

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

News Release

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January Unemployment Rises Slightly

Alaska's unemployment rate climbed to 8.9 percent in January, up five tenths of a percentage point from December's revised rate of 8.4 percent. The state's rate historically reaches its high point for the year in January or February and then begins to fall as seasonal employment picks up.

The comparable national rate (not seasonally adjusted) for January was 6.3 percent. Dan Robinson, an economist with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, reported the numbers.

Five of the state's six economic regions recorded higher rates in January, the exception being in the Gulf Coast where seasonal jobs related to Kodiak's January fisheries pushed the rate lower.

Anchorage's unemployment rate remained substantially lower than other areas in the state, increasing from 5.6 percent in December to 6.0 percent in January. Fairbanks saw a larger increase, from 7.1 percent to 8.0 percent.

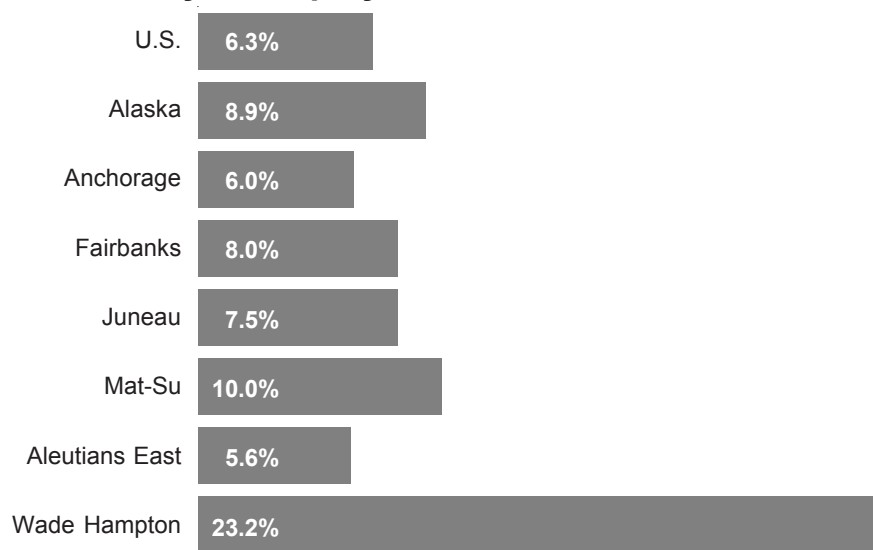
At 7.5 percent, Juneau's rate remained well below those of other Southeast boroughs and census areas. Sitka is the only other community in Southeast that does not have a double-digit unemployment rate.

Wage and salary employment estimates for January showed a decline of 5,500 jobs over the month. The biggest decline was in government, where several federal agencies including the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Postal Service made expected seasonal cutbacks. State and local government employment also fell modestly as expected in January.

Other significant employment losses came in construction, retail trade, and food services and drinking places. Manufacturing jobs increased in January behind the strength of seafood processing activity.

Comparisons to last year show that Alaska has added about 5,700 jobs since January 2003. Health care and social services employment continues to show strong growth as does the construction industry. The most significant over the year employment losses have come from the oil industry which is estimated to have about 400 fewer jobs than in January 2003.

January Unemployment for Selected Areas



(Detailed table on reverse)

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section
All rates not seasonally adjusted

Alaska Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

	preliminary 1/04	revised 12/03	revised 1/03	Changes from 12/03	1/03
Total Nonfarm Employment	284,700	290,200	279,000	-5,500	5,700
Natural Resources & Mining	9,600	10,000	10,000	-400	-400
Construction	13,700	15,300	12,500	-1,600	1,200
Manufacturing	9,000	5,900	8,700	3,100	300
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	57,900	59,700	57,200	-1,800	700
Information	6,900	7,000	6,800	-100	100
Financial Activities	14,100	14,400	13,700	-300	400
Professional & Business Services	22,000	22,300	22,000	-300	0
Education & Health Services	33,800	33,900	31,500	-100	2,300
Leisure & Hospitality	26,000	27,300	25,600	-1,300	400
Other Services	11,000	11,200	11,100	-200	-100
Government	80,700	83,100	79,900	-2,400	800

Government includes employees of public schools, the University of Alaska, and certain federally-recognized tribal entities.

Benchmark date: March 2003

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

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate

January 2004:	Alaska 7.3%	U.S. 5.6%
December 2003:	Alaska 8.1%	U.S. 5.7%
January 2003:	Alaska 7.9%	U.S. 5.8%

URL Address: <http://almis.labor.state.ak.us>

Contact: Dan Robinson (907) 465-6036

Labor Force by Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	1/04	12/03	1/03	1/04	12/03	1/03	1/04	12/03	1/03	1/04	12/03	1/03
Alaska Statewide	338,115	330,346	323,108	30,239	27,747	31,333	8.9	8.4	9.7	307,876	302,599	291,775
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	192,971	189,025	181,835	13,082	11,906	13,634	6.8	6.3	7.5	179,889	177,119	168,201
Municipality of Anchorage	154,154	151,687	147,976	9,201	8,467	9,613	6.0	5.6	6.5	144,953	143,220	138,363
Mat-Su Borough	38,817	37,338	33,859	3,881	3,439	4,021	10.0	9.2	11.9	34,936	33,899	29,838
Gulf Coast Region	32,369	31,712	32,225	4,466	4,582	4,877	13.8	14.4	15.1	27,903	27,130	27,348
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,549	20,637	21,352	3,263	2,858	3,430	15.1	13.8	16.1	18,286	17,779	17,922
Kodiak Island Borough	5,978	6,471	5,998	483	1,128	612	8.1	17.4	10.2	5,495	5,343	5,386
Valdez-Cordova CA	4,842	4,604	4,875	720	596	835	14.9	12.9	17.1	4,122	4,008	4,040
Interior Region	50,157	50,189	48,260	4,711	4,127	4,963	9.4	8.2	10.3	45,446	46,062	43,297
Denali Borough	1,261	1,254	1,193	234	213	214	18.6	17.0	17.9	1,027	1,041	979
Fairbanks North Star Bor.	43,940	44,111	42,267	3,524	3,148	3,762	8.0	7.1	8.9	40,416	40,963	38,505
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,646	2,580	2,560	469	373	486	17.7	14.5	19.0	2,177	2,207	2,074
Yukon-Koyukuk CA	2,308	2,244	2,241	483	394	502	20.9	17.6	22.4	1,825	1,850	1,739
Northern Region	9,518	9,294	9,297	1,493	1,390	1,391	15.7	15.0	15.0	8,025	7,904	7,906
Nome Census Area	3,570	3,440	3,454	584	499	513	16.4	14.5	14.9	2,986	2,941	2,941
North Slope Borough	3,511	3,474	3,383	470	479	387	13.4	13.8	11.4	3,041	2,995	2,996
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,437	2,379	2,459	439	411	491	18.0	17.3	20.0	1,998	1,968	1,968
Southeast Region	36,786	36,279	36,047	4,142	3,609	4,163	11.3	9.9	11.5	32,644	32,670	31,884
Haines Borough	1,200	1,187	1,216	193	179	233	16.1	15.1	19.2	1,007	1,008	983
Juneau Borough	16,022	15,973	15,617	1,201	1,141	1,142	7.5	7.1	7.3	14,821	14,832	14,475
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	6,930	6,766	6,883	820	651	915	11.8	9.6	13.3	6,110	6,115	5,968
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	2,687	2,553	2,654	544	408	561	20.2	16.0	21.1	2,143	2,145	2,093
Sitka Borough	4,336	4,346	4,200	394	401	350	9.1	9.2	8.3	3,942	3,945	3,850
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	2,004	1,950	1,930	379	324	343	18.9	16.6	17.8	1,625	1,626	1,587
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	3,299	3,210	3,249	544	453	559	16.5	14.1	17.2	2,755	2,757	2,690
Yakutat Borough	309	293	297	67	51	60	21.7	17.4	20.2	242	242	237
Southwest Region	16,314	13,848	15,445	2,345	2,133	2,305	14.4	15.4	14.9	13,969	11,715	13,140
Aleutians East Borough	1,675	1,444	1,598	94	118	111	5.6	8.2	6.9	1,581	1,326	1,487
Aleutians West Census Area	2,805	2,402	2,743	287	290	375	10.2	12.1	13.7	2,518	2,112	2,368
Bethel Census Area	6,435	5,484	6,052	952	886	894	14.8	16.2	14.8	5,483	4,598	5,158
Bristol Bay Borough	526	445	482	75	67	58	14.3	15.1	12.0	451	378	424
Dillingham Census Area	1,939	1,624	1,853	255	212	269	13.2	13.1	14.5	1,684	1,412	1,584
Lake & Peninsula Borough	619	507	546	144	108	99	23.3	21.3	18.1	475	399	447
Wade Hampton CA	2,315	1,943	2,171	538	452	499	23.2	23.3	23.0	1,777	1,491	1,672

Benchmark: March 2002

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.