



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: March 13, 2012

Alabama's January Unemployment Rate Falls to 7.8%

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's January unemployment rate was 7.8%, down from December 2011's rate of 8.0%, and well below January 2011's rate of 9.3%. January's rate represents 168,883 unemployed persons, compared to 174,443 in December, and 205,086 in January 2011.

"I am happy to see this positive trend of our unemployment rate falling month after month continue," said Surtees. "However, I want to remind everyone that there are still over 160,000 Alabamians out there who want a job and don't have one. Others have left the work force. The point is, we are still not where we need to be, and job growth and creation need to remain our top priority."

Governor Robert Bentley shares Director Surtees's sentiments. "It is encouraging to see our unemployment level drop to its lowest point in more than three years," Governor Bentley said. "Still, we must continue to make sure everyone who wants a job is able to find one. We will continue our efforts to create new jobs and to help retain the employers we have here in Alabama."

"We're also seeing initial unemployment compensation claims and benefit payments are very nearly at 2008 – pre-recession – levels. The number of first time payments is BELOW 2008 levels. In addition, our active job orders on our statewide jobs database are higher than they've been in four years. All of these stats point to a recovering economy," continued Surtees.

Initial claims for January 2012 were 36,824, compared to 45,043 in January 2011, 40,535 in January 2010, and 61,033 in January 2009. The comparable claims number in January 2008 was 35,766.

Benefit payments for January 2012 were \$35,190,120, compared to \$37,619,359 in

January 2011, \$49,154,145 in January 2010, and \$52,602,310 in January 2009. The comparable benefit payments number in January 2008 was \$26,301,965.

First time payments for January 2012 were 18,594, compared to 20,608 in January 2011, 23,727 in January 2010, and 32,483 in January 2009. The comparable first time payments number in January 2008 was 20,338.

Active job orders on www.joblink.alabama.gov January 2012 were 11,853, compared to 10,590 in January 2011, 7,377 in January 2010, and 5,846 in January 2009. The comparable numbers of job orders in January 2008 was 3,134.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates were: Shelby County at 5.8%, Coffee County at 6.8%, and Lee County at 6.9%.

Counties with the highest unemployment rates were: Wilcox County at 17.2%, Lowndes County at 16.6%, and Dallas County at 14.6%.

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