

# Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

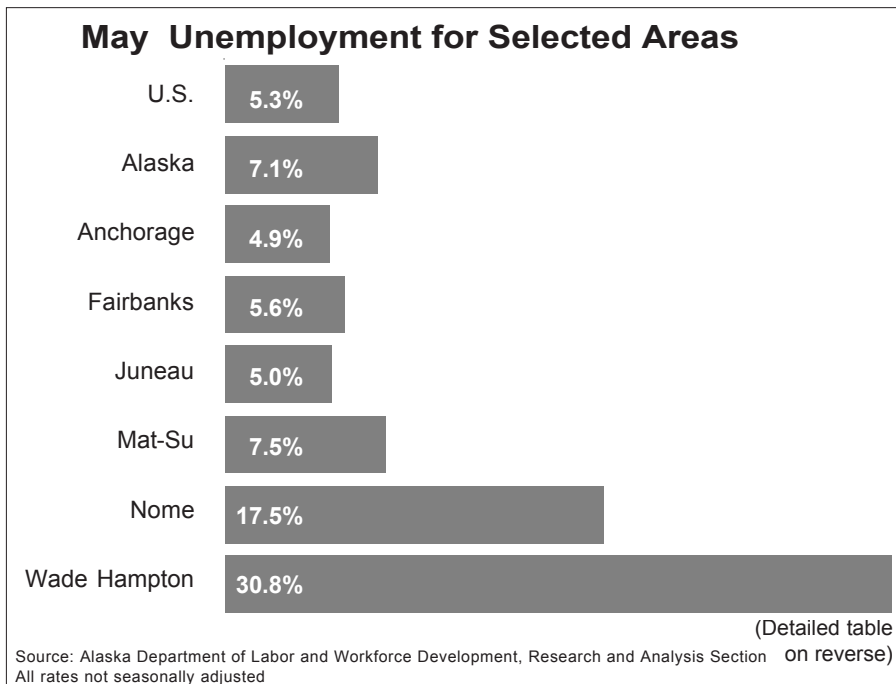
# News Release

Frank H. Murkowski, Governor  
Greg O'Claray, Commissioner

P.O. Box 21149  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1149  
Telephone: (907) 465-2700  
Fax: (907) 465-2784

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## May Unemployment Declines



Alaska's unemployment rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point in May to 7.1 percent. The comparable national rate fell one-tenth of a percentage point to 5.3 percent. Dan Robinson, an economist with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, reported the numbers.

Four of the state's six economic regions recorded lower unemployment rates in May as seasonal employment began building toward the peak employment months of July and August. The exceptions were the Northern and Southwest Regions.

The Northern Region has fewer seasonal jobs than other parts of Alaska and typically sees higher unemployment in May when schools break for the summer and some of the older secondary school students enter the labor market looking for jobs.

The higher May rate for the Southwest Region is due to a slight lull in fisheries activity in the Aleutians and also to a May unemployment increase in Bethel.

Most of the rest of the state saw seasonal employment pick up in May, which lowered unemployment rates. The most noticeable declines were in areas heavily dependent on the summer visitor industry. In the Denali Borough, for example, the unemployment rate fell from 12.8 percent in April to 5.9 percent in May. The Haines Borough and the Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area also saw drops of several percentage points.

Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau all recorded slightly lower unemployment rates. Anchorage's 4.9 percent rate was the lowest in the state.

Preliminary wage and salary employment estimates for May show over-the-year growth of about 1,500 jobs. The strongest growth continues to be in the health care, construction, and retail trade industries. Total employment growth has slowed somewhat due to the loss of 800 government jobs from May 2003 to May 2004 and ongoing losses in the natural resources and mining sector.

## Alaska Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

	preliminary 05/04	revised 04/04	revised 05/03	changes from	
				04/04	05/03
Total Nonfarm Employment	305,100	294,100	303,600	11,000	1,500
Natural Resources & Mining	9,900	9,800	10,400	100	-500
Construction	17,800	14,700	17,300	3,100	500
Manufacturing	9,400	9,200	9,500	200	-100
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	62,900	59,900	62,300	3,000	600
Information	6,900	6,800	7,000	100	-100
Financial Activities	14,700	14,300	14,400	400	300
Professional & Business Services	23,600	22,500	23,900	1,100	-300
Education & Health Services	34,300	34,500	33,000	-200	1,300
Leisure & Hospitality	31,100	27,800	30,700	3,300	400
Other Services	11,600	11,300	11,500	300	100
Government	82,800	83,500	83,600	-700	-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

May 2004:	Alaska 7.3%	U.S. 5.6%
April 2004:	Alaska 7.1%	U.S. 5.6%
May 2003:	Alaska 7.9%	U.S. 6.1%

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		
	5/04	4/04	5/03*	5/04	4/04	5/03*	5/04	4/04	5/03*	5/04	4/04	5/03*
Alaska Statewide	345,021	336,808	330,706	24,328	24,575	25,439	7.1	7.3	7.7	320,693	312,233	305,267
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	191,192	189,942	181,242	10,412	10,825	11,041	5.4	5.7	6.1	180,780	179,117	170,201
Municipality of Anchorage	152,750	151,984	145,530	7,533	7,728	8,081	4.9	5.1	5.6	145,217	144,256	137,449
Mat-Su Borough	38,442	37,958	35,712	2,879	3,097	2,960	7.5	8.2	8.3	35,563	34,861	32,752
Gulf Coast Region	35,132	33,245	34,035	3,649	3,563	3,757	10.4	10.7	11.0	31,483	29,682	30,278
Kenai Peninsula Borough	22,843	21,986	22,197	2,211	2,534	2,355	9.7	11.5	10.6	20,632	19,452	19,842
Kodiak Island Borough	7,118	6,299	6,901	918	454	938	12.9	7.2	13.6	6,200	5,845	5,963
Valdez-Cordova CA	5,171	4,960	4,936	520	575	463	10.1	11.6	9.4	4,651	4,385	4,473
Interior Region	54,145	51,427	52,168	3,506	3,690	3,786	6.5	7.2	7.3	50,639	47,737	48,382
Denali Borough	1,217	1,237	1,167	72	158	73	5.9	12.8	6.3	1,145	1,079	1,094
Fairbanks North Star Bor.	47,705	45,181	45,954	2,671	2,728	2,927	5.6	6.0	6.4	45,034	42,453	43,027
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,721	2,681	2,625	295	394	307	10.8	14.7	11.7	2,426	2,287	2,318
Yukon-Koyukuk CA	2,503	2,327	2,422	469	410	479	18.7	17.6	19.8	2,034	1,917	1,943
Northern Region	9,411	9,225	9,346	1,567	1,398	1,518	16.7	15.2	16.2	7,844	7,827	7,828
Nome Census Area	3,538	3,451	3,435	620	539	523	17.5	15.6	15.2	2,918	2,912	2,912
North Slope Borough	3,428	3,366	3,416	455	400	449	13.3	11.9	13.1	2,973	2,966	2,967
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,445	2,408	2,495	492	459	546	20.1	19.1	21.9	1,953	1,949	1,949
Southeast Region	39,904	37,509	38,770	2,592	2,772	2,848	6.5	7.4	7.3	37,312	34,737	35,922
Haines Borough	1,246	1,213	1,236	95	142	128	7.6	11.7	10.4	1,151	1,071	1,108
Juneau Borough	17,828	16,624	17,259	888	853	950	5.0	5.1	5.5	16,940	15,771	16,309
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,519	7,108	7,320	535	606	596	7.1	8.5	8.1	6,984	6,502	6,724
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	2,750	2,630	2,698	301	350	340	10.9	13.3	12.6	2,449	2,280	2,358
Sitka Borough	4,738	4,441	4,567	232	246	229	4.9	5.5	5.0	4,506	4,195	4,338
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	2,019	1,945	1,953	162	216	165	8.0	11.1	8.4	1,857	1,729	1,788
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	3,496	3,252	3,405	348	321	374	10.0	9.9	11.0	3,148	2,931	3,031
Yakutat Borough	308	296	332	31	38	66	10.1	12.8	19.9	277	258	266
Southwest Region	15,237	15,460	15,145	2,601	2,328	2,489	17.1	15.1	16.4	12,636	13,132	12,656
Aleutians East Borough	1,509	1,543	1,525	79	57	92	5.2	3.7	6.0	1,430	1,486	1,433
Aleutians West Census Area	2,647	2,706	2,650	369	339	369	13.9	12.5	13.9	2,278	2,367	2,281
Bethel Census Area	6,010	6,071	6,054	1,050	916	1,086	17.5	15.1	17.9	4,960	5,155	4,968
Bristol Bay Borough	465	484	458	57	60	50	12.3	12.4	10.9	408	424	408
Dillingham Census Area	1,760	1,844	1,763	237	261	238	13.5	14.2	13.5	1,523	1,583	1,525
Lake & Peninsula Borough	523	559	522	93	112	91	17.8	20.0	17.4	430	447	431
Wade Hampton CA	2,324	2,254	2,173	716	583	563	30.8	25.9	25.9	1,608	1,671	1,610

*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.*