



Lower unemployment may not mean higher income level for Alabama

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

GILBERTOWN — More Alabamians have jobs today, but those jobs may not mean higher income levels for the state.

According to a report released last week by the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, the state ended 2006 with an unemployment rate of 3.6% after two months of record-low jobless rates. Rates dipped to 3.2% for October and November, and had not risen above 3.8% all year.

The numbers marked a lower rate for 2006 than the most recently-reported national rate of 4.5%.

Mississippi reported the highest unemployment rate in November, 7.5%, followed by Michigan, 6.9%, and South Carolina, 6.6%. Hawaii and Utah again recorded the lowest unemployment rates at 2.3% and 2.6%, respectively. Ten other states registered jobless rates below 3.5%.

During 2006, Alabama saw a net gain of 16,600 jobs, with the majority of the job growth (5,800) occurring in professional and business services. Educational and health service jobs grew by about 5,200 jobs, leisure and hospitality services added 3,500 jobs, while trade, transportation, and utilities were up by about 2,800 jobs.

The state posted losses primarily in manufacturing, losing some

3,800 jobs statewide.

Choctaw County's unemployment numbers were not quite as low at 5.1% in December, a jump from 4.6% in November 2006 and 4.7% in December, 2005. But at 5.1%, the county was several percentage points lower than the counties with the highest numbers — Bullock (8.4%), Wilcox (7.9%), and Perry (7.4%).

Despite the low state unemployment numbers, Alabama's economic picture is one of several factors that earned the state a 45th ranking in Education Week Magazine's Quality Counts 2007 report. Using a set of about 80 factors from low birth weight to educational levels to the job market, the study gave Alabama a dim outlook of potential success for its children.

According to the report, one of the detrimental factors that placed the state near the bottom was the percentage of children from families with incomes that are at least 200% of the federally-defined poverty level. The report states that 50.8% of Alabama's children are living at that level — a percentage that is lower than the national average of 59.8%.

A large 70.5% of Alabama's adults are in that labor force working full time year-round. The percentage is higher than the national average of 67.2%. Only five other states have higher percentages of their adults in the workforce year-round — Nevada

(71%), Delaware (71.4%), South Dakota (70.6%), Virginia (72.2%), and Maryland (70.8%).

But although the state has more available jobs, in many cases those jobs simply do not provide the level of income that is comparable to some other states. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Alabama has a per capita income of about \$29,623, and average earnings per job stand at about \$39,324. Nationally, the per capita personal income averages \$34,495, and average earnings per job are \$45,847.

One factor affecting the state's per capita income is the educational level of its citizens — a factor that was also used to determine the state's rankings in Quality Counts 2007.

Only 30.2% of Alabama's workforce has a 2 or 4 year college degree, and only 42.2% of the state's youngest adult residents age 18-24 are currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution or already have a degree.

Despite the positive outlook for Alabama's job market, the state still has work to do to raise the income levels of its citizens. With most of the state's jobs paying more than \$6,000 less annually than the national average — and the educational level of its citizens continuing to remain a factor — the state still ranks low when it comes to the ability of Alabamians to provide for potential success for its children.

Sun Country Calendar

There is no charge to list an upcoming non-profit or charitable event for your church, school, civic group, fire department, etc. Meetings of governmental entities may also be included. Send your announcement as far in advance as possible. Calendar items may be mailed, faxed, sent by U.S. Mail, delivered in person, or left in our drop box at The Country Corner in Butler.

Going on now

GIRL SCOUTS are taking orders for delicious Girl Scout Cookies! Help the girls to meet their 2007 goal and keep Scouting alive and well in Choctaw County by ordering several boxes. Call 205-459-2797 or 459-2696.

Wed., Jan. 24th - Thurs., Jan. 25th

40 DAYS HOLY CONVOCATION REVIVAL, Church of God Pentecostal, 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker, Min. Michael Ruffin.

Friday, Jan. 26 — Monday, Jan. 30

SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN, presented by Ballet and Theater Arts Performing Companies. Curtain times on Friday, Saturday and Monday, 8 p.m., with a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday. Tickets are \$10 and are now on sale at local banks and businesses. Call (251) 843-5138 for more information or reservations.

Saturday, Jan. 27th

THE VALLEY VIEW BOYS praise and worship group in concert at First Baptist Church of Butler. For more information call 205-459-2266.

GILFIELD DISTRICT ASSOCIATION winter board meeting, 10 a.m., St. John the Baptist Church, Halsell. Rev. Jasper Irby, President, Dea. Richard Jones, Secretary.

EIGHTH ANNUAL SUMTER CO. WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, Cuba Baptist Church, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Breakfast and lunch served, nursery provided, no charge. For more information, contact Pam Wooldrige at 205-392-4395 or any Di's Hope Member.

Sat., Jan. 27th - Sun., Jan. 28th

CHOIR CELEBRATION, New Mt. Mariah Baptist Church, Nanafalia, 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, 2 p.m. on Sunday. All churches, soloists, and groups are invited to attend and perform. Rev. Alphonso Bowen is the Pastor; Sis. Evie Thomas is the Choir President.

Sunday, Jan. 28th

PASTOR'S AIDE TEA, Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church, 4 p.m. Guest speaker, Pastor Robert L. Jackson.

Sunday, Jan. 28th

ANNUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM to be held at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, Jachin, Alabama. Sunday, January 28, 2007 at 12:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend. Rev. Cleo McGrew, Sr. Pastor.

Sundays -- Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 25

SUNDAY SERVICES, Vision Church, 2nd and 4th Sundays, 11 a.m., Butler Civic Center. Undershepherd/Overseer Mia (Grice) Wilkes. For more information, call 251-406-2499.

Tues., Jan. 30th and Wed., Jan. 31st

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER RECERTIFICATION CLASS, Tuesday at Choctaw Co. High School, Wednesday at Southern Choctaw High School. Times: 9 a.m., until 1 p.m. each day.

Wed., Jan. 31st — Fri., Feb. 2nd

40 DAYS HOLY CONVOCATION REVIVAL, Church of God Pentecostal, 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker, Min. Chris Holcombe.

Saturday, Feb. 3rd

40 DAYS HOLY CONVOCATION REVIVAL, Church of God Pentecostal, 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker, Eld. George Moore.

Sun., Feb. 4th — Wed., Feb. 7th

REVIVAL, Mosley Bridge Congregational Methodist Church. Lunch will be served following the Sunday morning service. Sunday evening service will begin at 6 p.m. and at 7 p.m. Monday through Wednesday. Evening meals will be served in the fellowship hall each night at 6 p.m. before worship services. Bro. Hal Dagg is the guest speaker.

Saturday, Feb. 10th

U.S. SEN. RICHARD SHELBY will host a county visit at 7:30 a.m. at Lindsey's Café in Butler. The public is invited to attend.

NEW HOPE VFD will be having a Boston Butt sale at the New Hope VFD from 10 a.m. — until. The Boston Butts are \$20 each.

Tuesday, Feb. 13th

CHOCTAW CO. BOARD OF EDUCATION meeting, 5:30 p.m., Choctaw Co. Elementary School.

Saturday, Feb. 17th

WILD GAME SUPPER, featuring guest speaker Rich Wingo, former linebacker with the Green Bay Packers, 6 p.m., Gilbertown Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. No admission fee but you must have a ticket so that the proper number of meals can be prepared. Contact Richie Abston at 251-843-2575.

August 17th — 19th

CHOCTAW CO. PICNIC AND REUNION WEEKEND, Atlanta, Georgia.



Obituaries

Inez Adams Coody

GILBERTOWN — Funeral services for Inez Adams Coody were held Jan. 18, 2007 at the chapel of Phillips Funeral Home in Gilbertown with Rev. Michael Boutwell and Rev. Brent Boutwell officiating. Interment was in the Advent Cemetery in Silas.

Mrs. Coody, 73, passed away on Jan. 16, 2007, at her residence in Gilbertown.

She is survived by husband Nilon Newton Coody of Gilbertown; one son David (Willie Jean) Coody of Gilbertown; five daughters Hazel (John D.) Pruitt, Marie (Harvey) Pruitt both of Gilbertown, Pamela (John Paul) Donald of Waynesboro, Miss., Wanda (Austin) Watkins of Silas, Sharon (Ron) Smith of Gilbertown; 11 grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren. Coody was preceded in death by mother Lucy Jane Adams, father Robert Dixon, one daughter Ola Jane Coody, one brother, two sisters, and one grandchild.

Pallbearers were Michael Coody, Bradley Coody, Matthew Coody, John David Pruitt, Bobby Pruitt, and Lance Pruitt. Honorary pallbearers were Calvin Andrews, Billy Grantham, Phillip Turner, and Perry Booker.

Phillips Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

Truman Gray Evans

HURRICANE — Funeral services for Truman Gray Evans were held Jan. 19, 2007 at Hurricane Baptist Church with Rev. Larry Browning and Rev. Buddy Braddock officiating. Interment was in Hurricane Cemetery.

Mr. Evans, 87, died Jan. 17 at H.C. Watkins Memorial Hospital in Quitman, Miss.

He is survived by cousins, aunts and many close friends.

A native of Choctaw County, Mr. Evans was a member of Hurricane Baptist Church where he served as Deacon. He was a retired Millwright from Hood Lumber Co.

Freeman Funeral Home of Waynesboro, Miss was in charge of the arrangements.

Bernice Houston "Pete" Campbell

QUITMAN, MS — Services for Bernice Houston "Pete" Campbell were held Jan. 18, 2007 at Wright's Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Barry Skelton and Rev. Dale Moore officiating. Interment was in Pine Hill Cemetery in Enterprise, MS.

Mr. Campbell, 70, died, Jan. 16 at his home in Quitman, MS. He was born on Sept. 5, 1936 in Clarke County, MS to Howard Arnold and Ruby Olivia Parker Campbell. He attended Mont Rose School, Cedar Creek School and Quitman High School.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army and served eight years in Frankfurt, Germany as a Military Policeman and then in the base Post Office. Upon his return home, he began working at Southern Pipe & Supply in Meridian, before being transferred to Baton Rouge, LA for 23 years. In 1986, he transferred back to Mississippi working at Southern Pipe & Supply Central Distribution Center until his retirement in 2000.

He was a dedicated member of Cooper's Chapel Church.

Mr. Campbell is survived by his wife of 44 years, Shira Ann Little Campbell; daughters, Vicki Lynn Campbell Turner and husband Russell, and their children Taylor Nicole and Weston Brent of Baton Rouge, LA; Debora Ann Campbell Reese and her husband Andrew and their children, Darren Eugene and Kristyn Olivia, of DeSoto, MS; and Anissa Suzanne Campbell Green and her husband Jesse of Meridian, MS; a brother, Hubert Alexander Campbell of Denham

Springs, LA; sisters, Tressie Merle Campbell King Johnson of Stonewall, MS and Susan Cornelia Campbell Hardin of Moss Point, MS.

His paternal grandparents were Hubert Arthur "Bud" and Susan Cornelia Mosley Campbell, of the Womack Hill community.

His great-great-grandparents were Rev. William and Martha Campbell, of Bladon Springs. Rev. Campbell pastored at many Baptist churches in Choctaw and Clarke counties between 1849-1877.

James Michael Lewis

GILBERTOWN — Funeral services for James Michael Lewis were held Jan. 20, 2007 at Heritage Church of God in Gilbertown with Rev. Clovis Lewis and Rev. Leon Ross officiating. Interment was in the Old Lusk Cemetery in Toxey.

Lewis, 21, died Jan. 17 at USA Medical Center in Mobile.

She is survived by his parents, Lucas and Vivian Busby Lewis of Silas; his grandparents, Lillian and Laverne Sikes, of Barrytown, George Busby of Mobile, and James "Buck" and Melba Lucas Lewis, of Toxey; his girlfriend, Celena Johnson, of Gilbertown; two brothers, Brian Fultz, of Gilbertown, Donny Williams, of Silas; two sisters, Ashley Lewis, of Toxey, and Leslie Fultz Savage, of Jackson.

Pallbearers were Ben Barber, Phillip Long, Josh Cornett, Donny Williams, Brian Fultz, Steve Presley, Tyler Cornett, and Wade Simmons. Honorary pallbearers were Ken Lucas, Rodney Johnson, Randall Johnson, Andrew Hailes, Jacob Jenkins, Jerry McKenzie, Jeff Savage, Jasper Ezell, Jason Dixon, and Lane Andrews.

Phillips Funeral Home of Gilbertown was in charge of arrangements.

Joe Hoffman

CITRONELLE — Funeral services for Joe Hoffman were held on Jan. 18, 2007 from the chapel of Bumpers Funeral Home in Butler with Rev. Fred Thomas and Rev. Clayton Hoffman officiating. Interment was in the Mosley Cemetery in Gilbertown.

Mr. Hoffman, who was 63 and a native of Choctaw County, died Jan. 15 at Mobile Infirmary. He was a retired construction pipe fitter and a veteran of the National Guard.

He was survived by his wife, Bonnie Carlisle Hoffman, of Citronelle; one son, Thomas Carlisle, of Citronelle; three daughters, Bridgett Reed, of Washington County, Shunda Fakaha, of Mobile, and Dorian McNair, of Citronelle; two brothers, Clayton Hoffman, of Amarillo, TX, and Winston Hoffman, of Stephenville, TX; two sisters, Fanny Brantley, of Citronelle, and Helen Mosley, of Saraland; and six grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ed and Annie Hoffman, one brother, one sister, and two sons. Bumpers Funeral Home in Butler was in charge of arrangements.

David Henry "Billy" Dykes

GILBERTOWN — Funeral services for David Henry "Billy" Dykes were held Jan. 21, 2007 at the Pleasant Hill Cemetery with Rev. Jimmy Singleton officiating. Interment was in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Mr. Dykes, 83, died Jan. 19 at Rush Foundation Hospital in Meridian. He was a retired self-employed farmer.

He is survived by his wife, Rosa Dykes, of Gilbertown; three sons, Jeff (wife, Cindy) Dykes, of Butler, Tim Dykes, and David Dykes, Jr., both of Gilbertown; two sisters, Cora Lee Young, and Vermelle Bonner, both of Butler; two grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Pallbearers were Benjamin Barber, Doug Dykes, Vernon Hearn, Yancy Taylor, Ray Tyson, and Greg Dykes. Honorary Pallbearers were Donald Lolley, Nelson Strurdivant, and Karen L. Manning.

Bumpers Funeral Home in Butler was in charge of arrangements.

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