

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Secretary Fitzgerald Washington



Governor Kay Ivey held a press conference in October to announce September's Unemployment rate of 3.8%. December's rate of 3.5% closed out 2017.

Employment Services
Unemployment Compensation
Labor Market Information

Hearings and Appeals
Workers' Compensation
Inspections



Letter to the Governor
The Honorable Kay Ivey
Governor of Alabama

Dear Governor Ivey,

2017 proved to be a successful and productive year for the Department of Labor. We were dedicated in our approach to reduce the unemployment rate, reaching a new record low, and committed to our goal of putting Alabamians back to work – in fact, our economy is supporting more jobs now than at any point in history!

We built on the success of our regional job fairs during the year, holding events in Huntsville, Gadsden, Enterprise, Montgomery, and the first-ever Governor’s Disability Job Fair in Birmingham. Nearly 7,000 jobseekers attended the fairs, and more than 600 employers participated. We worked closely with other state agencies, local governments, economic developers, employers, and regional workforce commissions, making these fairs truly collaborative events. We are continuously learning of success stories resulting from these events, and will continue these efforts in 2018.

Employment continued to improve in 2017, with Alabama’s economy supporting 2,093,063 jobs in December, the most recorded in history! We again surpassed economists’ predictions, adding 32,500 jobs over the year. Economists predicted the state would add 18,700 jobs for the entire year! The majority of the increase was attributed to hiring in the construction and manufacturing sectors.

The biggest news of the year was our unemployment rate. In September, we set a new record low with an unemployment rate of 3.8%, which only continued to drop over the next two months, landing at a new record low of 3.5% in November, which held in December. The number of people counted as unemployed is currently at its lowest level in history as well.

Our Career Centers reflected this improvement in the economy with more than 300,000 new registrants and 305,000 Alabamians served. Alabama JobLink, the state’s free online jobs database, registered more than 227,000 new job orders representing more than 316,000 job openings. More than 277,000 people used JobLink in 2017.

More than 82,000 jobseekers entered employment after receiving services through the Career Centers, representing nearly two-thirds of the jobseekers exiting the labor exchange system. Close to 83% were found to still be employed six months after exiting the system, with average earnings of \$25,470 per year.

Our marketing efforts increased significantly in 2017, with an expanded digital marketing campaign, print ads in more than 100 Alabama newspapers, and a roadside billboard campaign. We also added radio and tv marketing, and are currently promoting general services in the Career Centers as well as the Alabama Apprenticeship Program.

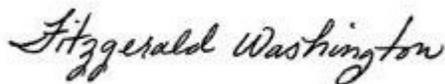
Alabama's veteran unemployment remained low in 2017, registering at 3.3% (12 month rolling average) as of September. This is down from the 3.9% recorded at the same time a year ago. Our Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JSVG) staff provided services to 1,498 veterans.

The Alabama Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund has a healthy balance of \$574 million. We collected more than \$208 million in unemployment insurance taxes in 2017. Due to a memorandum of understanding established with the U.S. Department of Labor in 2015, we have identified nearly 2,300 misclassified workers and more than \$29 million in misclassified wage dollars.

ADOL will continue to provide services to those Alabamians who need us the most, the unemployed and underemployed. Our staff is dedicated to upholding our efficient and professional service standards.

I present the 2017 Alabama Department of Labor Annual Report, which reflects a high level of commitment to positive, proactive, and ongoing efforts to adapt to ever-changing times and to position Alabama for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fitzgerald Washington".

Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



SECRETARY OF LABOR
FITZGERALD WASHINGTON

BOARD OF APPEALS
MEMBERS APPOINTED BY
GOVERNOR

ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEMBERS APPOINTED BY
GOVERNOR

SUPPORT DIVISIONS



**GOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS**
STEPHEN
MCCORMICK



LEGAL
JOSEPH AMMONS



FINANCE
MARGIE TONEY



**LABOR
ADMINISTRATOR**
VIVIAN HANDY



HUMAN RESOURCES
RENEE MINOR



**INFORMATION
SYSTEMS**
JEANNINE
PENDERGAST

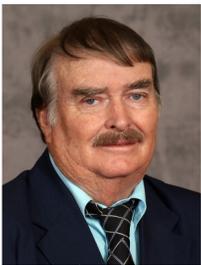
OPERATIONAL DIVISIONS



**EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES**
ROBERT BRANTLEY



**UNEMPLOYMENT
COMPENSATION**
THOMAS DANIEL



**LABOR MARKET
INFORMATION**
JIM HENRY



**HEARINGS &
APPEALS**
VENESSA WATKINS



**WORKERS'
COMPENSATION**
CHARLES DELAMAR



INSPECTIONS
JIM BYRUM



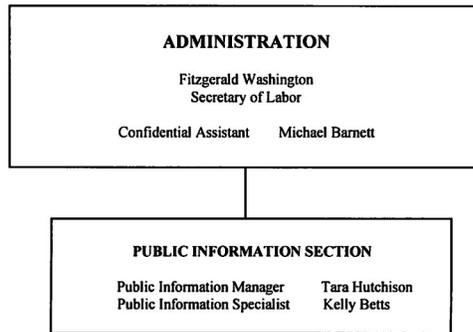
INSPECTIONS
BRIAN WITTWER

**WORKERS'
COMPENSATION
MEDICAL SERVICES
BOARD**

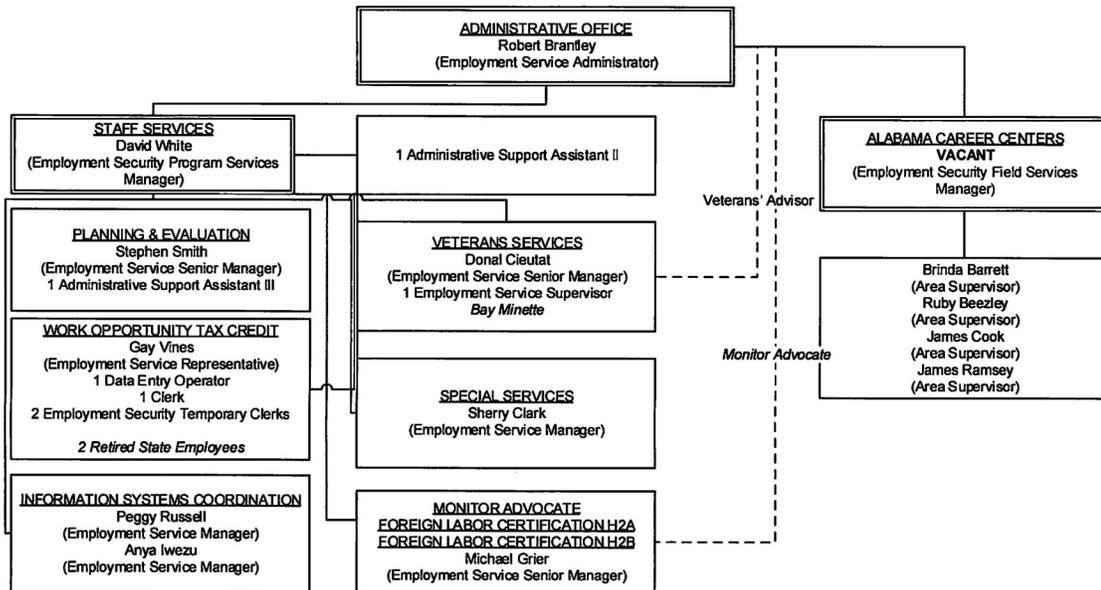
**BOARD OF
BOILERS AND
PRESSURE VESSELS
ELEVATOR SAFETY
REVIEW BOARD**

**BOARD OF MINE
EXAMINERS**

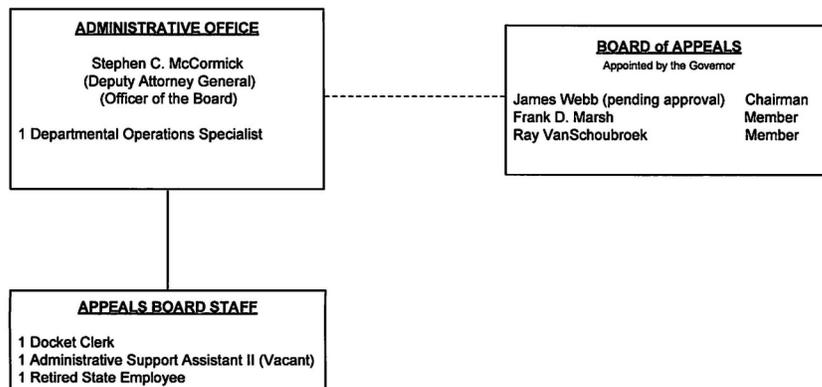
EXECUTIVE DIVISION



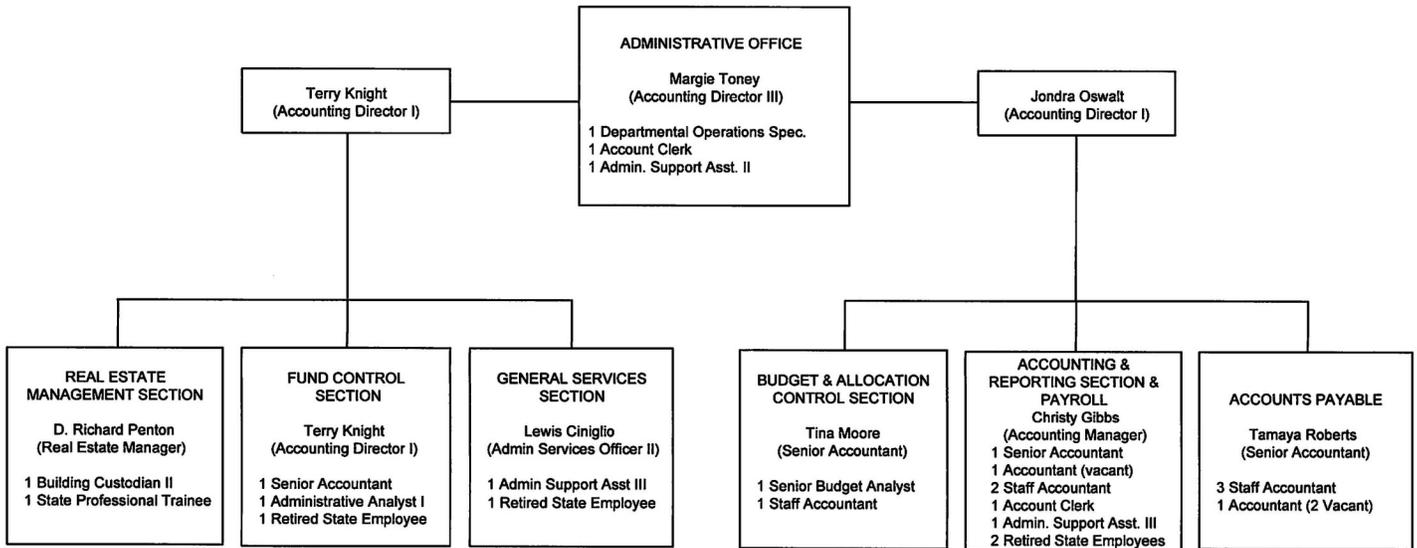
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DIVISION



GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

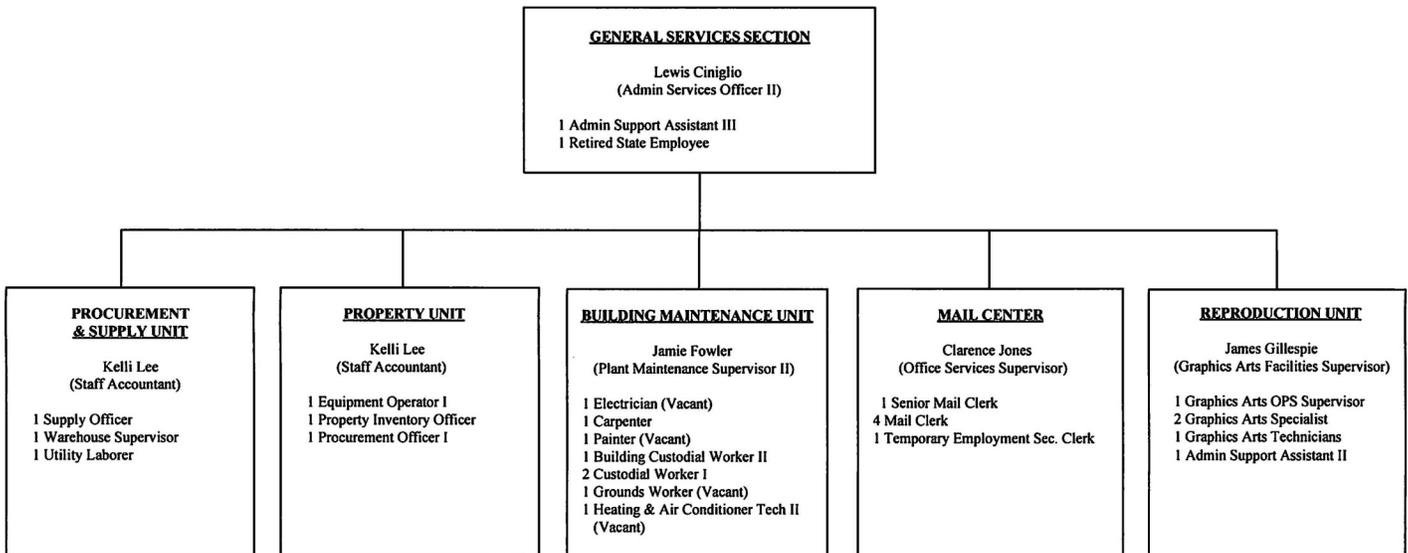


FINANCE DIVISION

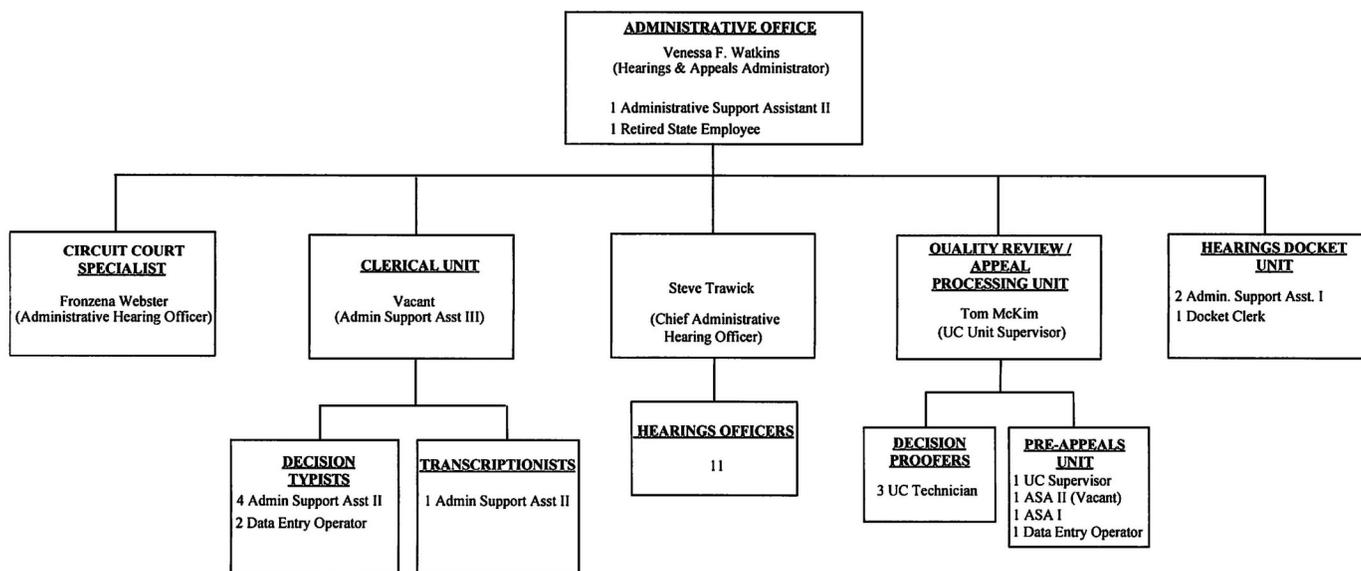


FINANCE DIVISION

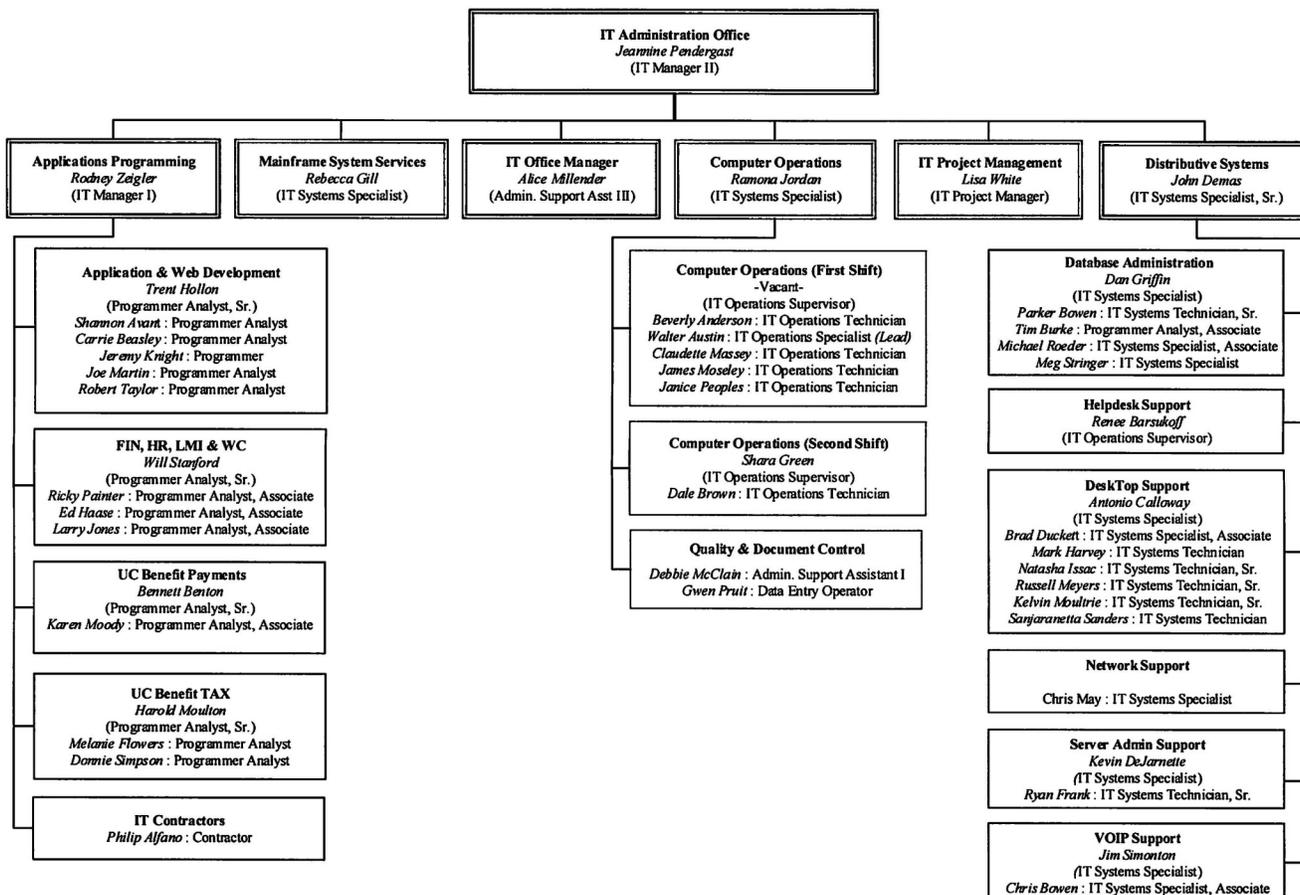
GENERAL SERVICES SECTION



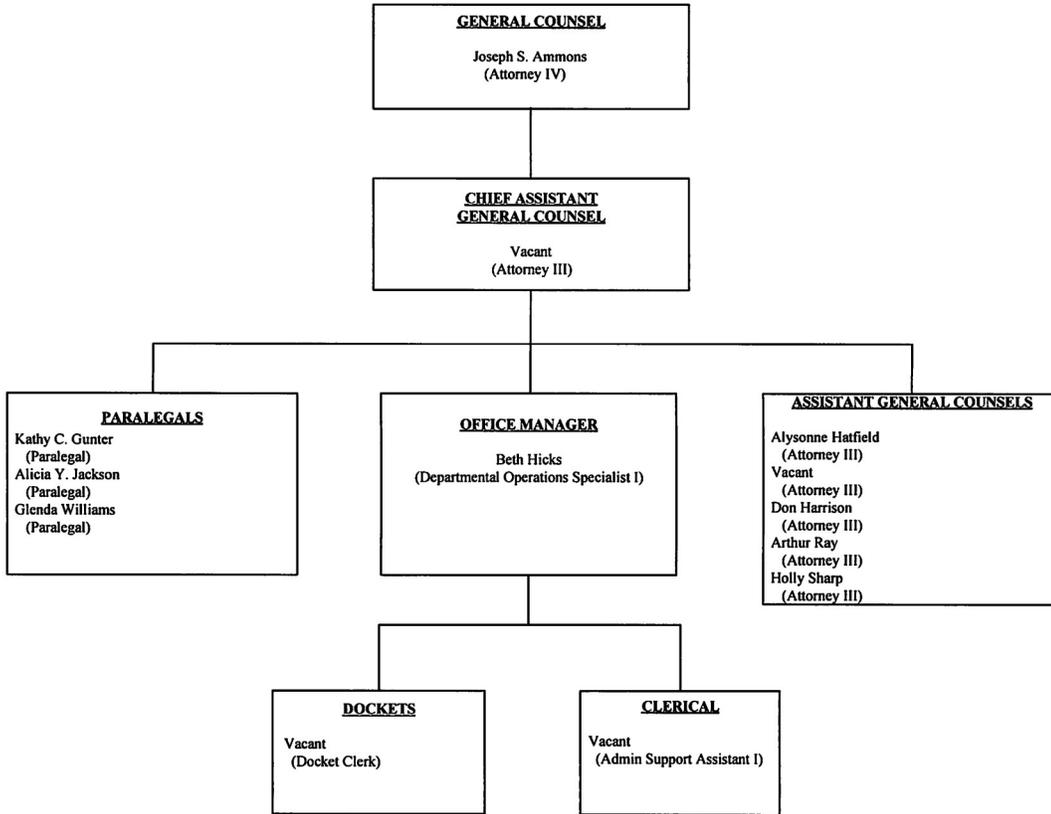
HEARINGS AND APPEALS DIVISION



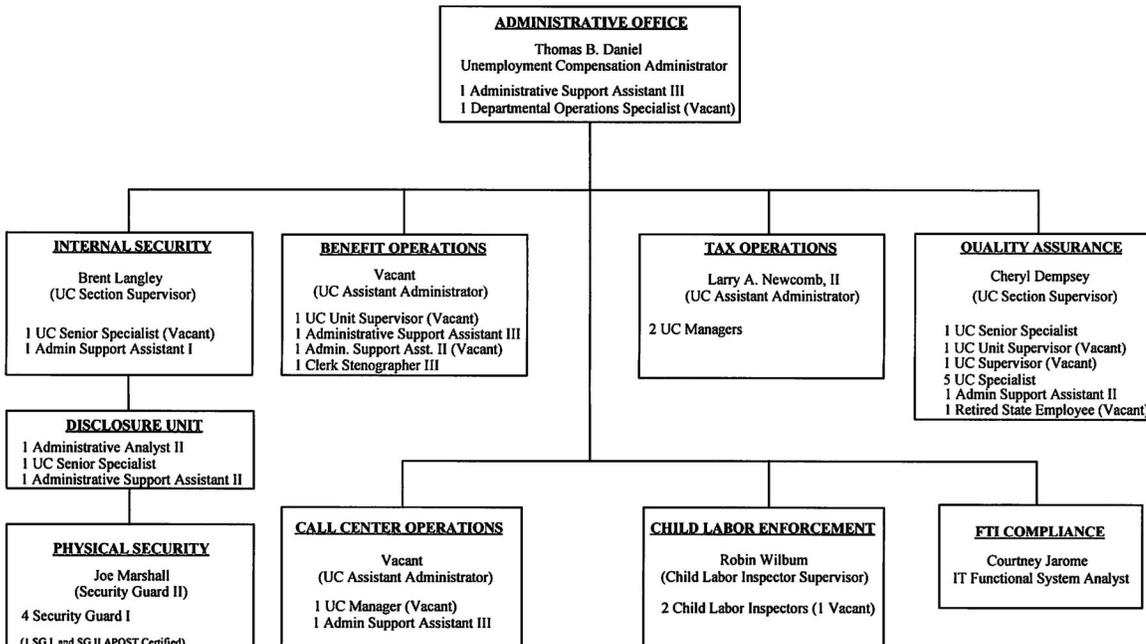
INFORMATION SYSTEMS DIVISION



LEGAL DIVISION

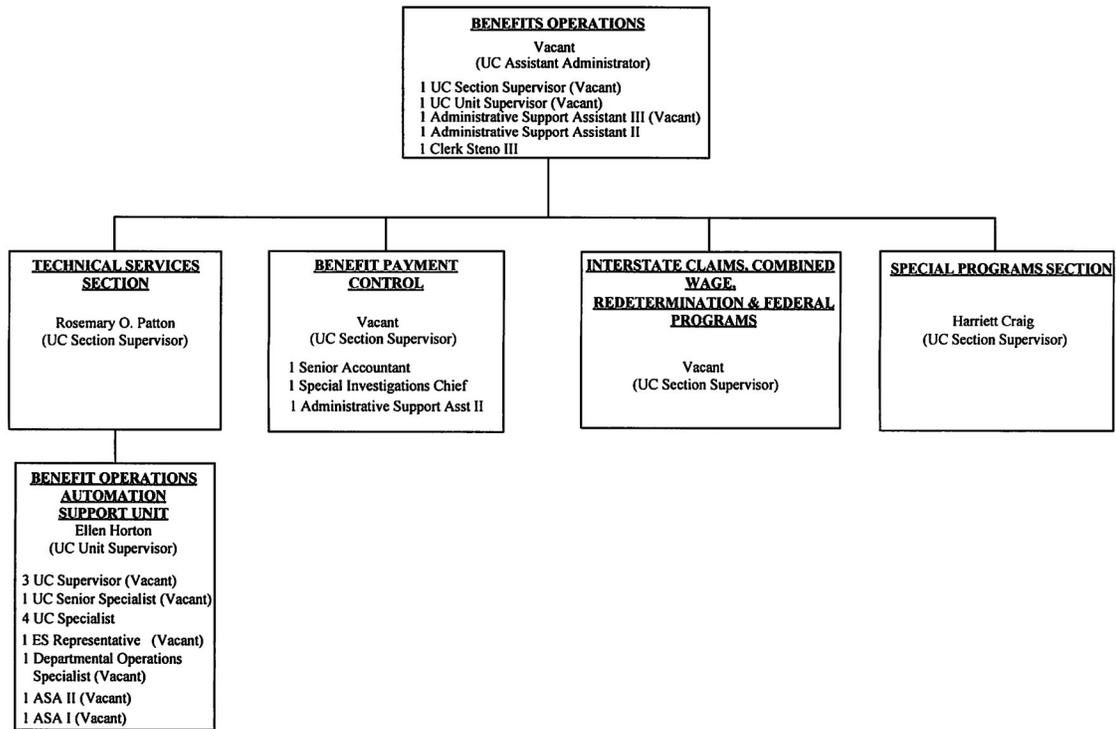


UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION



UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

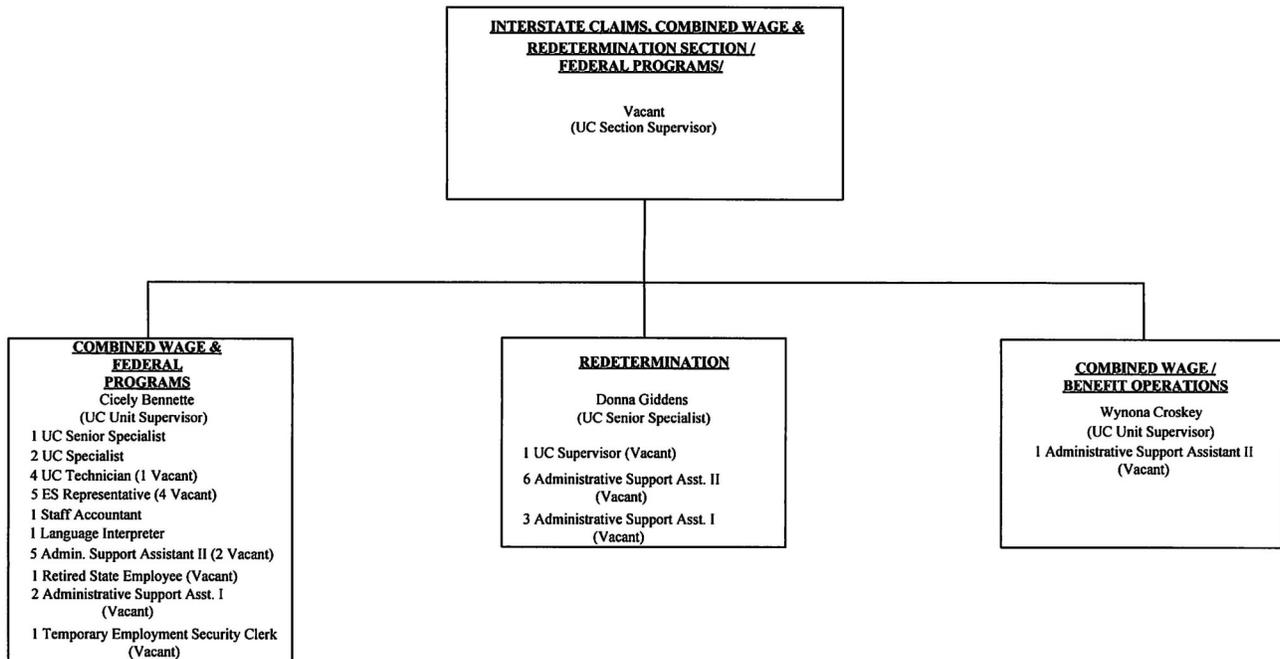
BENEFIT OPERATIONS



UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

BENEFIT OPERATIONS

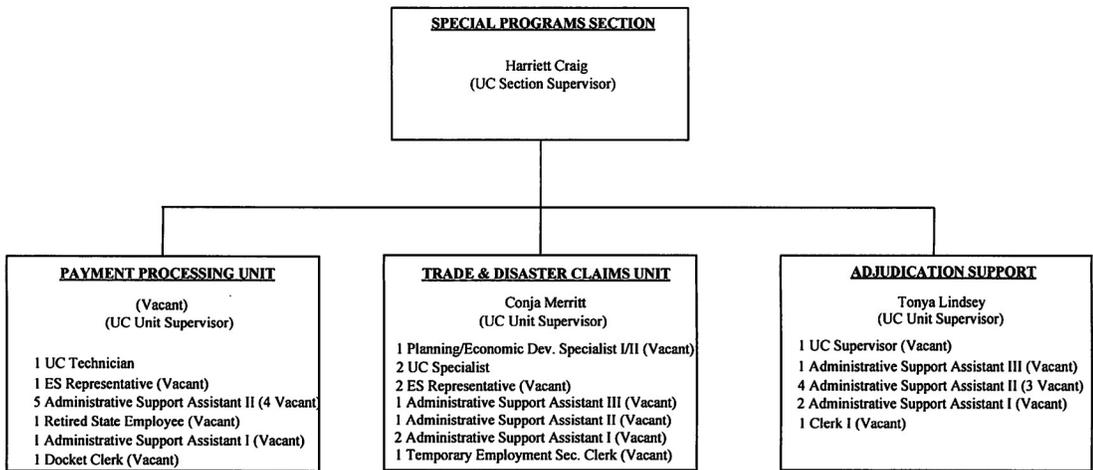
BENEFIT SERVICES SECTION



UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

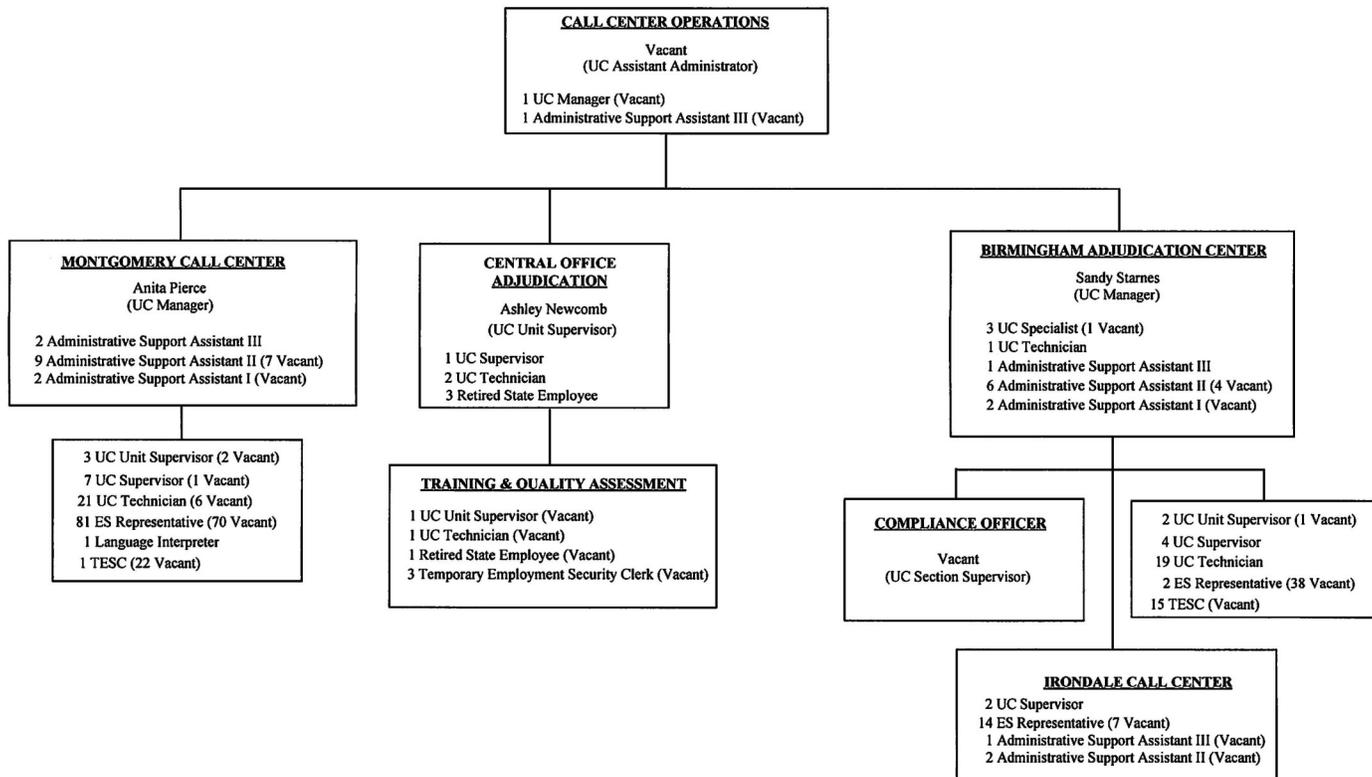
BENEFIT OPERATIONS

SPECIAL PROGRAMS SECTION



UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

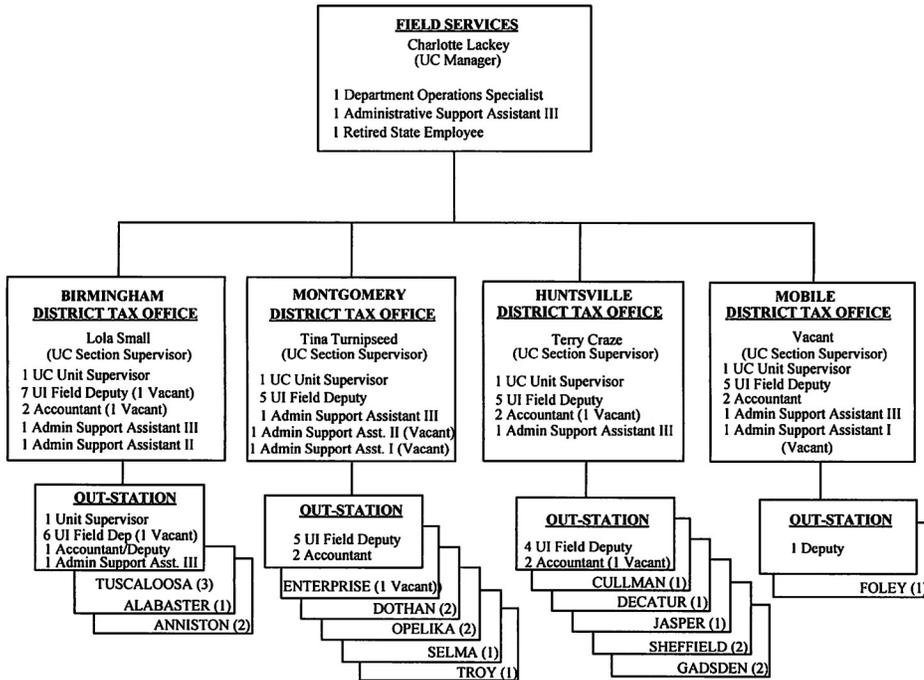
CALL CENTER OPERATIONS



UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

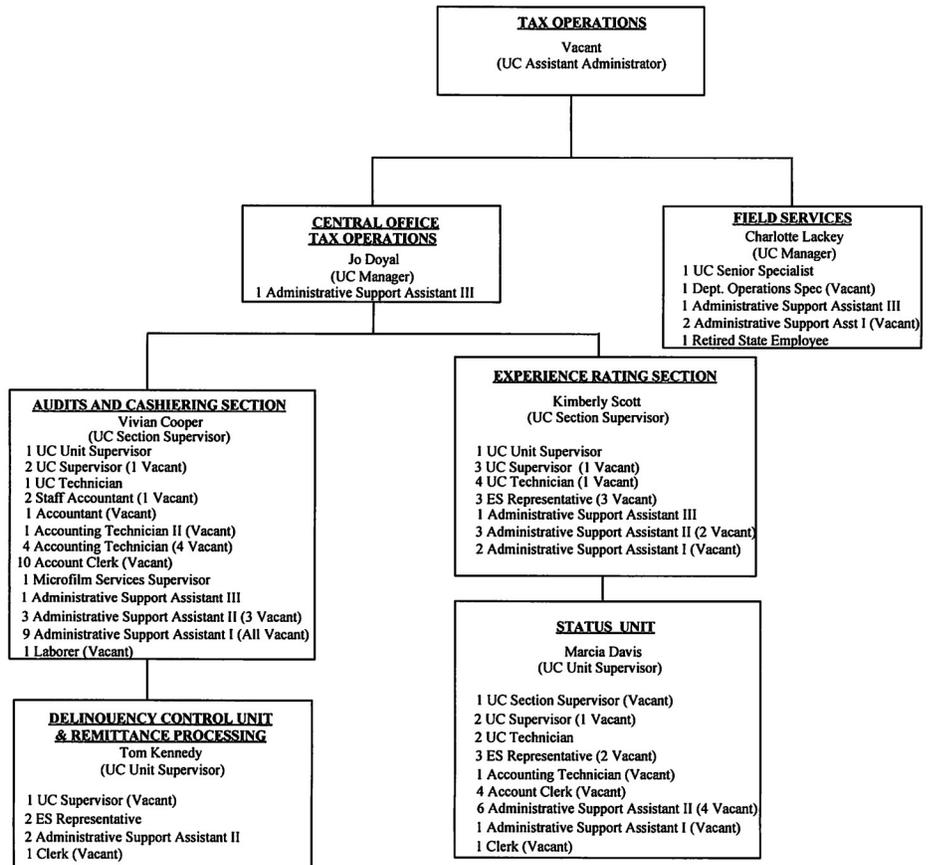
TAX OPERATIONS

FIELD SERVICES



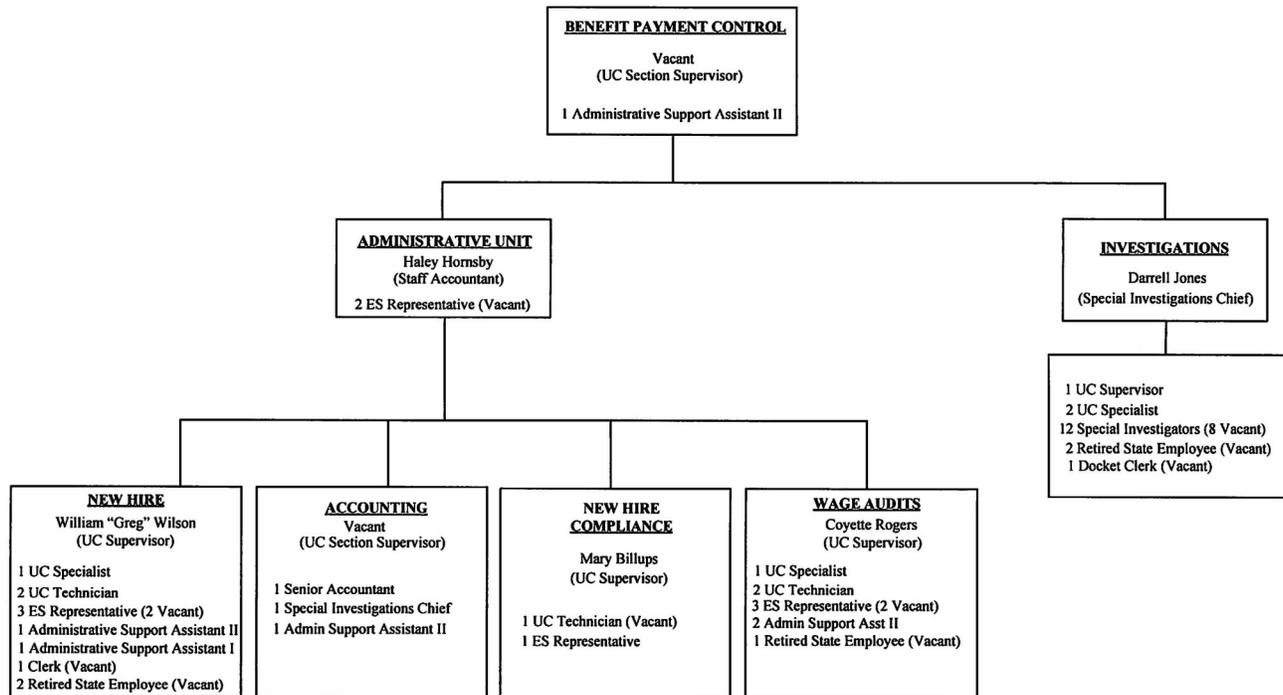
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

TAX OPERATIONS

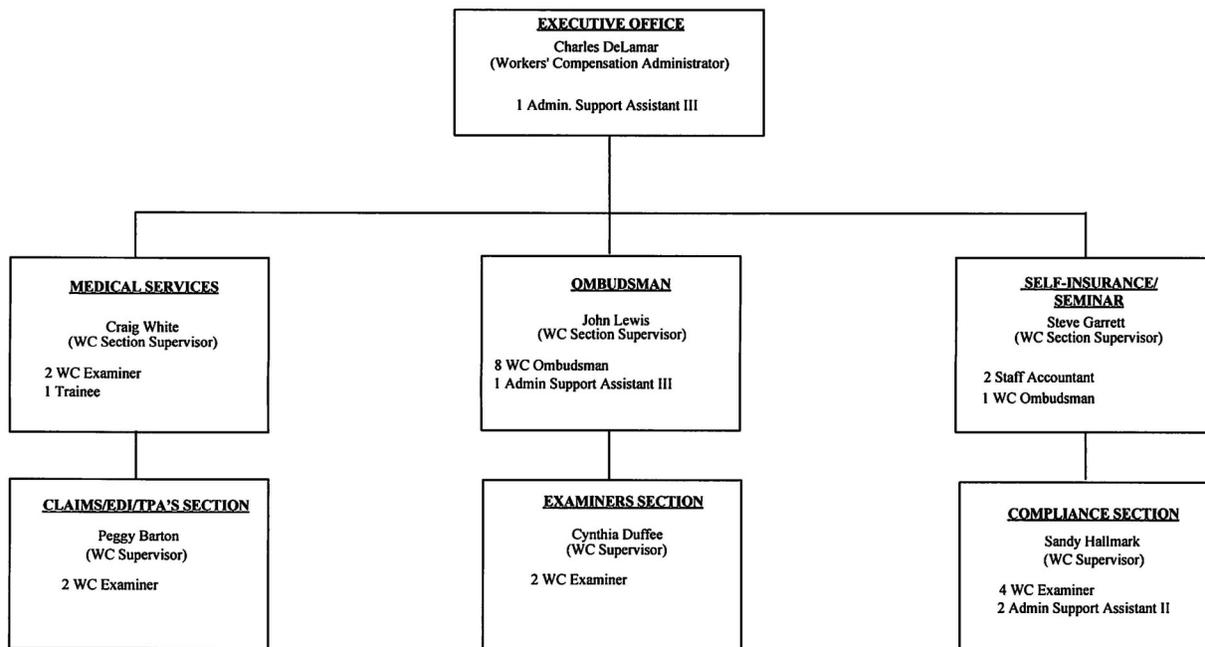


UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

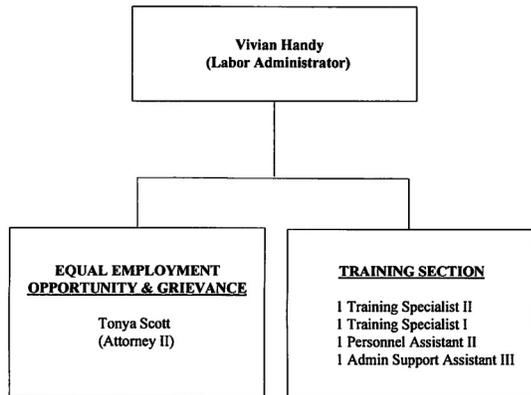
BENEFIT OPERATIONS



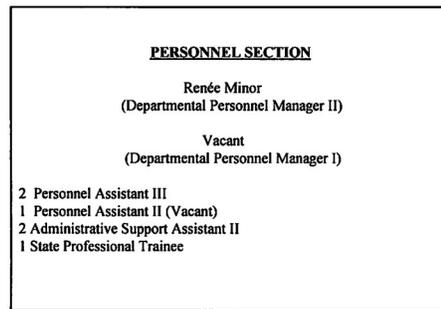
WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIVISION



LABOR ADMINISTRATOR

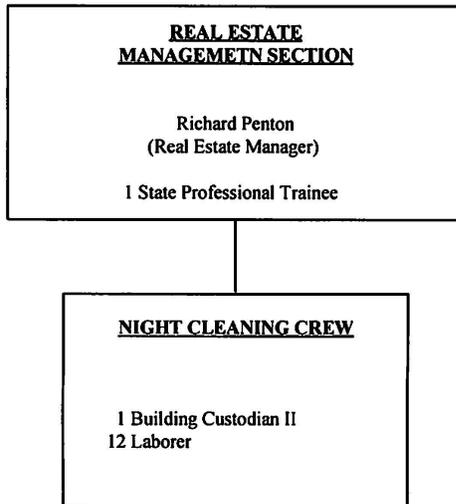


HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION



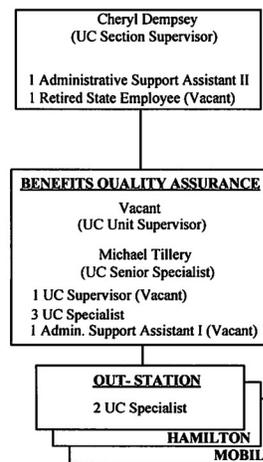
FINANCE DIVISION

**REAL ESTATE
MANAGEMENT SECTION**



UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DIVISION

QUALITY ASSURANCE SECTION





EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

DIRECTOR
ROBERT BRANTLEY

The Employment Service Division of the Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) serves as the gateway to the state’s job and labor markets delivering basic, individualized, and training services to both jobseekers and employers through the Alabama Career Center System. Alabama is also a proud partner in the American Job Center Network, which is designed to unify and

brand workforce services as part of a single national network, as well as AlabamaWorks, which is designed to unify and brand workforce services as part of a single state network.

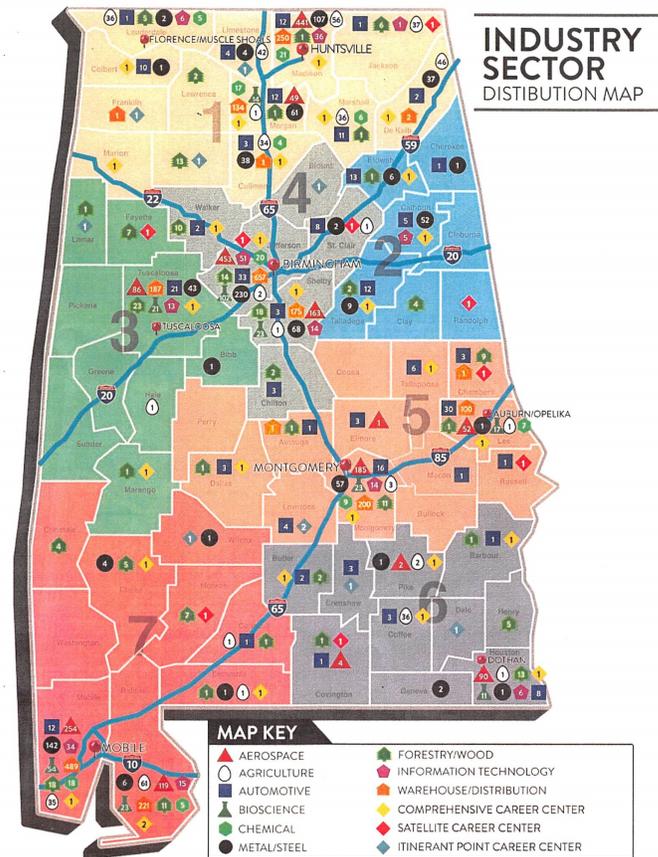


As a partner in the Alabama Career Center System, ADOL works with all workforce partners to build a customer-friendly system providing jobseekers and employers with a full range of seamless employment and training services in 49 “One-Stop Career Centers” located throughout the state.

Access to basic online workforce services is always available through Alabama JobLink (AJL) at www.joblink.alabama.gov. Access to services may also be obtained through visiting any of the state’s network of 49 Career Centers. Career Centers offer resource areas with access to high-speed internet and software designed to aid jobseekers, along with a vast array of resource materials, including the latest labor market information, and assistance with career and job searches. Staff can also assist employers in finding a quality skilled workforce. Computers are equipped to offer registration assistance to the state’s automated labor exchange, résumé

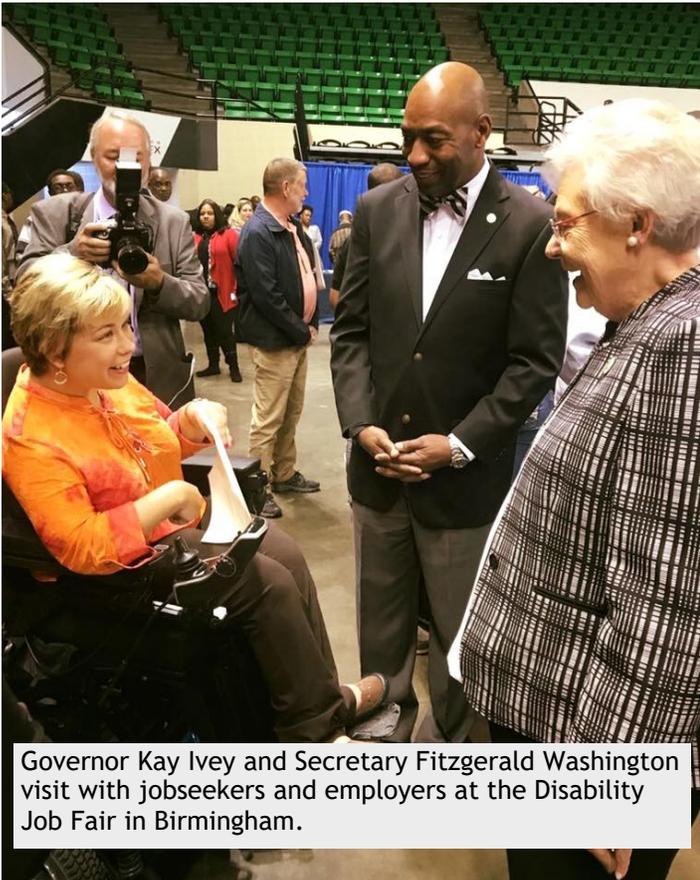
preparation, labor market / career / information / exploration, as well as a wide range of online resource material and tutorials for job-related subjects. Service may be either self-directed by the customer or provided by the professional staff in the Career Center.

Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), passed in June 2014, continued in 2017, with reconfiguration of the state’s three Local Workforce Areas to seven new Local Workforce Regions.



The new Local Workforce Boards are implementing plans that include certification of the state’s Career Centers. The one-stop operator contract was also awarded to the Alabama Department of Labor.

ADOL continued to pursue Career Center branding through collaboration with state television media and local government entities to sponsor five Regional Job Fairs in some of the state’s major markets: Huntsville, Gadsden, Enterprise, Birmingham, and Montgomery with nearly 7,000 jobseekers and more than 600 employers participating. The Career Center System and AJL brands is part of the newly revealed Alabama Works branding for workforce development in the state.



Governor Kay Ivey and Secretary Fitzgerald Washington visit with jobseekers and employers at the Disability Job Fair in Birmingham.

Building on the success of last year's Disability Employment Summit, ADOL hosted the first annual Governor's Disability Job Fair in Birmingham. A collaborative effort with several other agencies and the Governor's Office, the event proved to be extremely successful, with more than 95 employers participating and 1,100 jobseekers in attendance.

Marketing efforts by ADOL were ramped up this year with print and digital media and billboards used to increase awareness of Career Center services to jobseekers and employers. Beginning in the fall, billboards went up statewide to promote the apprenticeship program.

Additionally, the continuation of a statewide broadcast campaign, including tv and radio, has brought the message of both Career Center services and the apprenticeship program to dozens of stations statewide.



Recognition of the unlimited potential of social media to expand outreach service to a vastly wider audience through Facebook and the commitment to utilize this medium has combined to result in a 45% increase in "likes" for the Career Center Facebook pages.

These events/activities positively impacted the state's economy helping unemployment continue to improve in the state for the eighth consecutive year in 2017, registering at a historic low of 3.5% in November that was maintained in December. Over the year, wage and salary employment increased 32,500, with gains in the leisure and hospitality sector (+8,700), the construction sector (+6,100), and the manufacturing sector (+5,800), among others.

Alabama's Career Centers continue to reflect this improvement in the economy and better job market with lowered levels of new registrants seeking assistance (300,000) contributing to slightly fewer customer visits to Centers (450,000), and individuals being served



(305,000). Approximately 75% of registrants self-register for service while the remaining 25% visit Career Center locations throughout the state seeking registration assistance and service from professional staff. However, almost 15% of self-registrants eventually seek staff assistance at a Career Center. Approximately one in three of those seeking help were Unemployment Compensation claimants.

The Mobile Career Center (MCC) provided on-demand access to jobs where such access is not available. During this year the MCC participated in 55 events throughout the



The MCC is at every ADOL job fair to help jobseekers with AJL registration and résumé preparation.

state to provide workforce related assistance to the residents of Alabama. These included job fairs, business recruitment assistance, Rapid Response to dislocated workers, outreach to communities needing workforce development services, assistance to veterans returning home, and career days for students.

WIOA training for Career Center staff continued in 2017 emphasizing all aspects of implementing this important program.

Driving Alabama's workforce development system is AJL, a web-based, customer-driven service delivery system (joblink.alabama.gov), featuring self-service options for jobseekers and employers. Google Analytics reports that in the past year, there have been more than 277,000 users on AJL, with a returning visitor rate of 68.7%. This is more than 852,000 sessions, consisting of more than 11.9 million page views.

For jobseekers, AJL offers around-the-clock access for registration, job search, online résumé creation, automatic e-mail notification when skills match employer openings, and, in some instances, direct employer contact. AJL offers the ability to upload a résumé to the system and perform

job searches, not only in AJL, but also in Indeed.com, which expands access to millions of jobs from other sources, including small industry-specific job boards, local newspapers, and trade associations.

For employers, AJL is available 24/7 to post and manage job openings, search for qualified workers, and receive automatic e-mail notification when job requirements match jobseeker skills. This year, 2,042 individual employers have reviewed over 550,000 jobseeker résumés.

AJL includes jobs from the Direct Employers National Labor Exchange (US.jobs) in addition to jobs listed by employers with the Alabama Career Center System. The US.jobs National Labor Exchange represents the job openings available through an array of leading global employers. Jobs from the National Labor Exchange also include jobs in Alabama from USAJOBS, the federal government's official one-stop source for federal jobs and employment information.

Major enhancements made to AJL in 2017 include improvements to job and résumé searches and improved customer navigation.

Empowerment of the users of Alabama's Labor Exchange system to self-direct job and worker searches has opened access to the public labor exchange system, making it truly a customer demand-driven system. Success in this shift in service delivery is borne out in the numbers of jobseekers and employers served by the system with 77,262 new jobseeker accounts and 2,892 new employer accounts established this year. More than 227,000 new job orders representing over 316,000 job openings were listed on AJL



ADOL sent 16 employees to the first of three 2017 WIOA National Convenings in Dallas April 18-20. These convenings support WIOA implementation, building upon the regulations and guidance, virtual training, and resources already available to the system.

this year. Automation and stream-lining of the delivery of workforce development services continues to position the Alabama Career Center System as the gateway to Alabama's job and labor markets.

In 2017, more than 82,000 jobseekers entered employment after receiving employment services through the Career Center System, representing almost two-thirds (64.9%) of the jobseekers exiting the labor exchange system during this period. An overwhelming majority (82.7%) were found to still be employed six months after exiting the system with a job. Average earnings were \$25,470 per year or \$12.25 per hour.

Responsive adaptation to change serves to support and strengthen the mission of the Employment Services Division to achieve a customer-focused, technologically advanced, outcome-driven workforce delivery system that provides high standards of customer service and satisfaction.

CLAIMANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Claimant Assistance Enhancement Program is designed to reduce the duration of joblessness for Unemployment Compensation claimants. This is accomplished through quick, early intervention by Career Center staff with UC claimants to assess their needs and offer services designed to return them to work as quickly as possible. These services include: review of job search efforts, orientation to Career Center services, provision of labor market and career information, skills assessment, employability development plans, job search plans, résumé preparation, job search workshops, and intensified job development and placement services including skills assessment/transferability tools provided online to claimants by the Career Center.

This year, more than 59,000 eligible claimants were helped to find jobs, representing more than 66.3% of the eligible claimants exiting the labor exchange system during this period, creating a significant savings to the Unemployment Trust Fund.

BUSINESS CONTACTS

More than 24,000 promotional business contacts were made by Career Center staff with Alabama employers this year, representing the most business contacts made in over a decade. The Business Services Program trains Business Service Representatives (BSRs) to educate area employers



Career Center BSRs attended training held at the Hyundai Training Center in Montgomery May 23-24.

about Career Center services and programs that can help solve their workforce problems. These services include on-the-job training (OJT), the incumbent worker training program, and the apprenticeship program. The goal of the Business Services Program is to help employers take advantage of programs to grow and create jobs. In turn, employers' feedback is used to adjust services or develop new services to better serve employers.

RAPID RESPONSE

Rapid Response activities provided by Career Center staff, funded under contract with the Alabama Department of Commerce – Workforce Development Division, support the State's Rapid Response Team in providing assistance to the business community and workers affected by layoffs or plant closings in the state. Career Center staff participate in group employee meetings as key members of the State's Rapid Response Team to provide information and direction to dislocated workers relative to Career Center services, including: UI registration, job search registration, résumé preparation, online job search, job placement, veteran services, labor market information, and when necessary and appropriate, conduct dedicated on-site job search workshops.

The Rapid Response team assisted workers at 40 major closing and layoffs affecting 2,444 dislocated workers in FY 2017.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

During FY 2017, 14,966 volunteers were referred from a county food assistance office to a Career Center, of these 1,885 food stamp registrants visited a Career Center

seeking services. This is a marked decline from previous years owing to eligibility changes in the food stamp program. In 2017, mandatory participation of Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) in employment and training activities was changed to voluntary and additional options for retaining eligibility added.

ABAWDs from 35 counties (Baldwin, Barbour, Butler, Calhoun, Chambers, Clarke, Coffee, Colbert, Cullman, Dallas, DeKalb, Escambia, Etowah, Fayette, Houston, Jackson, Jefferson, Lee, Madison, Marengo, Marion, Marshall, Mobile, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Pike, Randolph, Russell, Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, and Walker) were invited to participate in the employment and training program. Those visiting Career Centers were provided services including: Career Center orientation, Labor Market Information, résumé preparation, job search assistance, job shops, individual employment plans, referral to training, case management, and referral to Support Services. There were 127 ABAWDs that received training services funded by WIOA.

A total of 829 food stamp clients were either placed in jobs through the Career Centers or obtained employment after receiving services.

TAX CREDITS FOR EMPLOYERS

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program is a federally funded program that provides incentives to businesses to hire individuals who have historically faced barriers to employment. The benefits of WOTC are twofold. It is an aid to help targeted jobseekers find and retain employment and it saves employers money by reducing their tax liability. Private-sector employers can reduce their tax costs by employing individuals from any of nine targeted WOTC designated groups:

1. Unemployed Veterans
2. TANF recipients
3. Food Stamp recipients
4. Designated community residents
5. Vocational rehabilitation referred individuals
6. Ex-felons
7. SSI recipients
8. Summer youth employees
9. Qualified long-term unemployment recipients

Alabama WOTC issued 35,545 certifications during 2017.

This represents a potential tax savings of at least \$86,198,880 for Alabama employers.

Effective January 1, 2016, Congress passed legislation to add a new targeted WOTC group, the long term unemployment recipient. WOTC added long term unemployment recipients to both automated and hard-copy applications and has established methods to certify or deny this targeted WOTC group. WOTC established access with the IRS to verify the qualifications of supplemental security income on applications with this targeted WOTC group. Also, continued efforts were taken to eliminate the need for hard-copy applications by providing encouragement and more direction for filing electronically. Those who take advantage of filing electronically have the added benefit of monitoring their decisions online. This eliminates the cost of mailing decisions in the traditional manner.

Additional information regarding the WOTC is available at www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/ and www.wotc.alabama.gov/WOTC.html.

SERVICES TO RURAL RESIDENTS

In addition to comprehensive Career Centers located in the state's more densely-populated metropolitan areas, the Alabama Career Center System also operates 11 satellite Career Centers and 11 itinerant point Career Centers to facilitate access to workforce delivery services through the Alabama Career Center System in the state's rural areas serving the needs of rural customers.



The ACCS opened a new satellite Career Center in Livingston in February. This office is the result of a partnership between the ACCS and the University of West Alabama (UWA). Secretary Washington attended the opening and was interviewed by the media.

Pictured from left: Johnnie Aycock, Special Assistant to UWA President; Livingston Mayor Thomas Tartt; Allison Brantley, UWA Director of Economic Development; UWA President Ken Tucker; Secretary Washington; Demopolis Career Center Manager Larry Jowers; and Dr. Tina Jones, UWA Executive Director.

As a part of this service, the Alabama Career Center System conducts the Agricultural Recruitment Service (ARS) and assists the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Foreign Labor Certification, with the Foreign Labor Certification H-2A temporary agricultural program for nonimmigrant foreign workers. Staff members based in Alabama Career Centers as well as members of the Alabama Department of Labor Central Office staff are responsible for overseeing the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Outreach Program and for conducting agricultural pre-occupancy housing inspections for the H-2A program.

Last year in response to 56 separate H-2A certifications, Career Center staff inspected 128 dwellings, with occupancy approved for 1,129 workers.

Migrant and seasonal farm workers were offered all services provided to other applicants and referred to other community agencies as needed. Access to bilingual service is available for each Career Center to help coordinate the process if the applicant is not proficient in English.

FOREIGN LABOR CERTIFICATION

The Foreign Labor Certification Unit of ADOL works directly with the employer or his agent or attorney to ensure that labor certification applications meet regulations and guidelines mandated by federal and state laws and U.S. Department of Labor employment service guidelines.

The Foreign Labor Certification H-2B unit serves a customer service role responding to employer inquiries and dissemination of comprehensive information concerning the program and guidance in the filing process. In Fiscal Year 2017, ADOL received 101 new intrastate job orders identified as H-2B, representing 4,665 job openings.

VETERAN SERVICES

Alabama Career Centers provide veterans with priority in services and training. The ACCS continues to implement a re-focus initiative proposed by the U.S. Department of Labor and required by federal grant provisions, which directs Career Center specialists to provide veterans with core services, including initial assessments of job readiness, résumé assistance, and referrals to job openings and job training.

Alabama's Jobs for Veterans State Grant staff (JVSG) provided individualized services to veterans with significant barriers to employment at an annual average rate of 99.3%.

Disabled veterans, veterans recently released from active duty, homeless veterans, economically and educationally disadvantaged veterans, incarcerated veterans, and veterans with significant barriers to employment are referred to Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists for intensive services. These services include assessments of job readiness, assisting veterans in developing a plan to become employed, and helping veterans connect to resources, services, and benefits.



Pictured from left: DVOP Susan Smith with the Tuscaloosa Career Center; and veteran Kimberly Sparks with the Fayette Career Center at a local vet event.

The re-focus initiative provides that Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) will advocate the Veterans Services Program to employers, conduct job development activities and workshops to assist veterans in finding employment, and promote the hiring of veterans.

Veterans are provided priority in all services and training provided by the Alabama Career Center system. Alabama JobLink offers self-service features and the convenience of access by internet to provide job matching and many other services. Nevertheless, nearly half of registered veterans also took advantage of personal assistance offered by Career Specialists, LVERs, and partnership agencies located at local Career Centers. Veterans' Employment Representatives and Career Center Specialists provide career coaching, local and national job search assistance, intensive services to locate and apply for supportive services and resources, and personal assistance in navigating today's complex and challenging job market.

LVERs are well-acquainted with the needs of local employers and how to assess military skills to determine a



From left: Larry Vaughn with the Dothan Career Center and Nicholas Bowen, with the Bay Minette Career Center, work the veteran registration table at the 14th Annual Fort Rucker Area Job Fair at Enterprise High School in July. Veterans receive priority service at all of ADOL’s job fairs.

service member’s transferable skills related to occupations in civilian careers. The LVERs are assigned to the Business Services Teams at Alabama Career Centers as veterans’ employment advocates to locate potential employment opportunities and encourage employers to offer veterans priority consideration for their job openings. LVERs also work with DVOP specialists to explore job development opportunities for their clients.

Many veterans and military service members preparing for separation from active duty are provided career counseling and assistance to enroll into state and federally-funded workforce training or into vocational or four-year degree programs under one of the GI Bill programs.

Alabama’s veteran unemployment remained low in 2017, registering at 3.3% (12 month rolling average) as of September. This is down from the 3.9% recorded at the same time a year ago. Our Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JSVG) staff provided services to 1,498 veterans.

Services to Military

Veterans’ employment representatives participate in the Military Yellow Ribbon events and military family functions

for deploying and deactivating units of the Alabama National Guard and the Military Reserve components to extend job search services to soldiers in transition from active duty and assist military spouses to find jobs during the service member’s active duty deployment.

Extensive Outreach to Disabled Veterans and Veterans Facing Special Challenges

To assist veterans and recently separated service members with service-connected disabilities to find civilian jobs, the State of Alabama operates the DVOP program, funded under the federal JVSG, using specialists to provide intensive services and to guide disabled veterans into vocational training or to develop employment opportunities. The program also provides statewide outreach through events to assist economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans to connect with resources and services to overcome barriers to employment.

Last year, DVOPs counseled approximately 3,127 veterans with significant barriers to employment due to military service-connected disabilities and provided them employment services, career counseling, guidance on applying for veterans’ benefits, referrals to supportive services, job training, and information about employment and reemployment rights.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans

DVOP Specialists (Source: PIRL Report)	Goal	Result
Number of veterans provided Intensive Services by DVOPs divided by total number of veterans and eligible persons provided DVOP services	90%	99%

Affairs and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Division, DVOP specialists in the Alabama Career Centers work with VR&E’s counselors to develop job opportunities for disabled veterans participating in vocational training for employment.

Partnerships to Serve Veterans

Alabama Career Centers collaborate with colleges, universities, and trade schools to coordinate job fairs and career expositions, including events held at military installations and National Guard armories. These intensive efforts make a significant difference for recently-separated



ADOL held the 2017 Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Awards ceremony at the capitol auditorium in December.

military veterans and veterans returning from deployment. Other community partnerships developed by Alabama Career Centers and the Alabama Department of Labor include Homeless Veterans Stand-Down events in Mobile, Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Opelika-Auburn, and several rural areas. LVERs and DVOPs served 125 homeless veterans in Alabama last year, including 18 female homeless veterans, providing job search services and intensive services under a strategy of case management. Through innovative partnerships with local agencies and community organizations, homeless veterans were assisted in finding employment.

Alabama is in partnership with the Direct Employers

Association, through an initiative supported by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) that automates the posting of federal contractor jobs and career openings into Alabama’s JobLink data system. Jobs are posted directly to the Career Center located at the site of the contract. Veterans have 24-hour priority access to employment openings posted by member companies holding federal contracts in Alabama.

Alabama Veteran Incentive Awards

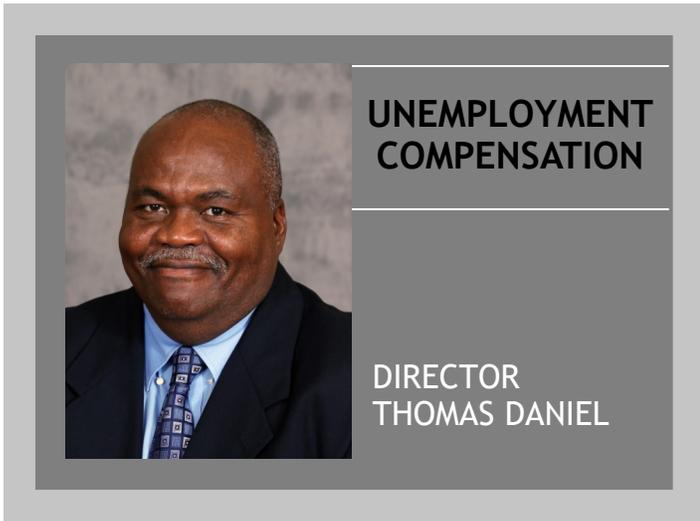
The Alabama Veteran Incentive Awards are presented annually to Alabama Department of Labor Career Center employees for going above and beyond in their service to veterans. This year the awards totaled \$26,931 and were awarded to: Phillip Michael Warren, Lisa Diane Owen, Coretta Bozeman, Renaldo Bryant, Susan Smith, and the Bay Minette Career Center. Their accolades range from working on the Veteran Affairs Committee of the local Chamber of Commerce to providing funds out of their own pocket to help a veteran pay for tools needed to start a new job.

Alabama Veterans Executive Network (AlaVetNet)

AlaVetNet continues to work, organizing and promoting resources for Alabama’s veterans. AlaVetNet launched its new website www.alavetnet.alabama.gov this year. The website provides the contact information for resources that veterans can take advantage of in their area. The AlaVetNet employment committee continues to work on initiatives to keep the veteran unemployment rate under 5%.



State Veterans Coordinator Donal Cieutat was invited to attend a White House Veterans Affairs Conference with state and local leaders in November in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House Complex. Vice President Mike Pence gave the welcoming remarks and posed for a group photo.



BENEFIT OPERATIONS

Benefit Payment Control

Alabama has participated in the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Treasury Offset Program since 2012. In 2017, \$3,288,505.10 was intercepted and applied to UC overpayments. Since participation in the Treasury Offset Program in 2012, Alabama has recovered \$33,402,145.65 in outstanding UC overpayments. Alabama has recovered \$1,166,445.61 in outstanding UC overpayments from the State Offset Program in 2017.

In 2015 Alabama implemented a 15% penalty mandated by the federal government on all fraudulent overpayments. As of September 30, 2017, \$892,862.07 of the outstanding penalty assessed has been collected. In 2016 Alabama implemented a 2% interest on total amounts outstanding due to fraud. As of September 30, 2017, \$154,469.15 of the outstanding interest assessed has been collected.

There were 267 warrants filed and 35 prosecutions won.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance exceeded requirements for the number of cases selected for review and case completion time lapse in all cases, both paid and denied. The federally mandated time lapse for paid claims is 70% completed within 60 days. Quality Assurance Investigators completed 98.13% in 60 days. The mean completion time for paid claims was 32 days. The mandated case completion for denied cases is 60% within 60 days; Quality Assurance Investigators completed 100% in 60 days. The mean completion time for denied cases was 26 days.

All statistical reports for paid and denied claims for the federal annual report were verified as correctly reported.

Based on the Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM) Annual Letter of Determination, Alabama met or exceeded requirements in all areas: methods and procedures, investigative procedures, National Directory of New Hires cross match, case completion, timeliness, comparison report, and sample selection. The only exception was the comparison report for monetary, separation, and nonseparation denials.

Improperly paid and denied claims are presented to Technical Services for review and recommendations for procedures to correct repeated errors in payments and denials.

Two representatives attended cross regional peer review in Washington, D.C. Alabama passed the review with no error in coding cases.

**Alabama Department of Labor
Obtaining Convictions for
Unemployment Compensation
Fraud**

By Staff | December 15, 2017 | Filed under: News

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington announced today that the Department has successfully prosecuted several Alabamians for unemployment compensation fraud. The following individuals were charged with a misdemeanor violation of the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law by making false statements in claims for benefits:

- Sylvia D. Thornton, of Dothan, was tried in Henry County District Court on November 27, 2017. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Thornton received a total of \$11,019 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Special Programs

During FY 2017, four companies were certified for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) in Alabama. In addition, one out-of-state company was also certified for TAA which affected some Alabama residents.

At the end of 2017, there were 80 participants in the ATAA /RTAA programs and 161 participants in TAA-funded training.

As a result of severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding during the period of October 7, 2017, President Donald Trump declared a major disaster in Alabama on October 8, 2017 for five counties: Baldwin, Choctaw, Clark, Mobile, and Washington. There were no

requests for individual assistance, which pays Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), as the Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) conducted in the requested counties did not meet the minimum amount in damages required to approve DUA payments. Therefore, there is no dollar amount to report for total amount expended for DUA benefits.

Benefit Services

The agency has implemented the necessary programming to allow for the electronic transmission of all BEN 8s. Providing this information online expedites the detection of claimants who have returned to work that are not normally detected through New Hire reporting.

The Combined Wage Unit, in conjunction with the Information Systems Division, has further developed the CWC-02-12 application and is now able to enforce the issue of non-compliance as it relates to combined wage claims.

The Benefits Section is also working closely with the Netacent group in the configuration of a new Unemployment Insurance (UI) system to replace our mainframe application.



Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program (SAVE)

During fiscal year 2017, 1,046 non-citizen initial claims were filed, of which 950 were verified through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) designated automated system. This number represents a 44% reduction in the number of non-citizen initial claims filed in fiscal year 2016.

UC Technical Services

Generally, the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Technical Services Section applies annually for funding through the Supplemental Budget Request (SBR) process. However, during 2017, funding was only offered to states willing to enter into or those already part of a consortium working toward modernization. The UC Technical Services Section continues to work under previous funding to improve the ability to assist those served (both employer

and claimant) as well as advancing the overall integrity within the UI system.

The new electronic BEN-8R system implemented last year within eGov for reimbursing employers has been broadened to include access for tax-rated employers. Providing this information online expedites the detection of claimants who have returned to work that are not normally detected through New Hire reporting.

The new prison cross-match system, designed to identify those actively filing weekly certifications for UI benefits while incarcerated, has now been implemented after approval of the Security Design Plan was received from the Social Security Administration. Additionally, an online system to allow claimants with overpayments to make payments toward repayment via electronic funds transfer (EFT) received final approval and was placed into production.

All programming has been completed so that ADOL will be compliant with guidelines outlined in UIPL 02-12. Reports are created to identify instances in which an employer should be non-relieved of charges due to an overpayment being created following a failure to respond to a request for information, and having established a pattern of failing to respond to requests for information. Implementation of this project is pending an administrative rule change to allow enforcement of this non-relief.

Funds awarded from the 2016 SBR process have allowed new projects to be pursued. These ongoing projects include the UI Accessibility Project which will provide Spanish online options, a Spanish certification, and some selected written documents in Spanish for Spanish-speaking claimants, and a New Hire Enforcement project which will utilize an automated cross-matching system to identify employers failing to report newly hired employees and administering a penalty to those employers.

The Technical Services Section completed Employment and Training Administration (ETA) 9129 reporting for the first time this year. This report provides quarterly information on the UI and reemployment outcomes of claimants who are selected for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) activities. The data on this report is used for evaluation and monitoring of the RESEA initiative which provides funds to conduct in person assessments in the American Job Center including UI continued eligibility

review, the provision of individualized labor market information, development of a reemployment plan, and referral to reemployment services and/or training.

The Technical Services Section was responsible for coordinating and facilitating a major pre-paid debit card conversion in the first quarter of 2017. The Alabama Department of Labor, under a master agreement with the Alabama Department of Human Resources, transitioned from one service provider to another in the payment of unemployment benefits issued to pre-paid debit cards. The successful roll-out in the first quarter of 2017 was the culmination of a detailed and thorough project implementation plan spanning a nine-month period. The conversion project was deemed a tremendous success as evidenced by little to no client impact in terms of interruption of scheduled payments, delays in new card delivery, disposition of existing cards, vendor customer service, etc. The agency converted more than 8,000 card holder accounts.

State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) participation rates have continued to improve due to the increase in participating employers. The increase is due to the electronic response system adding single sign-on capability for employers. UIPL 19-16 (Unemployment Insurance Program Letter) requires states to implement SIDES web services with all available employers and Third Party Administrators (TPAs) – representing groups of individual employers within 12 months of their implementation, as well as continue a sustained outreach plan to increase employer participation in SIDES. To achieve that, four new TPAs were added in 2017. Alabama continues to be recognized by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) for timely implementation of all available employers/TPAs in the state. Increased employer participation in this automated process serves to promote quality as a tool toward improvement in the areas of meeting timeliness for non-monetary determinations as well as standardized formatting of documentation.

Additionally, consistent with guidelines mandated by UIPL 19-16, marketing inserts have been developed to promote the email notification system for employers. In preliminary mailings, these fliers were successful, resulting in employers responding and requesting participation in the email notification and/or updating the email address on

record. Another SBR funded project to mail an additional 20,000 fliers to targeted employers over the next two years has begun. ADOL anticipates this project will encourage employers to use the online system, SIDES E-Response, and will help Alabama to reach USDOL usage goals.

Continued work on improving data validation outcomes has been put on hold as ADOL in 2017 entered into a UI Modernization Project with Netacent. This modernization process requires a moratorium on changes and updates to the legacy system. The modernization effort is expected to address many current data validation concerns and offer solutions to eliminating those concerns to the degree ADOL anticipates consistently achieving satisfactory data validation results following completion of the modernization project. The Technical Services Section is assisting with the modernization project by offering subject matter expertise, serving as a liaison between the contractor/vendor and other subject matter experts, and is anticipated to be a focal unit for end-user training as we convert and transition from one system to another.

The Single Line Adjudication Process (SLAP) application continues to be managed by the Technical Services Section. The application provides ADOL the most standardized and consistent method by which to issue non-monetary determinations resulting in sustained higher levels of consistency and quality.

Ongoing dialogue among adjudication managers and department staff continues to ensure all possible enhancements and improvements to the program are continuously reviewed and implemented when possible.

During the UI Modernization Project, the Technical Services Section continues to serve as a central liaison in the development and testing of new processes and modifications to existing processes and/or procedures, system updates and enhancements as well as the coordination, communication, research, and testing needed for error resolution involving systems and/or processes outside of the current scope of phase one of the UI Modernization Project.

CALL CENTER OPERATIONS

Call Center Operations consists of an administrative unit, two call centers, and an adjudication center. Through the call centers, unemployed individuals can file unemployment claims by calling a toll-free telephone



In an effort to highlight the work of the ADOL Call Centers, Secretary Fitzgerald Washington held a monthly staff meeting at the Montgomery Call Center. Manager Anita Pierce gave the group a tour of the facility and a presentation about the center's operations, challenges, and upcoming projects.



number and receiving assistance from a customer service representative (CSR) or by accessing a web application and completing their claims via the internet. The adjudication center is staffed with unemployment claims adjudicators and fact finders. These staff members review claims, conduct fact-finding investigations, and issue initial determinations on whether to allow or deny unemployment compensation benefits based on a claimant's separation from their job and based on whether they are meeting other eligibility requirements under the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law.

- Approximately 159,957 claims and inquiry calls were handled through ADOL's Unemployment Compensation Call Center System in 2017, representing an 37% reduction in calls received in 2016.

- Approximately 121,668 claims were processed through the Remote Initial Claims (RIC) system in 2017, representing a 16% increase over 2016.
 - ⇒ 47,529 claims were filed through the call centers by CSRs.
 - ⇒ 57,044 claims were filed and completed via web application.
 - ⇒ 17,095 claims were initiated on the web but were not completed and claimants had to be referred to the call centers for completion by CSRs.
- 39% of claims processed were completed by a CSR and 47% of claims processed were completed via the web. Web initiated claims continue to be the preferred method to file claims as 60.9% of all claims filed were initiated via the web.
- Approximately 85,521 issues were adjudicated by adjudication staff in 2017. This amounts to a 16.23% workload reduction from 2016.
 - ⇒ 51,312 separation issues
 - ⇒ 31,147 non-separation issues

TAX OPERATIONS

In 2017, Tax Operations continued to thrive and set the standard for the nation in many categories. The section continues to operate in the black by collecting unemployment compensation tax in excess of \$208 million and has exceeded benefit payments for the seventh straight year. The Alabama Unemployment Trust Fund has gained more than \$48 million over the year, increasing to more than \$574 million.

Electronic filing and remittance percentages continue to make Alabama one of the most efficient states in payment processing. Electronic receipts of tax returns averaged 99% and electronic remittances averaged 98% during the year. Accomplishments for the fiscal year are listed below:

- 6,197 online automated adjustments to employer accounts were processed. Bulk filers (ADP, Paychex) submitted 1,527 online adjustments, bringing the combined total online adjustments to 7,724.
- Audits/Delinquency Control deposited a total of

\$251,693,219.00 for the period covering October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017.

- The involvement of UC Tax in the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) was delayed due to UI modernization. Netacent has been contracted by the department to carry out the UI modernization.
- It was discovered in early 2017 that many employers had failed to pay the Special Interest Assessment for which they were billed in August 2011. The special interest assessment is a tax assessed on all Alabama employers to repay the interest charged on federal funds borrowed by ADOL. The Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund was depleted during this time due to high numbers of unemployment claims caused by a downturn in the economy. First, all employer accounts were identified that had a credit balance and owed the special interest assessment. Adjustments were keyed to apply the credit to the special interest assessment due. There were 849 employer accounts adjusted and the special interest paid via credit application was \$97,260. A new billing letter was then sent out in June 2017 to the remaining employers who owed the special interest assessment. As a result of that billing, another 633 employers paid special interest assessment tax of \$100,870.13. The department is still receiving special interest assessment payments from employers.
- Audits/Cashiering resurrected the automatic refund program for the quarterly issuance of refund checks for credits on employer accounts. From October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017, employers received \$27,309,411.36 in refunds from the department.
- A new online program is being implemented for third-party administrators which will result in a decrease of incoming telephone calls. The program allows third-party administrators to select a UC Account Summary option from the website. After inputting POA/pin, all client account information is displayed, such as missing quarterly reports, unpaid tax, penalty, interest, unemployment tax rates and any credit on the account. This eliminates the need for administrators to go to each individual client record. Hopefully, this will greatly assist with the problem of overpayment of taxes as the representative can see their clients' tax rates.
- This will also result in reduction of labor and paper costs involved in printing refund checks.
- The online electronic funds transfer payment section has been revised by the Information Systems Division to allow greater flexibility when an employer enters a payment. A table displays each quarterly amount due for tax, penalty, and interest. The employer may edit the amounts shown to customize payments. This revision will greatly reduce the amount of manual posting required after the receipt of electronic payments.
- A new feature for both tax-rated and reimbursing employers has been introduced in E-Gov allowing the employer to view current benefit charging (payments made to former employees). This will allow employers to see weekly benefit payments prior to actually receiving a quarterly benefit charge statement. It will be helpful to employers for budgeting purposes and may cut down on large overpayments as a result of employers being able to detect fraudulent benefit payments earlier.
- Tax Rate notices will once again be available for download from the website for calendar/tax year 2018. The majority of the tax payers utilize the electronic version and only an estimated 266 paper documents will be mailed. For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, calendar year 2017 tax rates produced will be 76,136 for on-line filers saving postage costs of \$37,306.64.
- 8,036 new employer accounts were established this year with 83% (8,749) being online filers. The popularity of setting up an account online continues to grow each year. Percent of growth from last year is 2.4%. 13,163 address changes were completed this year. 15% of those completed were done by employers online. The department continues to encourage employers to go online to use the automated systems.
- Due to a reduction in staff in Audits and Cashiering, the Status Unit has taken on extra duties. Status staff are now removing penalties, transferring wages, and requesting refunds in order to process drops, cancellations, and successor accounts in an expeditious manner.

Other items of note are as follows:

- Tax Operations successfully passed all Tax Performance studies in 2017, and met or exceeded all minimum requirements mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Appeals had 30 cases prior to fiscal year 2017. Tax appeals received 17 additional cases during the fiscal year. Of the total 47 cases, five cases were affirmed, four cases were overruled, four cases were withdrawn and five cases either defaulted or other circumstances resolved the appeal. One appeal is still pending a decision from an August 22, 2017 hearing. At the end of FY 2017, appeals had 28 cases awaiting hearings or in negotiations. Due to staff shortages in other areas of the department, many of these cases have been pending for some time now. Delinquency appeal hearing staff are reviewing cases pending in order to end the appeal.

Field Services experienced a productive year in 2017. The Field Staff has:

- Collected \$8,658,426.78 of delinquent monies.
- Completed 1,311 Employer Wage Audits.
- Discovered 2,285 misclassified workers and \$29,825,924.00 in misclassified wage dollars.

The new web-based field audit system was implemented in December 2016. The server-based system has proven to be beneficial and more secure than the previous system.

CHILD LABOR ENFORCEMENT

State law currently allows children age 14 and 15 to work until 7 p.m. during a school year. Children who are 16, 17, or 18 and are still enrolled in high school may work until 10 p.m.



This child labor violation is currently under investigation in St. Clair County.



Minors under the age of 18 are prohibited from working in many hazardous occupations. However, seven Alabama teenagers have died in prohibited work-related activities since 2000. Fortunately, none of those have occurred in more than 15 years, although serious injuries have been reported.

What Does Child Labor Enforcement Do?

- Follows up on 8 - 10 complaints per month. These complaints involve multiple issues including record keeping, hour violations, prohibited occupations, alcohol, and underage minors.
- Randomly inspects businesses for compliance.
- Works with other federal and state agencies on

Decatur school officials: Suspected child labor violations increasing

By Mary Sell Montgomery Bureau Jun 4, 2017 0



The Gemstone Foods facility in Decatur on Wednesday. [JERONIMO NISA/THE DECATUR DAILY]

Jerónimo Nisa

Buy Now



As a member of the Alabama Human Trafficking Task Force, Government Affairs Director Stephen McCormick presented a session titled *LABOR TRAFFICKING: A New Commitment* at the Alabama Human Trafficking Summit held in Montgomery in February. Human Trafficking falls under child labor enforcement.

- investigations involving underage minors working in prohibited occupations.
- Conducts trainings for new employers and first offenders.
- Issues civil money penalties.
- Trains 400+ Career Technical Teachers in four separate sessions each year (as required by the Department of Education).
- Partners with other state and federal agencies to facilitate pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Participates in the Annual Fire Explorer Junior Cadet training at the Alabama Fire College.
- Writes, designs, and updates all posters, brochures, forms, and other publications. These are provided to all school systems in the state.
- Answers calls and emails from the public, businesses, and school officials.
- Conducts training for employers upon request.

Fiscal Year 2017

- 1,429 inspections of businesses were conducted.
- 228 violations were identified.
- \$84,350.00 in civil money penalties was collected.
- \$116,378.50 in fees were collected for Child Labor Certificates.

Note: Child Labor went from three to two inspectors in May 2016 to cover the entire state.

INTERNAL SECURITY SECTION

The ADOL Internal Security Section (comprised of the Internal Security Unit, the UI Disclosure Unit, and the Physical Security Unit) is vital to maintaining the integrity of the UI program and safeguarding program assets. Authority for Internal Security resides in provisions set forth in the Social Security Act Section 303(a)(5) and Internal Revenue Code Section 3304(a)(4). Per Employment and Training (ET) Handbook 376, Guidelines for Internal Security in UI Operations, all states are required to administer an Internal Security Program.

Internal security activities include conducting risk analyses, reviewing newly automated and manual procedures, conducting investigations of alleged internal violations by agency staff and others, and conducting audits and reviews



Chief of Internal Security Brent Langley conducted 12 Security Awareness Training classes for 400 employees.



Internal Security also conducted a fire drill in December to test ADOL's central office evacuation plan.

of UI operations. In 2017, the Internal Security Unit conducted three internal investigations, five internal audits, and provided a response to more than 12,000 requests from law enforcement agencies.

The Physical Security staff ordered and oversaw the installation of new security doors for the main lobby.

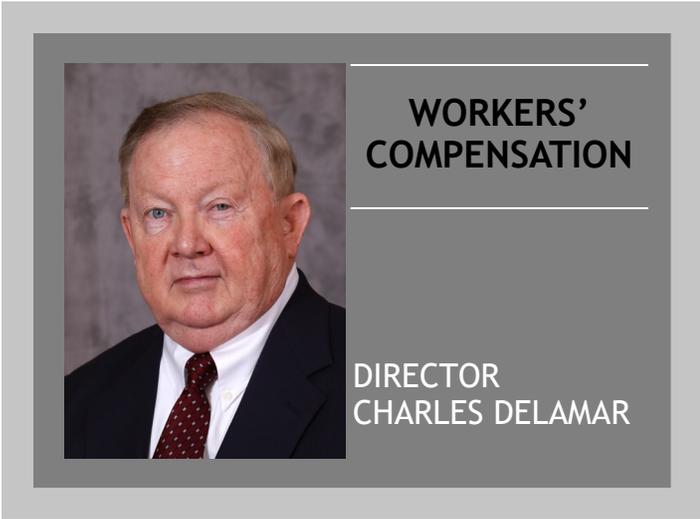
The Disclosure Unit oversees the release of ADOL confidential information and prepares all Informational Disclosure Agreement contracts for release of confidential information. Requests are received from various clients

(claimants, attorneys, employers, payroll companies, etc.). The Disclosure Unit invoices each request and in 2017 processed more than 15,000 records totaling more than \$162,584.00 in receivables.

In addition, Internal Security is serving as a conduit between those claimants failing to answer the identity challenge questions properly and the Adjudication Center. In the short tenure of this program, more than 1,000 identity issues have been addressed.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

	Fiscal Year		Net Change	Percent Change
	2017	2016		
State Unemployment Compensation				
Initial Claims				
New	112,885	125,750	(12,865)	-10.2
Additional	40,418	43,245	(2,827)	-6.5
Weeks Claimed *	893,126	1,044,539	(151,413)	-14.5
Weeks Compensated	764,556	874,679	(110,123)	-12.6
Gross Benefits Paid	168,085,686	\$191,420,247	(\$23,334,561)	-12.2
Federal Employees				
Initial Claims				
New	480	516	(36)	-7.0
Additional	71	97	(26)	-26.8
Weeks Claimed *	3,062	3,229	(167)	-5.2
Weeks Compensated	3,221	2,955	266	9.0
Gross Benefits Paid	786,503	\$701,676	\$84,827	12.1
Ex Servicemen				
Initial Claims				
New	600	791	(191)	-24.1
Additional	51	67	(16)	-23.9
Weeks Claimed *	5,620	7,376	(1,756)	-23.8
Weeks Compensated	5,353	6,474	(1,121)	-17.3
Gross Benefits Paid	1,408,760	\$1,698,253	(\$289,493)	-17.0
	0	\$0		
High Extended Benefit Unemployment				
Initial Claims	0	0	0	***
Weeks Claimed *	0	0	0	***
Weeks Compensated	0	0	0	***
Gross Benefits Paid	0	0	0	***
Trade Readjustment Allowance **				
Initial Claims	134	403	(269)	-66.7
Weeks Claimed	3,697	4,413	(716)	-16.2
Weeks Compensated	3,682	4,346	(664)	-15.3
Gross Benefits Paid	967,368	\$1,134,106	(\$166,738)	-14.7
Emergency Unemployment Compensation				
Initial Claims	0	4	(4)	-100.0
Weeks Claimed	0	0	0	***
Weeks Compensated (ALL TIERS)	0	0	0	***
Gross Benefits Paid (ALL TIERS)	0	0	\$0	***
Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance Program				
Initial Claims	30	52	(22)	-42.3
Weeks Claimed	1,589	1,986	(397)	-20.0
Weeks Compensated	1,589	1,986	(397)	-20.0
Gross Benefits Paid	257,546	\$298,836	(\$41,290)	-13.8



- The maximum benefits payable on fatalities increased from \$416,000 to \$421,500.

During fiscal year 2017 there were:

SELF-INSURANCE SECTION

Group Fund Certificates Issued	4,303
Group Fund Certificates Canceled	3,866
Self-Insurance Certificates Issued	12
Self-Insurance Certificates Canceled	41
Self-Insurers Audited	291
Compliance Inspections	15,794
Employers In Non-Compliance	5,649
Continuing Education Seminars	5
Seminar Attendees	1,363
Continuing Education Certificates	1,342
Voluntary Mediations	2,167
Voluntary Mediations Resolved	1,722
Court Ordered Mediations	89
Court Ordered Mediations Resolved	56
Utilization Management/Bill Screening Certificates Issued	42
Drug-Free Workplace Certificates Issued	409
Medical Disputes	219
Third Party Administrators Certified	21
Professional Employer Organizations Certificates Issued	33

The Workers' Compensation Division ensures that necessary medical attention and compensation benefits are provided to employees injured on the job, or, in case of death, are provided to their dependents. The division provides information and services to claimants, employers, insurance companies, attorneys, judges, legislators, labor and management groups, government agencies, and other parties. Other functions include gathering statistics on accidents, enforcing reporting requirements, monitoring claim payments, auditing all claim settlements, and taking corrective action on incorrect settlements or improper reporting procedures. The division is responsible for gathering information on fraudulent claims of employees.

Ombudsmen mediate disputes through the benefit review conference process. The most frequent issue involves requests for information or assistance concerning the law or medical topics. The ombudsmen provide assistance to employees, employers, attorneys, insurance carriers, and third party administrators, via telephone, seminars, and speaking engagements.

The division conducts employer inspections to ensure compliance with the Workers' Compensation Law. The division offers both a formal and informal medical dispute resolution process for any party disputing a medical service that has been conducted or that is requested.

Effective May 25, 2017, the State of Alabama's average weekly wage was determined to be \$842.79 for the calendar year 2016. This resulted in the following changes, effective July 1, 2017:

- The minimum weekly compensation payable increased from \$229 to \$232.

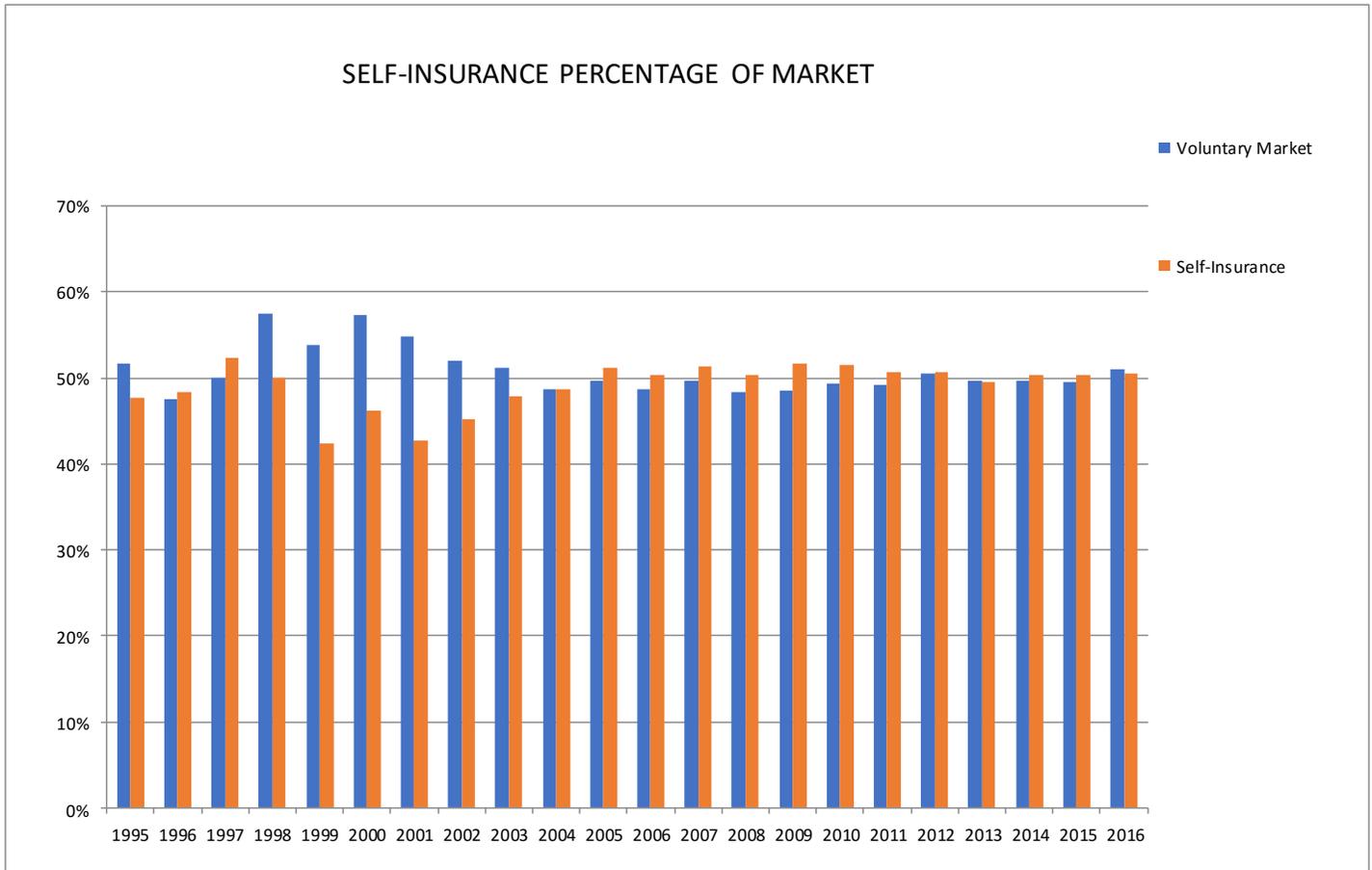
The Workers' Compensation Division also administers the rules and regulations for both Individual Self-Insurers and Group Self-Insurers. During FY2017, the following activity took place within the Self-Insurance Section:

INDIVIDUAL SELF-INSURANCE			
	FY 2017	FY 2016	Percent Change
Certificates Issued	12	10	20.00%
Certificates Canceled	41	17	141.18%
Total Individual Self-Insurers	238	267	-10.86%

GROUP SELF-INSURANCE			
	FY 2017	FY 2016	Percent Change
Certificates Issued	4,303	4,384	-1.85%
Certificates Canceled	3,866	3,745	3.23%
Total Employers	28,230	27,644	2.12%
Total Number of Group Funds	17	17	0.00%

WC MARKET TRENDS

The graph below represents the total dollar amount actually paid for Workers' Compensation claims for calendar years 1995-2016, according to the Workers' Compensation Annual Assessment Report for Insurance Companies & Self-Insured Employers. As demonstrated by the graph, the trend for the voluntary market (private insurance) shows a steady decrease in market size of 60% in 1993 to 50% in 1997. However; this market has remained steady since 1997. The Self-Insurance sector increased its market share from 40% to 50% over the past 20-year period.



FIRST REPORTS OF INJURY BY COUNTY AND TOTAL NUMBER OF INJURIES

				FY2017%
	FY2017	FY2016	% Change	of Total
Autauga	84	79	6%	0.68%
Baldwin	508	471	8%	4.12%
Barbour	49	62	-21%	0.40%
Bibb	34	35	-3%	0.28%
Blount	55	46	20%	0.45%
Bullock	29	13	123%	0.24%
Butler	57	94	-39%	0.46%
Calhoun	252	226	12%	2.04%
Chambers	67	63	6%	0.54%
Cherokee	38	28	36%	0.31%
Chilton	74	70	6%	0.60%
Choctaw	21	28	-25%	0.17%
Clarke	61	60	2%	0.49%
Clay	17	42	-60%	0.14%
Cleburne	19	17	12%	0.15%
Coffee	118	119	-1%	0.96%
Colbert	139	207	-33%	1.13%
Conecuh	35	44	-20%	0.28%
Coosa	18	20	-10%	0.15%
Covington	63	57	11%	0.51%
Crenshaw	37	57	-35%	0.30%
Cullman	159	159	0%	1.29%
Dale	92	53	74%	0.75%
Dallas	114	127	-10%	0.92%
Dekalb	91	119	-24%	0.74%
Elmore	124	119	4%	1.01%
Escambia	61	81	-25%	0.49%
Etowah	303	340	-11%	2.46%
Fayette	42	23	83%	0.34%
Franklin	87	91	-4%	0.71%
Geneva	34	48	-29%	0.28%
Greene	23	19	21%	0.19%
Hale	17	14	21%	0.14%
Henry	22	30	-27%	0.18%
Houston	297	309	-4%	2.41%
Jackson	109	119	-8%	0.88%
Jefferson	1,982	1,993	-1%	16.06%
Lamar	29	30	-3%	0.24%
Lauderdale	133	173	-23%	1.08%
Lawrence	31	27	15%	0.25%
Lee	318	370	-14%	2.58%
Limestone	130	143	-9%	1.05%

				FY2017%
	FY2017	FY2016	% Change	of Total
Lowndes	30	13	131%	0.24%
Macon	33	26	27%	0.27%
Madison	805	856	-6%	6.52%
Marengo	50	47	6%	0.41%
Marion	69	64	8%	0.56%
Marshall	221	240	-8%	1.79%
Mobile	910	1,032	-12%	7.38%
Monroe	38	43	-12%	0.31%
Montgomery	827	827	0%	6.70%
Morgan	358	346	3%	2.90%
Perry	24	15	60%	0.19%
Pickens	27	40	-33%	0.22%
Pike	98	123	-20%	0.79%
Randolph	22	22	0%	0.18%
Russell	96	96	0%	0.78%
Shelby	345	329	5%	2.80%
St. Clair	97	85	14%	0.79%
Sumter	7	20	-65%	0.06%
Talladega	251	306	-18%	2.03%
Tallapoosa	83	82	1%	0.67%
Tuscaloosa	578	620	-7%	4.68%
Unclassified	1,142	1,290	-11%	9.26%
Walker	123	135	-9%	1.00%
Washington	52	41	27%	0.42%
Wilcox	21	23	-9%	0.17%
Winston	58	61	-5%	0.47%
TOTAL	12,338	13,007	-5%	100%

Approximately 16.49% of the 12,338 injuries reported occurred in manufacturing, followed by the health care industry and retail trade at 8%. Thus 33% of the total injuries reported fell within manufacturing, health care, and retail trade. The majority of these injuries can be broken down as follows:

MANUFACTURING		HEALTH CARE	
Wood	153	Ambulatory	280
Food	115	Hospitals	262
Fabricated Metal Product	269	Nursing	400
Transportation Equipment	344	RETAIL TRADE	
Plastics, Rubber	179	General Merchandise	212
		Motor Vehicle, Parts Dealer	180
		Food and Beverage	190

**FIRST REPORTS OF INJURY
CATEGORIZED BY INDUSTRY**

	FY2017
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	141
Mining	203
Utilities	130
Construction	855
Manufacturing	2,035
Wholesale Trade	574
Retail Trade	999
Transport, Warehouse	742
Information	113
Finance, Insurance	241
Real Estate, Rent, Lease	159
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	210
Management Companies, Enterprises	37
ASWMRS	749
Educational Services	62
Health Care, Social Assistance	1,046
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	85
Accommodation, Food	578
Other Services Excluding Public Administration	280
Public Administration	728
Unclassified	2,371
TOTAL	12,338

During FY2017 there were 29 fatalities reported. Of the 29 fatalities approximately 93% were males with an average weekly wage of \$789.44. The average age was 44 with the average length of employment being eight years. Of the 29 deaths, approximately 9% were employed six months or less. Five fatalities were 60 years of age or older. The oldest was 73 and 10 were 40 years of age or younger with vehicular crashes making up 44% of the cause of death.

**TYPE OF INJURIES
CATEGORIZED BY PART OF BODY**

Body Part Injured	Number	Percent
Head	733	6%
Neck	253	2%
Upper Extremities	4,251	34%
Trunk	2,565	21%
Lower Extremities	3,225	26%
Multiple Body Parts	1,311	11%
Total	12,338	100%

FATALITIES REPORTED

	FY2017	% of Total
Agriculture	2	7%
Construction	5	17%
Transportation/Warehousing	3	10%
Manufacturing	1	3%
Mining	1	3%
Health Care/Social Assistance	0	0%
Retail Trade	3	10%
Administrative & Support	3	10%
Wholesale Trade	1	3%
Information	1	3%
Real Estate & Rental	1	3%
Public Administration	1	3%
Non-classifiable Establishments	7	24%
TOTAL	29	100%



LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

DIRECTOR
JIM HENRY

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data essential for evaluating the condition of the Alabama economy. What is the latest unemployment rate? What wages can be expected from a certain occupation? Which industries employ the most people? What occupations are in high demand? These are just a few examples of questions answered with labor market information. The LMI page of the ADOL website, labor.alabama.gov/lmi, allows public and professional users access to the LMI data.

The LMI division operates four Federal-State cooperative programs in agreement with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a statistical branch of the United States Department of Labor. These core programs are:

1. Current Employment Statistics (CES)
2. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)
3. Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)
4. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

The CES program is a monthly count of jobs, earnings, and work hours among the state's nonfarm businesses using survey data from more than 19,000 businesses. CES publishes data on more than 70 detailed industries at the state level as well as industry detail for 12 metropolitan areas each month. These sample-based estimates are revised annually to re-anchor them back to the near universe counts of employment (QCEW).



The LAUS program calculates and publishes civilian labor force, employment, unemployment, and an unemployment rate for the state, metropolitan areas, and counties each month. The LAUS unit is responsible not only for publishing the rates, but providing insight to the rates from a historical standpoint.

The OES program surveys nonfarm establishments collecting occupational employment data on workers by industry. Data collected produces estimated total employment by occupation for the state and selected areas as well as estimated wages. The data produced is used by a variety of customers including economic developers, jobseekers, school counselors, and secondary education. In addition, the information helps the projections unit to produce projected employment. In 2017, this unit maintained its longstanding success in obtaining over a 75% response rate, in both survey panels, for each metropolitan area, balance of state area, and the state in its entirety.

The QCEW program collects quarterly employment and wage data for workers covered by state unemployment insurance (UI) laws. This program is responsible for assigning North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and county codes to new employers and surveying established employers to ensure accuracy. The QCEW provides the number of establishments, monthly employment, and quarterly wages, by NAICS industry groups, for the state and counties. In 2017, numerous requests regarding both current and historical data were fulfilled using system reports and staff created progress queries.

In addition to the four cooperative BLS programs, the LMI Division also maintains the responsibility as the official statistical data collection and analysis manager for the Workforce Information System. This responsibility includes analyzing workforce trends, providing data updates to the Workforce Information Database, and publishing reports to deliver quality workforce information to our customers. In 2017 LMI:

- Updated all reports with the latest available data.
- Visited every career center around the state, informing staff on updated materials and other reports that are useful for them to use with clients, such as the county profile and the HWOL reports.

- Wrote the economic conditions portion of the WIOA plans for six of the new WIOA local boards.
- Produced long-term occupational projections data and high demand occupations for each of the seven newly designated workforce regions.
- Participated in approximately seven career fairs and six job fairs throughout the state.

- ⇒ Teacher Certification Development Program
- ⇒ Alabama Association of Colleges and Employers
- ⇒ Decatur Chamber of Commerce Planning Meeting

As part of the ADOL's mission to foster and promote the welfare of jobseekers and provide insured benefits to those who have lost jobs due to no fault of their own, the Reports Unit of LMI compiles ongoing data on unemployment activity levels across the state. In FY 2017, unemployment activities continued to recover from the recession of the previous years. New initial claims dropped 14% over the previous fiscal year.

The Reports Unit continues to track and submit data on claims and payment levels for the various unemployment compensation programs along with providing special requests to government and private agencies. The unit also compiles narratives and publishes the monthly Statistical Bulletin on the internet which reveals claimant totals and trends of the state UI and federal/ex-military unemployment programs.

The following programs were supported in FY2017:

- State Unemployment Insurance
- Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees
- Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service members
- Emergency Unemployment Compensation 08 -Tier 1
- HEB Compensation
- Trade Act of 1974
- Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance

In addition, the Trade Act Participant Report (TAPR) was submitted and data obtained in conjunction with other federal and state agencies. This federally mandated quarterly report tracks participant characteristics and outcomes from training, etc., and reemployment to measure the success of the Trade Act Program.

This section also conducted economic research to provide estimates for Unemployment Compensation legislation, including the analysis of the benefit costs, tax revenues, and trust fund adequacy.



Gerald Nix, a statistician with the Labor Market Information Division of ADOL, participated in the Coastal Alabama Community College (CACC) Career Fair alongside Sunny, the CACC mascot.

- Attended all state Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) and state WIOA board meetings.
- Attended multiple board meetings in each of the seven workforce regions.
- Presented Labor Market Information to the following groups:
 - ⇒ Local SHRM chapter meetings
 - ⇒ Local Workforce Boards
 - ⇒ Northeast Alabama Human Resources & Manufacturing Conference
 - ⇒ Alabama Workforce Council
 - ⇒ Alabama National Guard Data Conference
 - ⇒ Career Center Training for Business Service Representatives
 - ⇒ Alabama Career Development Conference



September 30, 2017. Although most appeals involve contested determinations on unemployment compensation claims, the division also participates in cases relating to departmental personnel matters and other due-process hearings relative to the operations of the department, as necessary.

Appeal hearings on contested unemployment compensation benefit claims are conducted via teleconference, unless special accommodations are requested by an interested party. Hearings are scheduled Monday through Friday. During the past year the workload necessitated all 10 Hearings Officers to conduct an average of six daily hearings.

The primary mission of the Hearings and Appeals Division is to afford an interested party the opportunity to protest an allowance or disallowance of unemployment compensation benefit payments in a quasi-judicial administrative hearing. The division is the first level appeals body for protest of the initial determination on an unemployment compensation claim. The language of the U.S. Constitution and Social Security Act of 1935 provides that no person shall be deprived of their privilege to life, liberty and property, and prohibits government, federal and state, from depriving an individual of these rights without due process of law. The division is charged with affording all citizens due process of law in the public service sector.

The U.S. Department of Labor mandates that 60% of appeal cases be finalized within 30 days of the appeal file date to meet timeliness standards, and at least 80% of the cases evaluated must rate 85% of the potential points for quality (whether the hearing is conducted and a decision issued in accordance with the measures established by the Employment and Training Administration). The division finalized 11,366 cases in FY 2017, with an average of 82.7% of these cases being finalized within 30 days from the appeal file date. Additionally, for the same rating period, the division averaged 99% for the number of cases scoring at least 85% of the potential points for quality.

The appeals process is a network of employees working together to accomplish the goal of processing the appeal on a contested unemployment compensation claim in the most efficient and expeditious manner to meet prescribed federal and state laws, administrative codes, guidelines, and procedures while providing quality public service with limited resources. The division is comprised of six work groups with a staff of 33 employees. The manpower for the division was reduced by 2.94% in fiscal year ending

The division is expecting to undertake a total revamping of administrative procedures for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018. Plans are in the works to modernize the UI database, thereby allowing the division to improve performance levels in terms of expediting the appeals process and improving service delivery while reducing operation costs.

Benefits: Timeliness and Quality Reports					
LOWER AUTHORITY APPEALS QUALITY REPORT FOR 01/01/2017 THROUGH 12/31/2017					
STATE	Minimum Sample Size	Cases Not Scored	Cases Scored	Number of Scored Cases >= 85	Percent of Scored Cases >= 85
Alabama					
<i>*Waiting week from 01/01/2017 to 12/31/2017.</i>					
09/30/2017	20	0	20	20	100
06/30/2017	20	0	20	20	100
03/31/2017	20	0	20	20	100
Total	60	0	60	60	100

USDOL web page showing Alabama's Timeliness and Quality Report for 2017.

The Office of the ADOL Labor Administrator was established in January 2016.

The ADOL Labor Administrator is responsible for planning and directing the internal and external programs necessary to achieve the strategic goals for the department, as well as directing other high level administrative duties and decision making.

The 2017 ADOL Strategic Goals included:

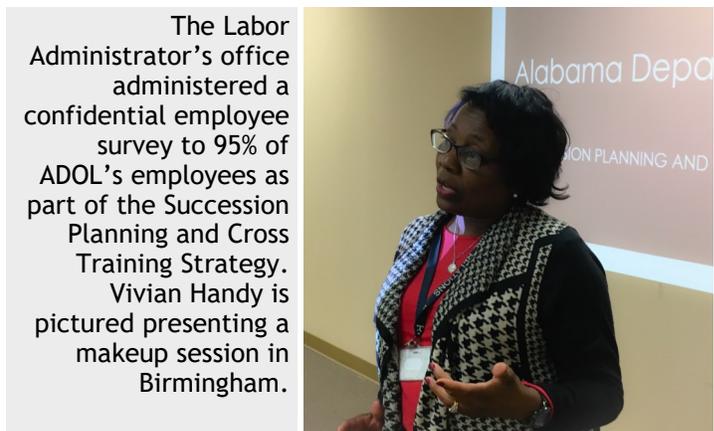
1. Continue the efforts of identifying key staff and personnel to develop the next generation of leadership;
2. Enhance the agency's training programs, with a specific focus on cross-training among divisions;
3. Preserve and communicate the successes of staff and outcome of services provided to the community;
4. Adopt strategies for more transparency;
5. Foster fellowship and relationship building by increasing staff participation with local non-profit organizations;
6. Improve building security policies and procedures; and
7. Develop a model for Performance Improvement Plans for each ADOL Division.

Periodic reports are provided to the Labor Secretary on the status of the Strategic Goals.

In 2017 the Labor Administrator developed and began implementation of the Performance Improvement Plans. The purpose is to ensure that the organizational structures, plans, and overall missions for each ADOL division are being reviewed, and that each is accountable and compliant with the appropriate policies and procedures as they relate to the services provided. Implementation of the Performance Improvement Plans will continue into 2018 and beyond. The Labor Administrator supervised the establishment and administration of EEO and ADA departmental policies to conform with state and federal laws, maintained and updated master sets of policies and procedures on the intranet, continued the review of the ADOL Employee Handbook to ensure information is updated and correct, and updated the departmental training procedures. The office coordinated, reviewed, and ensured that the overall strategic ADOL goals and services are being implemented on a continuous basis. Additionally, the office coordinated various activities



associated with carrying out the strategic goals such as: building relationships with private, public and non-profit entities; supervising and directing the training section for all departmental training activity; and serving as the supervisor/advisor of the Equal Employment Opportunity and Grievance Manager. The office planned and presided over quarterly meetings of the Performance Improvement Team, provided training sessions, and traveled to local employment services offices to administer the confidential employee survey as a part of the Succession Planning and Cross Training Strategy for the department. The Labor Administrator served as a non-partisan member of the Selection and Interview Panels for supervisory level positions during job interviews and built networking opportunities made available through attending professional conferences, non-profit leadership meetings, and professional associations. The office of the Labor Administrator will continue to research methods and execute ideas for positively impacting the overall work environment at ADOL.



The Labor Administrator's office administered a confidential employee survey to 95% of ADOL's employees as part of the Succession Planning and Cross Training Strategy. Vivian Handy is pictured presenting a makeup session in Birmingham.

**THE OFFICE OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY AND COMPLIANCE**

The Equal Employment Opportunity and Grievance (EEO&G) section was placed under the supervision of the Labor Administrator in January 2016. Tonya Scott serves as EEO Manager.

The EEO&G section is responsible for ensuring that ADOL complies with federal equal opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and regulations. In fulfillment of this goal, the section conducts compliance reviews of departmental programs, activities, and services, and provides technical assistance as needed; processes requests for reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA); counsels employees on various confidential subjects such as discrimination based on race, sex, and other protected classifications, harassment, etc. and investigates grievances arising out of alleged misconduct; and investigates complaints of discrimination filed by participants in the employment service and unemployment compensation



programs. EEO&G recommends corrective action when appropriate.

During the 2017 calendar year, five grievances were filed by ADOL employees. Two complaints were mediated or settled by the EEO&G section with no further appeal or charges filed. During 2017, three charges were filed with the Federal EEOC in Birmingham. The EEOC dismissed all three charges and issued Notice-of-Right-to-Sue letters.

Additionally, during the 2017 calendar year, EEO&G processed three grievances filed by ES or UI participants, and 14 requests for reasonable accommodation under ADAAA.

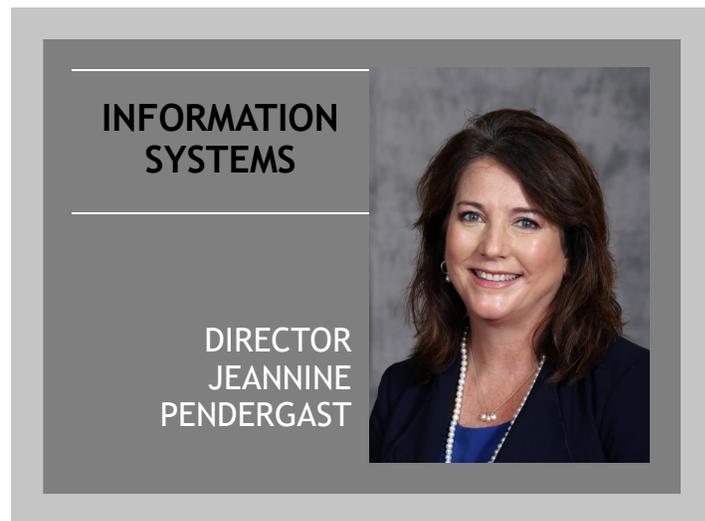


The Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance is represented at ADOL's job fairs to distribute information. Pictured above from left is Labor Administrator Vivian Handy, HR Director Renee Minor, and EEO Manager Tonya Scott.

ADOL's Information Systems (IS) Division has achieved, and helped other divisions achieve, many accomplishments in 2017. IS credits this to the flexibility of its staff. This adaptability has allowed IS to align its goals with each individual division's mission and business strategies. This has resulted in better management of ADOL's resources.

Below are some of the improvements implemented in 2017:

- PUPS processing with SSA, which identifies fraud and improper payments made to incarcerated claimants.
- Significant improvements to the Overpayment Repayment System and the Special Interest Payment Billing system for all employers who failed to pay in 2011. These enhancements make the collection of money owed the department faster and more efficient.
- Replaced an expensive vendor-supplied Aware system with an in-house written solution.
- Partnered with Netacent to provide a fully functional modernized UI system that, when implemented, will be a technologically advanced web-based application and a tremendous cost savings to the State of Alabama.
- Improvements to the Bulk Employer Account Summary (for legal POAs) and the online EL-4-B form Official Notification of Registration which allows POAs and employers to retrieve the most current account status information faster.
- Implemented an Online Payment Portal for our WC Division that permits employers to order WC law books, CDs, fee schedules, booklets, annual and semi-annual renewals, and an Online Assessment Portal giving employers the ability to pay their annual WC Assessment Notice. Both new applications resulted in a significant time savings.
- Implemented MS Office 365 which allows for better security and cost savings.



- Incorporated new features into the registration process of ADOL's already highly successful job fairs. IS is constantly looking for ways to improve the job fair experience for both employers and jobseekers.
- Enhanced security by implementing new security protocols based on state-of-the-art software recommendations and federal requirements ensuring that all data ADOL is entrusted with remains secure.

Throughout the years, strategic alignment has become a more complex and unstructured phenomenon and figuring out how to achieve this alignment is still a new science, not only for ADOL, but the entire industry. The lack of proven procedures and methodologies in how to achieve IS flexibility and maximize IS capability in relation to strategic alignment remains a challenge. At ADOL, the IS Division remains steadfast in maintaining an elevated level of customer service regardless of the challenges. ADOL's IS Division looks forward to the innovations of 2018, while still utilizing the proven technologies of previous years to solve problems and assist others in any way possible.



The Desktop Support Unit of the IS Division is critical to ADOL's job fair initiative. They set up, train, and offer tech support for all computer equipment to run onsite registration, the scanning system, and the mobile Career Center.



HR also serves as the liaison with the Retirement Systems of Alabama, the State Employee Insurance Board, the State Comptroller’s Office, the Ethics Commission, and the State Personnel Department for information, updates, and other changes that are to be disseminated throughout the department. HR is responsible for ensuring that all federal and state laws are followed as they relate to these activities.



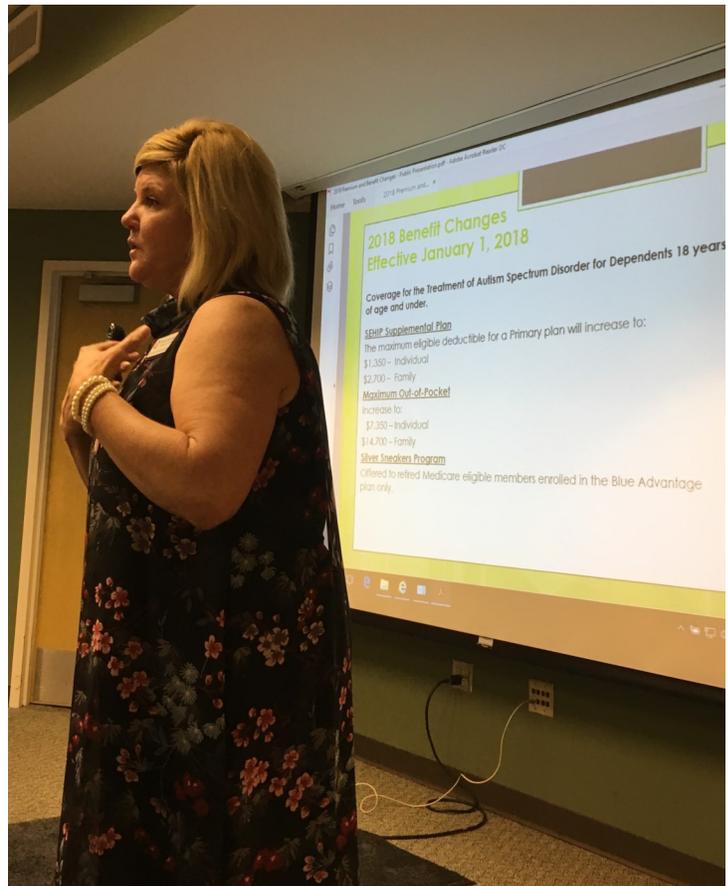
At the end of the fiscal year, approximately 450 personnel transactions had been completed and total personnel equaled 886.

The Human Resources (HR) Division provides administrative support to all divisions, sections, units, and individual employees of the Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL). Administrative duties include the processing and monitoring of all personnel transactions (e.g., newly hired employees, transfers, promotions, demotions, separations, etc.), disciplinary procedures, Family and Medical Leave Act administration, leave donations, military leave actions,



FMLA refers to the Family and Medical Leave Act, which is a federal law that guarantees certain employees up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave each year with no threat of job loss. FMLA also requires that employers covered by the law maintain the health benefits for eligible workers just as if they were working.

annual and sick leave management, annual and probationary performance appraisals, policy development, counseling, providing recommendations, and other HR related matters. HR works closely with the department’s Finance Division in ensuring that all transactions are maintained within the assigned budget for service areas.



SEIB Marketing Director Tonya Campbell gave an update in November about 2018 benefit changes regarding insurance, flex accounts, and wellness discounts. There were 23 employees at the meeting and Campbell stayed to answer all questions after her presentation.

The Finance Division works with the entire department to ensure that all funds are used in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and to maximize the efficient use of resources in providing needed services to the public.

The division's objective is to seek ways to enhance the department's accounting process, while maintaining the appropriate accounting controls to ensure that expenditures are in compliance with all applicable regulations, as well as fiscal responsibility. In addition, greater transparency and usefulness of financial reports is an ongoing commitment of the division.

Finance's 65 employees support ADOL's operations divisions by providing essential services in the areas of Accounts Payable, Accounting and Reporting, Budget and Allocation Control, Fund Control, Payroll, Procurement and Supply, Mail and Property, Real Estate Management, Reproduction, Building Maintenance, and Custodial Services. Most functions of the division must collaborate with the state's central oversight entities, including the Office of Information Technology, the Division of Purchasing, the State Comptroller's Office, the Examiners of Public Accounts, and the Executive Budget Office.

In fiscal year 2017, the Finance Division collaborated closely with ADOL's Employment Services (ES) Division to successfully respond to the Alabama Department of Commerce Workforce Development Division's RFP for Alabama Career Center One-Stop Operator Services. Finance's Budget Section, along with ES Central Office and career center staff, coordinated with state partner agencies and three local workforce boards governing seven geographical areas, to ensure state and federal requirements and deadlines for development and signing of WIOA budgets and agreements were met.

The Finance Division's Accounting and Reporting Section was instrumental in the development of a new electronic payment portal for employer payments of amounts due to ADOL for Worker's Compensation Professional Employer Organization (PEO) registrations and annual assessments, greatly streamlining this process to the benefit of both payees and the department.

Another major accomplishment was Finance's collaboration with ADOL's Information Services and Unemployment Compensation Divisions to issue an RFP, select a vendor, and establish a contract for a critical UI Modernization Project, which is now underway.

Accomplishments of the Finance Division's General Services and Real Estate Management Sections were:

- The successful and long-awaited relocation of the Birmingham Career Center to a new facility, and the



negotiation of a lease to collocate the department's other three Birmingham operations, totally eliminating two of the previous leases.

- Continued improvements to the Central Office building in Montgomery:
 - ⇒ Completion of a major roofing project;
 - ⇒ Establishment of a contract for upgrading of the fire alarm system;
 - ⇒ Replacement of the lower parking deck's old lighting fixtures with cost efficient LED lighting creating a brighter appearance and enhanced security; and
 - ⇒ Completion of a project to create a spacious, functional, attractive and technology-equipped media/conference room out of an empty office space (pictured below).

Finance Division section leaders and staff worked diligently throughout the year to provide the best service possible to customers both within and outside of the ADOL.



ADOL hosted a meeting in December in the newly renovated conference room at ADOL's Central Office.



GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

DIRECTOR
STEPHEN M^CCORMICK

The Governmental Affairs Division is responsible for serving as the governmental and legislative liaison for the department with other entities of local, state, and federal government and business and labor groups. The division is also responsible for drafting departmental legislation. The Governmental Affairs Division works closely with the legislature to pass legislation beneficial to the department and the people of Alabama.

One of the largest responsibilities for the Governmental Affairs Division is to ensure a successful outcome in the General Fund Budget. The General Fund Budget covers only one entity within the Alabama Department of Labor,

the Mine Safety Program. The preceding two years of General Fund Budgets passed by the Legislature have reduced this program by as much as 40% of the 2015 appropriated budget to make up for shortfalls in other areas such as Medicaid and prisons. This reduction greatly affects the ability to inspect underground and above-ground mine operations for the safety of the employees that operate those facilities. The Governmental Affairs Division successfully lobbied both House and Senate General Fund Budget Chairmen for additional revenue to operate such an important program. The result was a 14.11% increase from the governor's proposed budget resulting in \$100,000 of additional revenue for the Mine Safety Program. The department greatly appreciates both Chairmen, Rep. Steve Clouse and Sen. Tripp Pittman, for funding this vital state service.

The Governmental Affairs Division also prepared **House Bill 242**, known as the Workers' Compensation Corporate Officer Exemptions Bill. Existing law allowed a corporate officer to be exempt from coverage under Workers' Compensation by filing a written certification with the Department of Labor and the employer's insurance carrier. This bill removed the requirement that the officer and the carrier file a certification with the Department of Labor. The exemption is a personal transaction between the



Director Stephen McCormick gives a Legislative Update to the Alabama chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) at ADOL's Central Office. He is a member of LERA Executive Board.

corporate officer and insurance provider; the Department of Labor is not a party to the transaction. The Department of Labor's sole duty is to file the certificate within its filing system. No data is collected from the report or the individual filing. This legislation will reduce government involvement in transactions between private business and their workers' compensation carriers. The department worked closely with bill sponsor Rep. Danny Garrett (Trussville-R), to ensure all interested groups were satisfied with the changes and that the bill ultimately received passage from both chambers.

SUNSET BILLS

Every year the Alabama Legislature is tasked with reviewing and auditing dozens of boards, agencies, and commissions to recommend whether these entities will be given additional years of operation, or if they will sunset, which means their functions and responsibilities will terminate. In 2017, the Alabama Department of Labor had one entity up for Sunset Review: The Elevator Safety Review Board.

House Bill 108 - The Elevator Safety Review Board. The board was given an extension for one year of operations. The Elevator Safety Review Board members and Director Stephen McCormick met with the Sunset Review Board during its annual performance review meetings held in July. McCormick represented the Elevator Safety Review Board on behalf of the ADOL. All aspects of the annual inspection were reviewed, discussed, and thoroughly explained to the Sunset Board members. The chairman of the board complimented the board members on their service to the State of Alabama and assured them of their continued operation as a board. The department expects a full four-year extension during the 2018 legislative session.

The Governmental Affairs Division also acts as a liaison for the Board of Appeals. The Board of Appeals is a statutorily created board that reviews and hears Unemployment Compensation cases at the highest administrative level. The board holds hearings at seven cities around the state on a rotating basis: Birmingham, Decatur, Dothan, Mobile, Montgomery, Oxford, and Tuscaloosa. In 2017, the board reviewed 2,336 appeals and held 811 in-person hearings.



In addition, the division represents the department in all employment related litigation, including, but not limited to, pre-termination/pre-suspension hearings, and State Personnel Board matters.

During 2017, the department had two cases in Federal District Court. Counsel for the department has made more than 230 court appearances during the past year, and has collected more than \$350,000.00 from overpaid unemployment claimants.

The Legal Division serves as legal counsel for the department. In that regard, the division renders legal opinions and interpretations of the department’s various laws, and represents the department in all court matters.

The General Counsel and Assistant General Counsels have represented the department before all Circuit Courts throughout the state, the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals, the Alabama Supreme Court, the U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, the U.S. District Courts, and the U.S. Supreme Court. These cases involve the following:

- Unemployment compensation benefit appeals;
- Unemployment compensation overpayment cases;
- Unemployment tax cases;
- Workers’ compensation compliance cases;
- Objections to subpoenas for confidential records;
- Child labor enforcement cases;
- Child support withholding cases;
- Surface mining violation cases;
- Board of Adjustment matters;
- Bankruptcy matters; and
- Inspections Division matters.

The Mining and Reclamation Division is responsible for administering programs in:

- Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation
- Mine Safety and Inspection
- Surface Mining of Non-Fuel Minerals

ABANDONED MINE LAND RECLAMATION

August 3, 2017, marked the 40th anniversary of the enactment of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). When Congress passed SMCRA, it presented a unique challenge – to strike a balance between our country’s need for the energy produced by coal and the protection of our environment. Through vital partnerships between the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, state governments, tribal governments, the coal mining industry, and environmental communities, the daunting goal of SMCRA is still being successfully achieved. Alabama has had primacy for its coal regulatory and abandoned mine land programs since 1982.

The mission of the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Program is to restore land and water resources which have been adversely impacted by past coal mining, and for which there is no continuing responsibility under state or federal law. The work is funded by annual grants from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), which collects production fees from active coal operators at a rate of 28¢ per ton for surface-mined coal and 12¢ per ton for underground-mined coal, approximately 50% of which is granted back to Alabama. High priority projects are those that remove past mining related extreme dangers and safety hazards to the public but also correct a multitude of significant adverse environmental impacts throughout the 21 coal producing counties in northern Alabama. The program also impacts positively on local economies as reclamation dollars are expended on earthmoving, construction materials, revegetation supplies, and fund contractors utilizing local manpower to carry out the work. During FY 2017:

- Thirteen AML reclamation projects were completed with three others under contract and/or under construction. Three of the completed AML reclamation projects were emergency responses related to mine subsidence. Each of these projects stabilized sudden occurrence subsidence areas adjacent to public use and



residential structures in Walker County.

- Eighteen significant public hazards were eliminated, including three dangerous highwalls totaling 5,050 linear feet, one vertical opening, seven areas of subsidence, two open mine portals, three pit areas totaling 7.8 acres and 91.5 acres of spoil area which were reclaimed and revegetated.
- Engineering design was completed on nine AML reclamation projects, six of which were in-house designs and three were performed by outside engineering consulting firms through the request for proposal (RFP) process. There are five projects currently in design with in-house staff.
- One of the designs completed includes the recently completed Ruffner Mountain Portal project, which reclaimed two open mine portals using bat gate closures as both mines were identified as a habitat for several species of bats. These portals were located within one of the largest urban nature preserves in the country. These portals were reclaimed utilizing bat gate closures fabricates on-site to prevent human intrusion into the underground mine works. The construction of these bat gates provided a potential research site for treatment of White-Nose syndrome. Cooperation between AML, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and Ruffner Mountain personnel resulted in the Annual Bat Blitz being held in the Birmingham Metro area. This provided a unique opportunity for public outreach and education on the importance of bats in the ecosystem and their use of



BEFORE
Ruffner Mountain mining portal



DURING
Bat gate construction



AFTER
Ruffner Mountain mining portal

abandoned mines as habitat.

- An aerial photography and topographic mapping contract was awarded and the services completed for 14 sites on the AML inventory that covered 1,730 acres of

abandoned mine lands.

- Maintenance was performed on nine previously reclaimed AML project sites.
- Fifty-six acres on one previously reclaimed site were planted in trees under Alabama's AML reforestation program. In the past 38 years, ADOL has reestablished approximately 8 million trees on its reclaimed sites.

The Indian Valley, West AML project located in Jefferson County was completed which reclaimed a dangerous highwall averaging 80 feet in height and totaling 3,500 linear feet in length; a dangerous pit totaling 3.4 acres; and 65 acres of mine spoil. The dangerous highwall and associated AML hazards were within 500 feet of several residential homes. The contractor was required to obtain coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Permit from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). The contractor was also required to obtain pollution liability insurance for the project. Construction on the Indian Valley, West project began on July 18, 2016 and was completed on August 23, 2017 at a total cost of \$1,982,734.65.

The Radiant City Road I and II AML Projects were completed which eliminated a dangerous highwall and an adjacent hazardous water body in Walker County. The sites involved a 600-linear foot highwall averaging 35 feet in height, totaling eight acres, and a one acre hazardous water body involving 8.5 acres. Although both sites were relatively small, there had been accidents at each site in an approximate four-year period which resulted in two deaths.

The Alabama AML Program completed three Emergency Reclamation Projects, which brings the total to 197 since the program's inception. The emergency provision in Alabama's AML program allows ADOL to respond to sudden, life-threatening abandoned mine-related problems within 24 hours.

In an ongoing effort for AML program efficiency improvements and the best management of expenditures of our federal AML grant funds, an AML office reorganization was implemented. With the retirement of our Construction Branch Supervisor, the Construction and Engineering Design Branches were combined into a single Design and Construction Branch without rehiring for the vacant position. There was a time of transition, but the



BEFORE
Radiant City Road dangerous highwall



AFTER
Radiant City Road dangerous highwall

reorganization has proven very effective with yet another cut in personnel. Several other efficiency improvements are currently under review, with plans to implement over the next year or two.

During FY 2017 Congress allowed OSMRE to extend the FY 2016 Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Economic Development Pilot Program to FY 2017 and included Alabama, which provided an additional \$10M for unfunded Priority I and Priority II AML sites which accelerate the remediation of AML sites with economic and community development end uses. The intent of this pilot program is to explore and implement strategies to return legacy coal sites to productive uses. Alabama is currently implementing this program using both existing AML inventory sites, as well as proposals which are being submitted as a result of a public announcement which will close on January 15, 2018. One project for approximately \$1M has already been submitted to OSMRE for review and vetting has begun for others which will be submitted in the coming months. Once the first project has been approved and funded, ADOL has three years to obligate the entire \$10M.

As a result of a forest fire extinguished by the Alabama Forestry Commission in the Fall of 2016 in Marvel, Ala., a coal refuse pile near a number of residences was ignited. No actual fire was identified and although there had been an effective fire break constructed around the perimeter,

the area was smoking in several areas, therefore ADOL/ AML monitored it regularly over the following months. By mid-summer, the smoking had increased which resulted in several complaints from nearby residents. A more detailed investigation with OSMRE revealed a substantial increase in the subsurface burning refuse material presenting an imminent and significant safety hazard, which prompted an AML emergency declaration — Marvel Gob Fire II Emergency.

In a further effort for AML program efficiency, it was decided to pursue this emergency in accordance with Ala. Code 41-16-23, which authorizes the Labor Secretary to declare the emergency. It also allows for utilization of Alabama Department of Finance provisions to immediately pursue proposals from Emergency Response Contractors and circumvent the normal required Alabama competitive bid process. This was accomplished quickly and as FY 2017 came to a close, the selected contractor was preparing to move in and begin work the first week of October 2017.

The Alabama AML Reclamation Program was represented at the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs (NAAML P) Winter Business Meeting in February 2017, held in Golden, Col., and the NAAML P Annual Conference and Business Meeting in September 2017, held in Lexington, Ky. During the Annual Conference and Business Meeting, the Alabama State Mine Land Reclamation Supervisor Chuck Williams was awarded the prestigious Stan Barnard Memorial Award which recognizes the individual who exhibits qualities of



Chuck Williams, left, receives the Stan Barnard Memorial Award at the NAAML P Annual Conference.

MARVEL ROAD GOB FIRE



outstanding dedication, commitment and hard work toward enhancement of the National Association.

Additionally, the Alabama AML Reclamation Program was represented at an OSMRE Mid-Continent Region (MCR) States' Coordination Meeting in August 2017, held in Kansas City, Mo. Alabama is one of 11 states with an Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program located in the MCR. The NAAML P is actively involved in supporting reauthorization of the National AML Reclamation Program Law (Title IV of SMCRA), which is currently scheduled to expire in 2021.

Eight ADOL/AML employees attended 18 NTTP and/or TIPS training courses on a variety of AML Reclamation topics.

During FY 2017, Alabama's AML State Plan Amendment proposal continued its journey through OSMRE's approval process maze, including 42 separate steps of review. As of September 12, 2017, the final rule package had been received by the OSMRE Headquarters' Front Office for review (Step 34/42) and is still there at year's end. The amendment was initially submitted to OSMRE in the Spring of FY 2015.

MINE SAFETY AND INSPECTION

The Mine Safety and Inspection Program inspects all mines, more than 600 statewide, to ensure compliance with state laws which protect the safety of persons working in the mining industry. This section also coordinates rescue efforts in the event of a mine disaster and investigates mine accidents.

During FY 2017, 2,277 miners were employed in the coal industry, producing 14.4 million tons of coal. An additional 2,000 miners were employed in open pits and quarries producing approximately 40 million tons of non-fuel



minerals. A total of 283 underground and surface inspections were completed at coal mines statewide. During this fiscal year, there were two mining fatalities.

A continuing program provided education and training for mine foreman and underground blasting certification. Four underground certification examinations were administered, resulting in the issuance of 61 underground mine foreman certificates, two fireboss certificates, and six upgrades from fireboss to mine foreman. Also, 19 surface foreman certifications and 79 hoist certificates were issued. Mine rescue training continued to be provided by Bevill State Community College under contract with the department.

The two state mine rescue teams continued to train and prepare for performing mine rescue and recovery in extreme and potentially lethal environments. Their efforts along with those of the entire mine safety staff help to provide safe working conditions for all miners within the State of Alabama.

SURFACE MINING OF NON-FUEL MINERALS

Non-fuel minerals are mined in all 67 Alabama counties and contribute greatly to the state's economy. Examples of non-fuel minerals mined in Alabama are sand, gravel, granite, clay, bauxite, and shale. This section ensures that lands mined for those minerals are reclaimed in accordance with the Alabama Surface Mining Act of 1969. In addition, this section issues mining permits, ensures that mine sites are properly bonded for reclamation purposes, makes periodic inspections, and releases bonds once sites have been satisfactorily reclaimed.

In FY 2017, 361 permits (17 new permits, 344 renewals) were issued to operators for the surface mining of non-fuel minerals – a 13% increase in permit renewals from last year. Meanwhile, efforts continued to bring all unpermitted surface mining operations into compliance.

One half inspector stationed in the Montgomery central office and three inspectors stationed in the Birmingham office made 400 site inspections. Of those, 17 inspections were made to verify locations of new permit areas, 300 inspections were made of active operations, 50 inspections were made of unpermitted sites, three inspections were made to investigate citizen complaints and 30 inspections were made of operations with expired permits. During FY 2017, 13 bonds were released for satisfactory reclamation, and seven bonds were forfeited for failure to reclaim. A total of 70 acres were reclaimed – a 66% reduction from last year.

Other activities included telephone contacts with operators, surety companies, citizens, other agencies, and landowners. Letters were written to mining operators regarding results of site inspections and action needed to remain in compliance with the Alabama Surface Mining Act of 1969. Citizen complaints involving blasting at quarries, highwalls situated too close to property lines, sediment discharge from uncontrolled runoff, and lack of reclamation were promptly investigated. An estimated 30 sites were abandoned and left unreclaimed at year's end, with insufficient funds to complete any meaningful reclamation. Mining continues at approximately 300 permitted sites, with 140 sites being idle, abandoned, or in the process of being reclaimed.

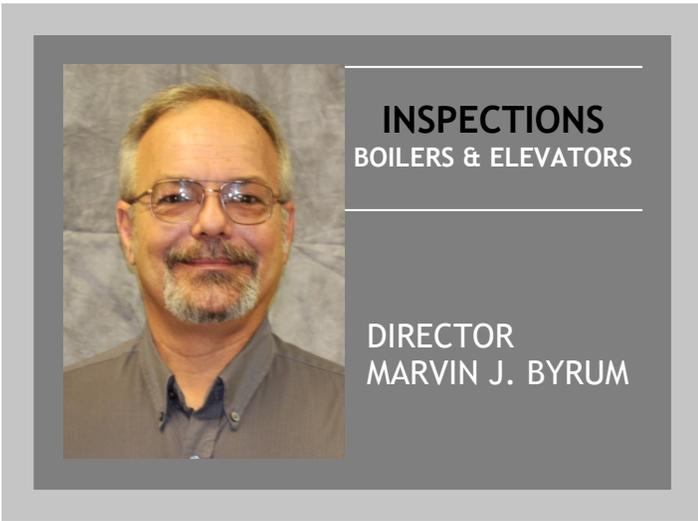
A large decrease in mining of aggregates such as limestone, marble, sand, gravel, and crushed stone was experienced in FY 2017. Road contractors have reacted to new hardness specifications for paving materials by opening new granite and sandstone quarries. As residential areas encroach on the sources of those minerals, increased citizen complaints will need to be addressed.



BEFORE
Radiant City Church



AFTER
Radiant City Church



When the Alabama Legislature charged the State Labor Department with administering new state elevator and boiler safety inspection codes, it also created two professional advisory boards to enact rules and regulations and provide program oversight. Members are appointed for staggered terms.

BOARD OF BOILERS AND PRESSURE VESSELS

- Dr. David F. Dyer, Chairman, Auburn University, former Mechanical Engineering Department Chairman (public/engineering schools)
- Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary, Alabama Department of Labor (government)
- Jerry Rhodes, Vice Chairman, Southside,

Westinghouse/Anniston (owners and users of pressure vessels)

- Tony Millette, Birmingham (owners and users, power boilers)
- Gene Canavan, International Paper, Prattville (owners and users of heating boilers)
- R. Barry Latham, McAbee Construction, Tuscaloosa (boilers and pressure vessels manufacturers)
- Steve Speed, Jasper, Boilermakers, international representative (labor)
- Jeffery Lambert, Montgomery, Mechanical Contractors (heating contractors)
- Edward F. Wiggins, Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. (insurance companies)

ELEVATOR SAFETY REVIEW BOARD

- Arthur Steber, Chairman, Elevator Maintenance & Repair Co., Prattville (elevator manufacturers)
- Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary, Alabama Dept. of Labor (government)
- Jeff McNorton, Birmingham, (elevator service providers)
- Jay Jenkins, Jenkins, Jenkins, and Monroe, Anniston (architects)



The Elevator Safety Review Board met in January at ADOL’s Central Office in Montgomery. Secretary Fitzgerald Washington presided at the meeting.

- Betty Swan, Building Owners & Managers Assn., Birmingham (public)
- James H. Wyatt, Planning and Engineering, City of Birmingham (municipalities)
- Linda Burkette (public)
- Philip R. Meadows (physically disabled community)
- Barry Johnson, Montgomery (professional licensed engineers)
- David Hallmark, Business Agent, IUEC Local 24, Birmingham, (labor)

HISTORY: BOILERS AND PRESSURE VESSELS



When the boiler and pressure vessel safety inspection program was established by the State Legislature in 2000, Alabama became the 49th state in the nation to begin conducting boiler and pressure vessel safety inspections. The Alabama Department of Labor estimates Alabama has about 18,822 boilers and pressure vessels. During FY 2017, a total of 10,241 inspections were performed by state and insurance inspectors. There were 2,847 violations found, and 2,353 were corrected. There were 1,181 new boiler permits received during the reporting period.

From the 1840s-1920s nearly 50,000 people a year were killed in boiler explosions and thousands more injured, giving rise to boiler safety inspection programs. Modern day pre-emptive safety checks by state governments and insurance companies have reduced boiler explosions fatalities nationwide.

Most common Alabama boiler violations:

1. Safety Relief Device not working;

2. Carbon Dioxide Monitor not installed;
3. Remote shutdown not installed;
4. Installed without permit.

Boilers and pressure vessels with serious violations, such as safety circuit overridden or not working, are shut down immediately. Minor violations require a 30-day completion schedule.

HISTORY: ELEVATORS AND ESCALATORS



When the Legislature adopted an elevator safety inspection code in 2003, Alabama became the 44th state to institute a safety inspection program for passenger lift devices. The program became fully functional in June of 2004. Before passage of a statewide bill, only Birmingham inspected elevators.

Elevator accidents are much more frequent than boiler malfunctions. Across the country approximately 30 people lose their lives each year in elevator accidents and another 17,000 are injured. The incident rate is probably not that surprising given the fact that more people use elevators each day than all other forms of transportation put together including planes, trains, and automobiles.

Escalators also cause injuries, especially for children. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, escalator accidents result in more than 10,000 reported injuries a year.

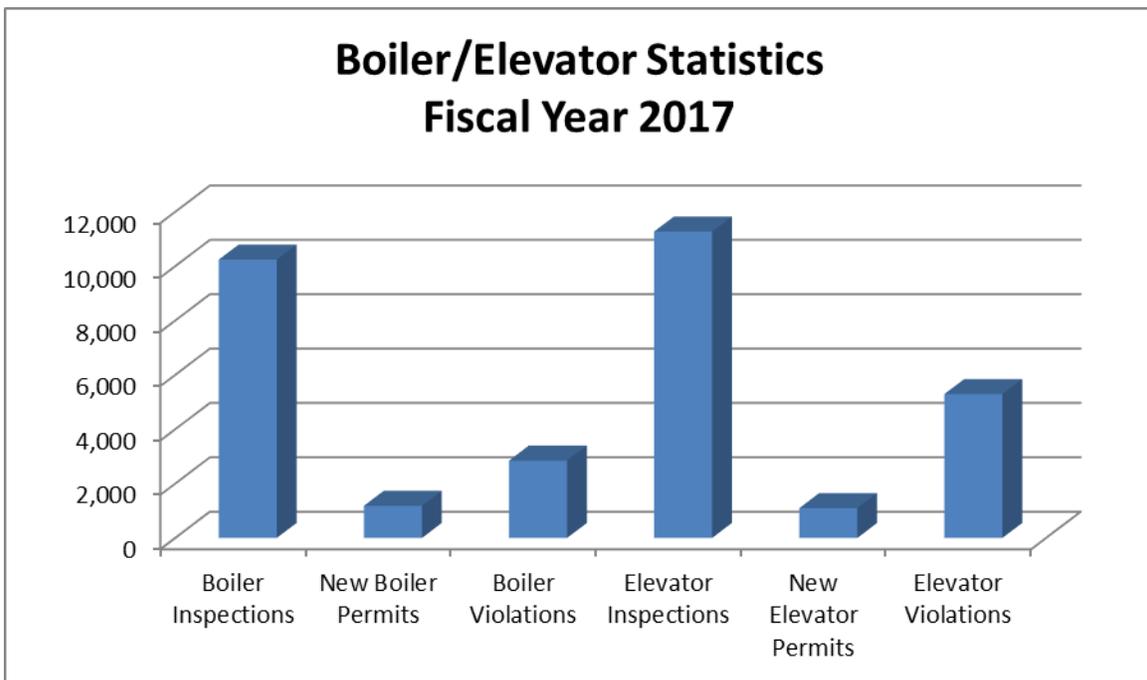
The Alabama Department of Labor estimates Alabama has about 10,424 elevators and related conveyances. During FY 2017, state and private inspectors conducted 11,275 safety checks on elevators and escalators in Alabama. In the process, 5,294 violations were uncovered and 5,484 were

corrected. New code violations are found each day. There were 1,097 new elevator permits received during the reporting period.

Most common Alabama elevator violations:

1. Annual and five-year safety checks past due;
2. Maintenance logs missing;
3. Broken or no communication device in elevator;
4. Emergency lighting not working.

A combination of these and other violations could require an immediate shutdown. Owners are required to fix most violations within 30 days.



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Albertville, Alabama 35950
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Alexander City, Alabama 35010
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2631 Temple Avenue North
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Fayette, Alabama 35555
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Foley, Alabama 36535
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