



Alabama Economic Update

April 21, 2015

Summary

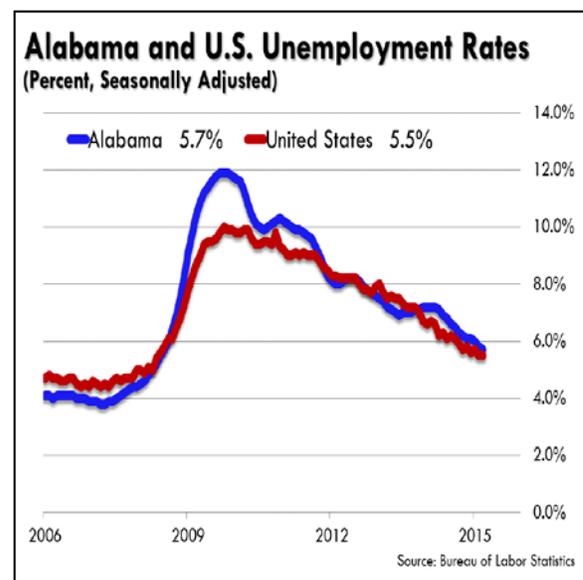
Nonfarm payroll employment in Alabama declined by 5,600 jobs and the unemployment rate fell to 5.7 percent in March according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Alabama Unemployment Rate

During March, the unemployment rate in Alabama declined by 0.1 percentage point to 5.7 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 129 in March to 123,100, while the labor force grew by 5,389 to 2,144,906. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 30 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Alabama. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Alabama stood at 7.2 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Alabama was 11.9 percent in November 2009. The series high for the unemployment rate in Alabama occurred in December 1982 when the unemployment rate reached 15.5 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in April 2007. This also represents the series low for the unemployment rate in Alabama. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.5 percent in March. March's unemployment rate was 1.1 percentage points lower than a year earlier when the rate stood at 6.6 percent. The ten year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The ten year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



Alabama Payroll Employment

Alabama nonfarm payrolls declined by 5,600 jobs, or 0.29 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during March. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 1,500. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Alabama increased by 27,100, or 1.42 percent. Alabama nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 10 of the past 12 months.

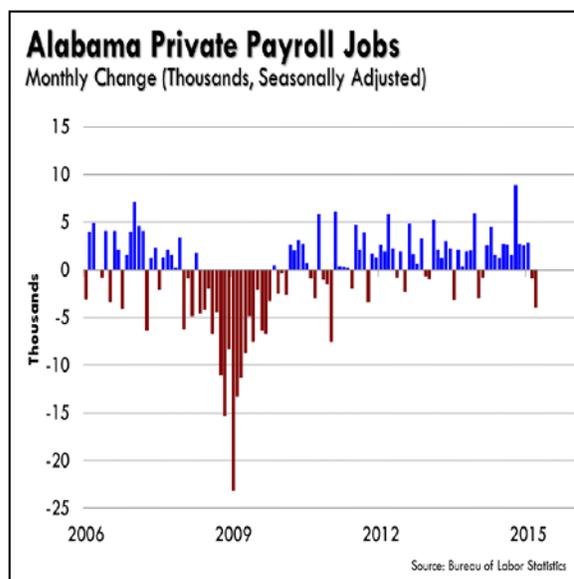
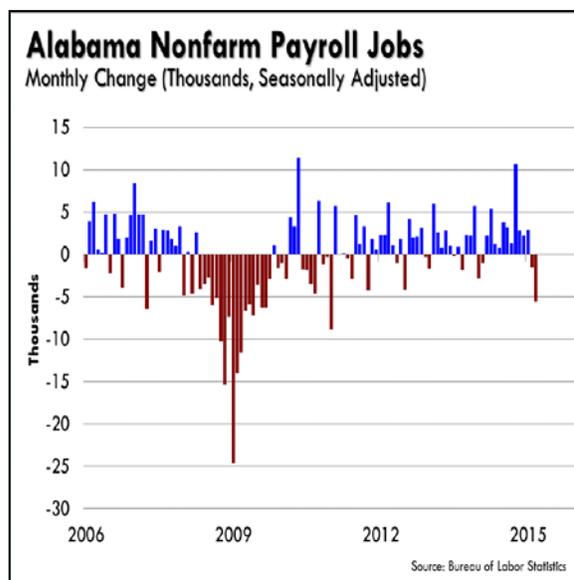
Nationally nonfarm payrolls increased by 126,000 jobs in March, or 0.09 percent. Over the 12 month period ending in March 2015, nonfarm payrolls grew by 3,128,000 jobs, or 2.27 percent. Alabama ranks 30th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During March, Alabama private sector payrolls declined by 4,000, or 0.26 percent. Private sector payrolls declined by 900 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Alabama increased by 26,000, or 1.69 percent. Alabama private sector payroll employment has increased in 10 of the past 12 months.

Nationally, private sector payroll jobs increased by 129,000 in March, or 0.11 percent. Over past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 3,056,000 private sector payroll jobs, an increase of 2.63 percent.

Alabama ranks 30th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During March, total government payroll employment in Alabama declined by 1,600, or 0.42 percent. Federal government payroll employment declined by 100, or 0.19 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 400, or 0.37 percent, while local government payroll employment declined by 1,100, or 0.51 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 1,100, or 0.29 percent. State government payroll employment was unchanged. Local government payroll employment increased by 1,200, or 0.56 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during March were Professional & Business Services (+1,100) and Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (unchanged). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Total Government (-1,600) and Leisure & Hospitality (-1,300).

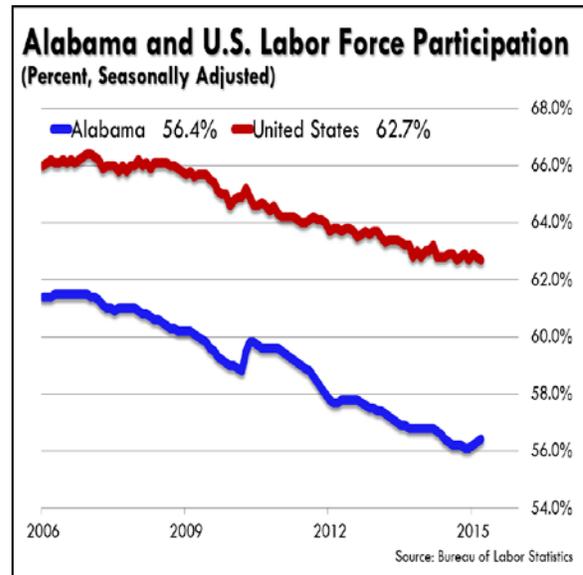
The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Professional & Business Services (+8,700) and Leisure & Hospitality (+7,000). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-800) and Information (+500).

Other Alabama Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Alabama rose to 56.4 percent in March from 56.3 percent the prior month. At 56.4 percent, Alabama has one of the five lowest labor force participation rates in the nation. The labor force participation rate in Alabama is unchanged from a year earlier. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and older who are employed or actively looking for work.

The 10 year high for the labor force participation rate in Alabama was 61.7 percent in September 2005. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Alabama occurred in September 1997 when the labor force participation rate hit 64.6 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 56.1 percent in December 2014. This also represents the series low for the labor force participation rate in Alabama.

The national labor force participation rate declined by 0.1 percentage point to 62.7 percent in March, equaling the ten year low last reached in December 2014. That rate is 0.5 percentage point below the March 2014 level of 63.2 percent.



The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the Alabama civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, rose to 53.2 percent in March from 53.1 percent the prior month. At 53.2 percent, Alabama has one of the five lowest employment-to-population ratios in the nation. The employment-to-population ratio in Alabama is 0.5 percentage point higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Alabama was 59.1 percent in December 2006. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Alabama occurred in April 1998 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 61.4 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 52.0 percent in December 2009. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in March 1983 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 50.7 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio was unchanged at 59.3 percent in March. At 59.3 percent, the national employment-to-population ratio is still below the level of 59.4 percent when the recession ended in June 2009. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 percent in April 2000. The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio was 63.4 percent in December 2006. The recent low occurred in October 2013 when the employment-to-population ratio dipped to 58.2 percent. The last time the employment-to-population posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for April is scheduled for release on Wednesday, May 27. The national employment situation report for April is scheduled for release on Friday, May 8.

