



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: November 20, 2009

Alabama's Unemployment Rate Rises to 10.9% *Federal Extension Payments Already Being Distributed*

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that Alabama's October unemployment rate rose to 10.9%, up from September's rate of 10.7%.

The figure represents 226,790 unemployed persons and an increase of 3,800 in wage and salary employment. The sectors experiencing the gains were: government, professional and business services, trade, transportation, and utilities, and educational and health services. Sectors experiencing losses this month were: financial activities, manufacturing, other services, and natural resources and mining.

“While we did experience a slight increase in the unemployment rate, I am proud to announce that Alabama is already paying federal extension benefits to those claimants who qualify,” said Surtees. “This extension was only signed into law on November 6, so that represents a less than two week turn-around time on distributing these much needed dollars.”

The Department of Industrial Relations has determined that, to date, approximately 12,000 Alabamians are eligible for this most recent federal extension of benefits. This week, DIR asked claimants whose benefits exhausted on or before November 14, 2009 to begin certifying for the extended benefits. Claimants can certify online at www.dir.alabama.gov, or by calling 1-800-752-7389. Payments for some of these claims began earlier this week.

“Once again, I'd like to encourage unemployed Alabamians to be patient with us as we distribute these funds,” said Surtees. “We are doing everything possible to get these funds circulating in Alabama's economy as quickly as we can. Filing online is the best way to speed up the process.”

Counties with the lowest unemployment rate were: Shelby at 7.4%, Madison at 7.5%, and Coffee at 8.3%. Counties with the highest unemployment rate were: Wilcox at 25.1%, Dallas at 21.9%, and Conecuh at 20.5%.

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