

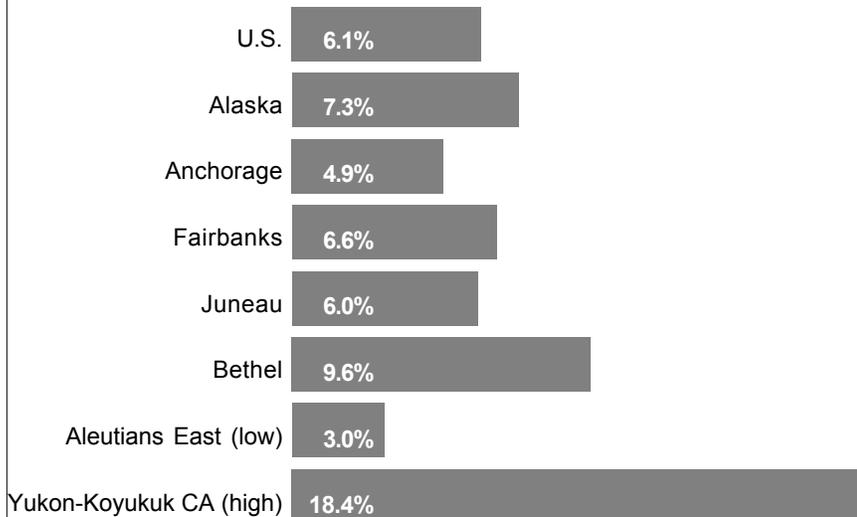
## Department of Labor and Workforce Development

## News Release

March 15, 2002

**February Unemployment Rate Sets Record Low**

No. 02-20

**February Unemployment for Selected Areas**

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section  
CA indicates census area; other areas are boroughs. All rates not seasonally adjusted

(Detailed table on reverse)

**Alaska Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment**

	preliminary 02/02	revised 01/02	Changes 02/01	from 01/02	02/01
Total Nonagricultural Employment	279,600	272,000	275,100	7,600	4,500
Mining	10,200	10,200	11,500	0	-1,300
Construction	11,800	11,700	11,500	100	300
Manufacturing	13,300	9,300	13,600	4,000	-300
Transportation, Commun. & Utilities	26,100	25,900	26,000	200	100
Trade	54,800	54,900	53,400	-100	1,400
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	12,500	12,400	12,300	100	200
Services & Misc.	70,300	69,500	68,700	800	1,600
Government	80,600	78,100	78,100	2,500	2,500

Government includes employees of public schools and the University of Alaska.

Benchmark date: March 2001

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

**Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates**

February 2002:	Alaska 5.7%	U.S. 5.5%
January 2002:	Alaska 5.9%	U.S. 5.6%
February 2001:	Alaska 6.4%	U.S. 4.2%

Alaska's unemployment rate fell to 7.3% in February, a decrease of two tenths of a percentage point from January. The 7.3% rate is the lowest ever recorded in February and well below the year-ago rate of 8.1%. The comparable national unemployment rate was 6.1%.

The number of unemployed Alaskans decreased by 581 in February to 23,675, a decline of 2.4% from January and 8% less than a year ago. Not since 1990 has the state's number of unemployed persons been so low in the month of February. Initial claims for unemployment benefits dropped by almost 3,000, a 28.6% decline from January. With 7,432 initial claims filed in February, the state is slightly above the year-ago level of 6,940.

Most areas of the state saw small decreases in their unemployment rates, though Anchorage's rate increased from 4.8% to 4.9%. The Aleutians East Borough recorded the lowest rate in the state for February at 3.0% and the Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area had the highest at 18.4%. Areas with smaller populations are more likely to see dramatic month-to-month changes in their rates, since a single event such as the opening of a fishery or a seasonal layoff can affect a large segment of the area labor force. Both the Aleutians East Borough, which saw a rate change from 6.5% to 3.0% from January to February, and the Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area, which saw an increase over the same period from 17.2% to 18.4%, are examples.

Alaska has added 4,500 jobs since February 2001, a relatively modest growth rate of 1.6%. According to Dan Robinson, a labor economist with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, "The shrinking number of unemployed Alaskans will have plenty of job opportunities in the coming months."

Contact: Dan Robinson, Labor Economist, Juneau (907) 465-6036

Fairbanks toll free number (800) 478-9900

URL Address: [www.labor.state.ak.us/research/research.htm](http://www.labor.state.ak.us/research/research.htm)

## Labor Force by Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	02/02	01/02	02/01	02/02	01/02	02/01	02/02	01/02	02/01	02/02	01/02	02/01
Alaska Statewide	322,864	322,699	317,003	23,675	24,256	25,720	7.3	7.5	8.1	299,189	298,443	291,283
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	178,758	180,956	173,652	10,001	10,016	10,848	5.6	5.5	6.2	168,757	170,940	162,804
Municipality of Anchorage	146,748	148,808	143,889	7,170	7,155	7,682	4.9	4.8	5.3	139,578	141,653	136,207
Mat-Su Borough	32,010	32,148	29,763	2,831	2,861	3,166	8.8	8.9	10.6	29,179	29,287	26,597
Gulf Coast Region	32,066	32,192	32,367	3,695	3,994	4,133	11.5	12.4	12.8	28,371	28,198	28,234
Kenai Peninsula Borough	20,786	20,734	21,035	2,599	2,658	2,936	12.5	12.8	14.0	18,187	18,076	18,099
Kodiak Island Borough	6,385	6,587	6,280	498	736	421	7.8	11.2	6.7	5,887	5,851	5,859
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,895	4,871	5,052	598	600	776	12.2	12.3	15.4	4,297	4,271	4,276
Interior Region	48,870	48,558	48,281	3,719	3,875	4,156	7.6	8.0	8.6	45,151	44,683	44,125
Denali Borough	1,177	1,168	1,150	150	151	146	12.7	12.9	12.7	1,027	1,017	1,004
Fairbanks North Star Borough	42,914	42,681	42,396	2,825	3,008	3,218	6.6	7.0	7.6	40,089	39,673	39,178
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,608	2,593	2,586	345	353	374	13.2	13.6	14.5	2,263	2,240	2,212
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,170	2,117	2,148	399	364	417	18.4	17.2	19.4	1,771	1,753	1,731
Northern Region	8,979	9,174	9,522	1,014	991	1,163	11.3	10.8	12.2	7,965	8,183	8,359
Nome Census Area	3,375	3,434	3,596	389	366	462	11.5	10.7	12.8	2,986	3,068	3,134
North Slope Borough	3,367	3,439	3,521	290	278	292	8.6	8.1	8.3	3,077	3,161	3,229
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,237	2,302	2,406	335	348	410	15.0	15.1	17.0	1,902	1,954	1,996
Southeast Region	37,616	37,477	36,855	3,657	3,686	3,655	9.7	9.8	9.9	33,959	33,791	33,200
Haines Borough	1,208	1,215	1,215	182	194	212	15.1	16.0	17.4	1,026	1,021	1,003
Juneau Borough	16,014	15,936	15,726	964	960	1,012	6.0	6.0	6.4	15,050	14,976	14,714
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,352	7,287	7,111	835	802	739	11.4	11.0	10.4	6,517	6,485	6,372
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	3,109	3,074	3,110	539	517	598	17.3	16.8	19.2	2,570	2,557	2,512
Sitka Borough	4,067	4,070	3,983	284	305	284	7.0	7.5	7.1	3,783	3,765	3,699
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	2,089	2,109	2,060	313	342	324	15.0	16.2	15.7	1,776	1,767	1,736
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	3,469	3,484	3,355	488	517	440	14.1	14.8	13.1	2,981	2,967	2,915
Yakutat Borough	306	303	295	51	49	46	16.7	16.2	15.6	255	254	249
Southwest Region	16,575	14,342	16,324	1,589	1,694	1,764	9.6	11.8	10.8	14,986	12,648	14,560
Aleutians East Borough	1,686	1,476	1,653	50	96	64	3.0	6.5	3.9	1,636	1,380	1,589
Aleutians West Census Area	2,187	2,041	2,154	122	298	148	5.6	14.6	6.9	2,065	1,743	2,006
Bethel Census Area	6,974	5,914	6,812	670	594	687	9.6	10.0	10.1	6,304	5,320	6,125
Bristol Bay Borough	582	498	562	86	79	80	14.8	15.9	14.2	496	419	482
Dillingham Census Area	2,006	1,718	1,987	179	176	212	8.9	10.2	10.7	1,827	1,542	1,775
Lake & Peninsula Borough	705	600	704	90	81	106	12.8	13.5	15.1	615	519	598
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,437	2,094	2,453	393	369	467	16.1	17.6	19.0	2,044	1,725	1,986

Benchmark: 2001

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section. • Comparisons between different time periods are not as meaningful as other time series produced by Research and Analysis. • The official definition of unemployment currently in place excludes anyone who has not made an active attempt to find work in the four-week period up to and including the week that includes the 12th of the reference month. Due to the scarcity of employment opportunities in rural Alaska locations, many individuals do not meet the official definition of unemployed because they have not conducted an active job search. These individuals are considered not in the labor force.