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STATE OF ALABAMA

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MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Friday announced that Alabama’s preliminary, seasonally adjusted October unemployment rate is 5.9%, down from September’s rate of 6.0%, and below October 2014’s rate of 6.2%.

“More jobs are being created, Alabama’s unemployment rate continues to drop and our economy is growing,” Governor Robert Bentley said. “The wage and salary employment is at its highest level for the year. It has not been this high in almost seven years. We are one step closer to full employment, and my effort to create jobs will continue until every Alabamian who wants a job has an opportunity to have one.”

Wage and salary employment increased in October by 7,200 to 1,965,000. Monthly gains were seen in the government sector (+3,800), the professional and business services sector (+2,600), and the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+2,200), among others.

Over the year, wage and salary employment increased by 21,100, with gains in the leisure and hospitality sector (+5,200), the education and health services sector (+4,700), and the professional and business services sector (+3,800), among others.

The last time wage and salary employment was at this level or above was in November 2008, when it was 1,970,900.

“Not only are we seeing the highest wage and salary employment numbers of the year, we’ve also surpassed 2015 growth expectation by nearly 8,000 jobs,” Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Fitzgerald Washington said. “Economists forecasted wage and salary growth of 33,800, and we’ve already seen growth of 41,700 through October alone*. We still have two months to go, and those are traditionally strong due to holiday hiring. The counties continue to show improvement, as well. All 67 counties experienced decreases in their unemployment rates over the month, and only one county registered an increase over the year.”

Choctaw County is the only county to register an increase in its unemployment rate over the year, rising from 7.8% to 8.4%. All other counties saw decreases over the month and either no change or decreases over the year.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.0%, Lee County at 4.5%, and Elmore and Cullman Counties at 4.8%.

**For more information regarding 2015 economic forecasts, visit <http://cber.cba.ua.edu/> and click on “2015 Alabama Economic Forecast Released at 27th Annual CBER Conference.”*