handled through HR, which is also responsible for overseeing and managing the use of the main training room and training equipment. The focus for the training section in 2007 was to encourage more agency employees to attend training courses offered by the State Personnel Department. The overall goal of HR is to assist employees, the public, applicants, and callers by providing needed information, while fostering a professional image.

# **INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

The Information Systems Division provides state of the art mainframe and distributed system processing to support all Industrial Relations departmental functions. The division is composed of three sections: Applications Programming, Computer Operations and the Distributed Systems Section. Significant achievements from the past year include the development and implementation of the Internet UC Continued Claims application, and the implementation of new Tape Management and Job Scheduling systems. The division also implemented check imaging machines, automated the Alternative Trade Readjustment Act program, converted microfilm to electronic images, and acquired the New Hire Program

# **LEGAL**

The Legal Division serves as legal counsel for Industrial Relations. In that role, the division renders legal opinions and interpretations of the various laws administered by the agency to the director or other Industrial Relations divisions. The General Counsel and Assistant General Counsels represented the department in the Court of Civil Appeals and the Alabama Supreme Court, as well as in all Circuit Courts throughout the state, in cases involving the following: Unemployment Compensation benefit appeals, Unemployment Tax, Rules to Show Cause relating to records from employers, motions to quash subpoenas seeking confidential agency records, Unemployment Compensation overpayments, child support withholding, Surface Mining violations, and matters before the Board of Adjustment.

In addition, court appearances were made in various federal courts concerning bankruptcies. No cases were filed against the department in 2007 claiming violations of federal statutes. Counsel for the agency made over 375 court appearances in 2007. A total of \$325,210.28 in cash was recovered from overpaid claimants and placed into the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund in 2007.

## ALABAMA CAREER CENTER SYSTEM

COUNTY	LOCATION	PHONE
<b>Baldwin</b>	201 Faulkner Dr./Bay Minette/36507	251-937-4161
	200 West Michigan Ave./Foley/36535	251-943-1575
<b>Barbour</b>	511 State Docks Rd./Eufaula/36027	334-687-8251
<b>Blount</b>	68644 Main St., Ste. 5/Blountsville/35031	205-429-4311
<b>Butler</b>	117 W. Commerce St./Greenville/36037	334-382-3128
<b>Calhoun</b>	1731 Coleman Rd./Anniston/36207	256-832-0147
<b>Clarke</b>	3090 Highway 43/Jackson/36545	251-246-2453
<b>Coffee</b>	2021 Boll Weevil Cir./Enterprise/36330	334-347-0044
<b>Colbert</b>	500 S. Montgomery Ave., #102/Sheffield/35660	256-383-5610
<b>Conecuh</b>	1023 Douglas Ave., #314/Brewton/36426	251-867-4376
<b>Cullman</b>	1201 Katherine St. NW/Cullman/35055	256-734-4911
<b>Dallas</b>	1112 Water Ave./Selma/36703	334-872-0471
<b>DeKalb</b>	2100 Jordan Rd. SW/Fort Payne/35968	256-845-2900
<b>Etowah</b>	216 North 5th St./Gadsden/35901	256-546-4667
<b>Houston</b>	787 Ross Clark Circle/Dothan/36303	334-792-2121
<b>Jackson</b>	706 E. Laurel St./Scottsboro/35768	256-574-1720
<b>Jefferson</b>	3440 Third Ave. S./Birmingham/35222	205-254-1300
	820 Watterson Curve/Trussville/35173	205-655-0395
<b>Lee</b>	2300 Frederick Rd./Opelika/36801	334-749-5065
<b>Madison</b>	2535 Sparkman Dr./Huntsville/35810	256-851-0537
<b>Marengo</b>	1074 Bailey Dr./Demopolis/36732	334-289-0202
<b>Marion</b>	1481 Military St. S./Hamilton/35570	205-921-7657
<b>Marshall</b>	5920 U. S. Hwy. 431 N./Albertville/35950	256-878-3031
<b>Mobile</b>	515 Springhill Plaza Ct./Mobile/36608	251-461-4146
<b>Monroe</b>	33 Outlet Dr./Monroeville/36460	251-575-3894
<b>Montgomery</b>	1060 East South Blvd./Montgomery/36116	334-286-1746
<b>Morgan</b>	1819 Bassett Ave. SE/Decatur/35601	256-355-0142
<b>Pike</b>	1023 South Brundidge St./Troy/36081	334-566-3920
<b>Randolph</b>	3862 Hwy. 431/Roanoke/36274	334-863-8114
<b>Shelby</b>	109 Plaza Cir./Alabaster/35007	205-663-2542
<b>Talladega</b>	2535 Haynes St., Ste. B/Talladega/35160	256-480-2109
<b>Tuscaloosa</b>	202 Skyland Blvd./Tuscaloosa/35405	205-758-7591
<b>Walker</b>	2604 Viking Dr./Jasper/35501	205-221-2576



# INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CENTRAL OFFICE DIRECTORY

**Information**  
334-242-8055

**Director**  
334-242-8990

**Employment Service Director**  
334-242-8003

**Unemployment Insurance Director**  
334-242-8025

**Workers' Compensation Director**  
334-353-0990

**Mining & Reclamation Director**  
334-242-8265

**Governmental Affairs Director**  
334-242-8274

**Labor Market Information Director**  
334-242-8874

**Industrial Relations Web Site**  
<http://www.dir.alabama.gov/>