

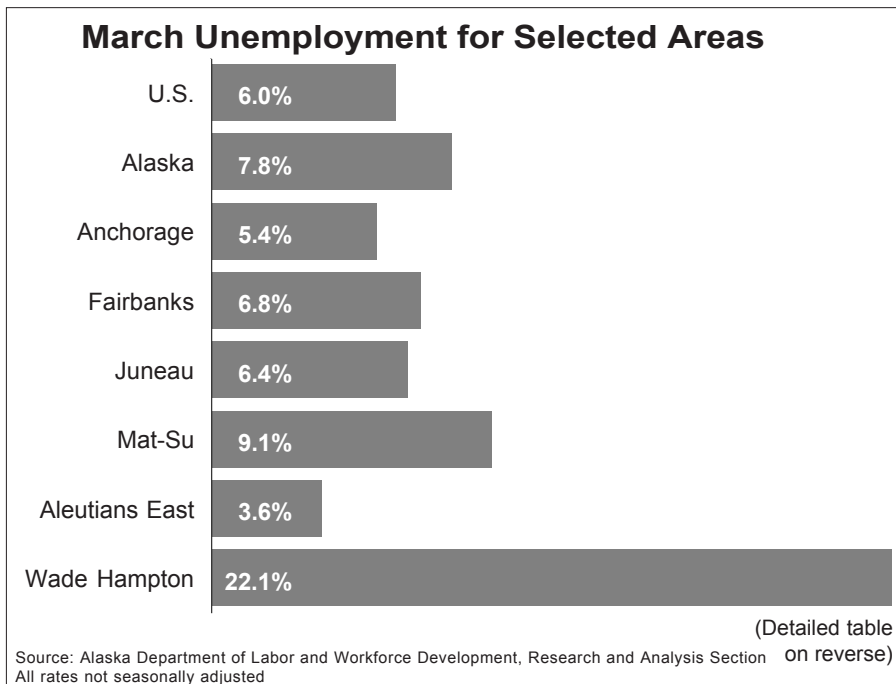
News Release

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April 16, 2004
No. 04-45

March Unemployment Declines



Alaska's wage and salary jobs increased by 3,300 jobs in March and the unemployment rate fell from 8.9 percent to 7.8 percent. Both numbers reflect expected seasonal movements as the state begins building toward its peak employment months of July and August.

The comparable national unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) was unchanged at 6.0 percent. Dan Robinson, an economist with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, reported the numbers.

All of the state's six economic regions recorded lower unemployment rates in March, with the biggest drops coming in the Gulf Coast and Southeast regions. Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau all continued to record unemployment rates below the statewide number. Anchorage's rate of 5.4 percent in March was more than two percentage points below the 7.8 percent statewide rate.

Alaska Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

	preliminary 03/04	revised 02/04	revised 03/03	changes from	
				02/04	03/03
Total Nonfarm Employment	292,300	289,000	288,400	3,300	3,900
Natural Resources & Mining	9,800	9,700	10,300	100	-500
Construction	13,700	13,500	13,100	200	600
Manufacturing	12,100	11,800	11,900	300	200
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	58,300	57,600	57,300	700	1,000
Information	6,900	6,900	6,800	0	100
Financial Activities	14,600	14,300	13,900	300	700
Professional & Business Services	22,200	22,000	22,200	200	0
Education & Health Services	34,300	33,800	32,500	500	1,800
Leisure & Hospitality	26,500	26,200	26,000	300	500
Other Services	11,100	11,200	11,300	-100	-200
Government	82,900	82,100	83,000	800	-100

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

The Aleutians East Borough recorded the state's lowest March unemployment rate at 3.6 percent, and the Wade Hampton Census Area had the highest at 22.1 percent.

The March increase in wage and salary jobs was scattered across nearly all industries. Alaska has added 3,900 jobs over the year, a growth rate of 1.4 percent. The biggest increase has been in health care and social services where 1,700 new jobs have been added. Retail trade has added 700 jobs with the biggest percentage gains coming from clothing stores and building materials and supplies stores. Employment in financial activities has increased by 700 jobs and the construction industry has added 600 jobs over the year.

Although government employment saw a seasonal increase of about 800 jobs in March, total government employment is down 100 from March 2003. State government jobs have decreased by about 200 over the year, and employment in local elementary and secondary schools has fallen by about 100 jobs. Federal employment has increased by about 100 over the same period.

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate

March 2004:	Alaska 7.1%	U.S. 5.7%
February 2004:	Alaska 7.3%	U.S. 5.6%
March 2003:	Alaska 7.9%	U.S. 5.8%

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

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Labor Force by Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	3/04	2/04	3/03*	3/04	2/04	3/03*	3/04	2/04	3/03*	3/04	2/04	3/03*
Alaska Statewide	336,419	339,213	323,040	26,270	30,109	28,245	7.8	8.9	8.7	310,149	309,104	294,795
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	189,315	190,896	179,141	11,531	12,945	12,322	6.1	6.8	6.9	177,784	177,951	166,819
Municipality of Anchorage	152,663	153,952	145,674	8,198	9,108	8,781	5.4	5.9	6.0	144,465	144,844	136,893
Mat-Su Borough	36,652	36,944	33,467	3,333	3,837	3,541	9.1	10.4	10.6	33,319	33,107	29,926
Gulf Coast Region	32,823	33,138	32,741	3,831	4,488	4,363	11.7	13.5	13.3	28,992	28,650	28,378
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,793	22,018	21,497	2,793	3,243	2,900	12.8	14.7	13.5	19,000	18,775	18,597
Kodiak Island Borough	6,082	6,102	6,400	373	460	811	6.1	7.5	12.7	5,709	5,642	5,589
Valdez-Cordova CA	4,948	5,016	4,844	665	784	652	13.4	15.6	13.5	4,283	4,232	4,192
Interior Region	50,267	50,324	48,809	4,017	4,724	4,456	8.0	9.4	9.1	46,250	45,600	44,353
Denali Borough	1,238	1,269	1,183	192	238	180	15.5	18.8	15.2	1,046	1,031	1,003
Fairbanks North Star Bor.	44,115	44,016	42,869	2,984	3,463	3,425	6.8	7.9	8.0	41,131	40,553	39,444
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,613	2,690	2,513	397	505	388	15.2	18.8	15.4	2,216	2,185	2,125
Yukon-Koyukuk CA	2,302	2,351	2,245	444	519	463	19.3	22.1	20.6	1,858	1,832	1,782
Northern Region	9,392	9,501	9,219	1,407	1,538	1,351	15.0	16.2	14.7	7,985	7,963	7,868
Nome Census Area	3,523	3,576	3,423	552	613	496	15.7	17.1	14.5	2,971	2,963	2,927
North Slope Borough	3,432	3,481	3,360	406	463	378	11.8	13.3	11.3	3,026	3,018	2,982
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,436	2,445	2,437	448	462	478	18.4	18.9	19.6	1,988	1,983	1,959
Southeast Region	36,902	37,370	36,080	3,316	4,079	3,580	9.0	10.9	9.9	33,586	33,291	32,500
Haines Borough	1,209	1,241	1,203	173	214	201	14.3	17.2	16.7	1,036	1,027	1,002
Juneau Borough	16,293	16,315	15,794	1,045	1,201	1,039	6.4	7.4	6.6	15,248	15,114	14,755
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	6,922	7,033	6,801	636	802	718	9.2	11.4	10.6	6,286	6,231	6,083
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	2,654	2,700	2,602	449	515	469	16.9	19.1	18.0	2,205	2,185	2,133
Sitka Borough	4,343	4,409	4,257	287	389	332	6.6	8.8	7.8	4,056	4,020	3,925
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	1,944	2,000	1,897	272	343	279	14.0	17.2	14.7	1,672	1,657	1,618
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	3,225	3,345	3,214	391	536	472	12.1	16.0	14.7	2,834	2,809	2,742
Yakutat Borough	314	327	312	65	80	71	20.7	24.5	22.8	249	247	241
Southwest Region	17,721	17,984	17,051	2,169	2,335	2,173	12.2	13.0	12.7	15,552	15,649	14,878
Aleutians East Borough	1,825	1,844	1,743	65	73	59	3.6	4.0	3.4	1,760	1,771	1,684
Aleutians West Census Area	3,001	3,022	2,903	198	201	221	6.6	6.7	7.6	2,803	2,821	2,682
Bethel Census Area	6,999	7,117	6,808	895	975	968	12.8	13.7	14.2	6,104	6,142	5,840
Bristol Bay Borough	564	584	537	62	79	57	11.0	13.5	10.6	502	505	480
Dillingham Census Area	2,128	2,150	2,046	254	264	253	11.9	12.3	12.4	1,874	1,886	1,793
Lake & Peninsula Borough	664	688	621	135	155	115	20.3	22.5	18.5	529	533	506
Wade Hampton CA	2,539	2,579	2,394	560	588	501	22.1	22.8	20.9	1,979	1,991	1,893

*Benchmark: March 2003 Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section. * Comparisons with previous year's numbers are of very limited use because of the magnitude of year-end revisions. The official definition of unemployment 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, many individuals do not meet the official definition of unemployed because they have not conducted an active job search. They are considered not in the labor force.*