



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: August 14, 2009

DIR Begins Implementation Process for 20 Week Unemployment Compensation Extension

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that the Department will begin the implementation process to allow unemployed Alabamians to receive up to an additional 20 weeks of Unemployment Compensation benefits.

In his call for this week’s special legislative session, Governor Bob Riley included a bill to provide for up to an additional 20 weeks in emergency benefits for those Alabamians who have exhausted the current 59 weeks of benefits. The extra benefits are funded 100% with federal stimulus dollars. This initiative was sponsored in the Senate by Senator Rodger Smitherman and in the House by Representative Frank McDaniel.

“Both Governor Riley and the Department of Industrial Relations realize that times are hard for many Alabamians during this recession,” said Surtees. “This bill will provide some extra help for those who continue to remain jobless.”

Following the passage of the bill, and signing by Governor Riley, DIR will provide the bill to the U.S. Department of Labor for certification. Once certified, DIR will be able to determine the starting date for which the additional weeks can be compensated.

DIR estimates that approximately 15,000 Alabamians may be eligible for the additional benefits. Claimants will be notified in writing by the Department informing them of their eligibility. The Department has also created a dedicated phone number for claimants to call with questions. The number is 1-877-490-1642, and it is expected to be activated next week.

“I would like to ask that claimants please be patient with us while we determine eligibility,” said Surtees. “Please be assured that we are working as quickly as possible to get all eligible claimants compensated in a timely manner.”

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