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STATE OF ALABAMA

Alabama's December Unemployment Rate Drops to 5.7%

Lowest Rate in More than Six Years

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Friday announced that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted December unemployment rate is 5.7%, down from November's rate of 6.0%, and below December 2013's rate of 6.1%.

"Alabama's unemployment rate is at a level this state has not experienced in more than six years," Governor Bentley said. "2014 ended on a positive note. Our unemployment rate stayed at 7.0% or below throughout the year, and our economy supported more jobs than it has since 2008. In other good news, our construction sector, which has seen large losses over the past few years, continues to grow. Our efforts to recruit jobs will continue until we are able to provide an opportunity for every Alabamian to have a job."

Over the year, wage and salary employment increased by 31,800, with gains in the leisure and hospitality sector (+8,800), the construction sector (+7,200), and the manufacturing sector (+7,100), among others. Employment in the construction sector is at its highest point since November 2010, when employment was 85,100. Current employment in the construction sector stands at 84,100.

Monthly gains in wage and salary employment increased in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+3,300), the financial activities sector (+500), and the construction sector (+400).

"This year, Alabama experienced the highest annual percentage of job growth since 2007," Alabama Labor Commissioner Fitzgerald Washington said. "We are continuing to recover from the devastating effects of the recession, and our rate of annual job growth reflects that."

The annual average percent of job growth in 2014 was 1.13%. The last time the annual average rate of job growth was higher was in 2007, when it was 1.32%.

JobLink, the state's online free jobs database (www.joblink.alabama.gov), registered 18,054 active job orders in December.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 3.7%, Lee County at 4.1%, and Cullman County at 4.2%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 12.5%, Bullock County at 10.7%, and Lowndes and Dallas Counties at 10.1%.

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