



## Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

### News Release

For Immediate Release: September 27, 2012

### Labor Commissioner Jim Bennett Retires After 34 Years of State Service

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Jim Bennett retired today following 34 years of state service. Bennett began his career as a capitol reporter for the *Birmingham Post Herald* in 1961. He entered into legislative service in the House of Representatives, representing Homewood, in 1978. He served in the House of Representatives until 1983, and was then elected to the Senate, where he served until 1993, representing Jefferson County.

Bennett was appointed secretary of state by Governor Guy Hunt in 1993 to fill a vacancy, and was later elected to two more terms, in 1994 and 1998. He also served as president of the National Association of Secretaries of State from 1999-2000.

In 2003, Governor Bob Riley appointed him Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Labor, and Governor Robert Bentley re-appointed him when he took office in 2011.

“We serve in order to make a difference,” said Bennett. “Over the years, I believe that’s what we’ve done. I’m pleased to have had the opportunity to work with so many quality people and to have seen so many changes in Alabama. But don’t count me out just yet - you’ll still be seeing me!”

“Jim Bennett has been around through many of Alabama’s toughest and best years,” said Tom Surtees, Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director, and who will become Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Labor on Monday, October 1, when a recently passed merger will take place. “I am proud to have known him as a fellow Cabinet member, and his years of service to the people of Alabama are invaluable. I wish him all the best in his retirement.”

Governor Robert Bentley attended the farewell reception, hosted by ADIR, for Bennett today.

“I would like to thank Jim for all of his years of service to the people of Alabama,” he said. “He has been a true and dedicated public servant who has made a great impact.”

The reception was attended by many of Bennett’s colleagues and friends, including former newspaper colleagues and various Cabinet members.

Attached is a photograph of Governor Robert Bentley and Jim Bennett at the retirement reception.

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