

From the Office of Governor Robert Bentley

Alabama's November Unemployment Rate Drops to 6.2%

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MONTGOMERY — Governor Robert Bentley announced Friday that Alabama's preliminary seasonally adjusted November unemployment rate is 6.2%, down from October's revised rate of 6.4%. November's rate represents 132,381 unemployed persons, compared to 137,160 in October and 148,956 in November 2012.

"The long-term trend in Alabama's unemployment rate is encouraging news for Alabamians who want a job," Governor Robert Bentley said. "Every Alabama county has a decrease in their unemployment rate for November, and that is a sign that Alabamians are getting back to work in both rural and urban areas of Alabama. There is still much work left to be done, however, until Alabama reaches full employment, and our efforts to recruit more jobs will continue."

November's rate represents the third time this year that Alabama's unemployment rate has been at its lowest in five years. Both July and August 2013 registered preliminary unemployment rates of 6.2% as well. The last time the unemployment rate was at or below 6.2% was in October 2008, when the rate was 5.9%.

"Not surprisingly, it appears as though seasonal hiring, especially in retail establishments, helped to lower our unemployment rate," Alabama Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees said. "This traditionally happens during the months of November and December as employers prepare for the Christmas shopping rush."

Wage and salary employment increased 4,100 in November, with the majority of the growth in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector, including retail trade, which saw an increase of nearly 8,000 jobs. Growth was also seen in the government, education and health services, and manufacturing sectors.

"The decline in the county unemployment rates, which range from at least a half a percentage point to nearly two, may present a clearer picture of what is actually going on throughout Alabama as the county data are not seasonally adjusted," said Surtees.

"Seasonal adjustment" refers to BLS's practice of anticipating certain trends in the labor force, such as hiring during the holidays or the surge in the labor force when students graduate in the spring, and predicting their effects of the unemployment rate. The not seasonally adjusted data show the number of people working in a county, with no seasonal factors imposed.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates were: Shelby County at 3.6%, Lee County at 4.5%, and Cullman, St. Clair, and Cherokee Counties at 4.7%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates were: Wilcox County at 13.9%, Bullock County at 11.9%, and Perry and Dallas Counties at 11.1%.