



MEDIA RELEASE

Jobs are Alaska's Future



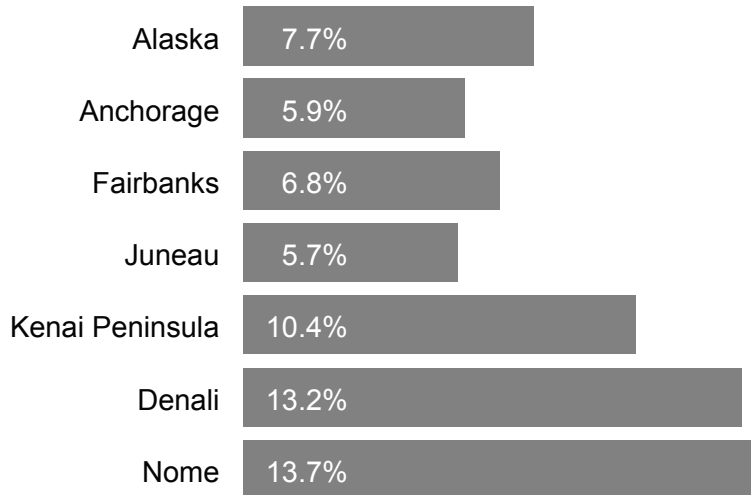
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Greg O'Claray, Commissioner

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No. 06-46

Unemployment rate falls to 7.7 percent in March

March Unemployment for Selected Areas



Sources: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Alaska's unemployment rate fell five-tenths of a percentage point in March to 7.7 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development. The March rate was two-tenths of a percentage point higher than March 2005's rate of 7.5 percent, marking the first time in 24 months that the unemployment rate hasn't shown an over-the-year decline.

It will take several more months of data, however, before any conclusions can be drawn about a change in the downward trend of unemployment rates. The statistics are in large part based on a survey of only about 1,000 Alaska households and are prone to considerable month-to-month variability.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment

| | Preliminary 03/06 | Revised 02/06 | Revised 03/05 | Changes from | |
|--|----------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| | | | | 02/06 | 03/05 |
| Total Nonfarm Employment | 301,400 | 298,400 | 296,100 | 3,000 | 5,300 |
| Natural Resources and Mining | 11,400 | 11,000 | 10,500 | 400 | 900 |
| Oil and Gas | 9,200 | 9,000 | 8,500 | 200 | 700 |
| Construction | 15,700 | 15,300 | 15,300 | 400 | 400 |
| Manufacturing | 11,500 | 11,500 | 11,800 | 0 | -300 |
| Trade, Transportation and Utilities | 59,900 | 59,400 | 58,900 | 500 | 1,000 |
| Retail Trade | 34,500 | 34,400 | 33,900 | 100 | 600 |
| Information | 6,800 | 6,800 | 6,900 | 0 | -100 |
| Financial Activities | 14,600 | 14,600 | 14,200 | 0 | 400 |
| Professional and Business Services | 22,900 | 22,800 | 22,300 | 100 | 600 |
| Educational ¹ and Health Services | 36,600 | 36,100 | 35,900 | 500 | 700 |
| Health Care | 26,400 | 26,100 | 25,800 | 300 | 600 |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 27,500 | 27,000 | 26,700 | 500 | 800 |
| Accommodation | 6,200 | 6,100 | 6,100 | 100 | 100 |
| Food Svcs. and Drinking Places | 17,500 | 17,200 | 17,000 | 300 | 500 |
| Other Services | 11,300 | 11,200 | 11,100 | 100 | 200 |
| Government ² | 83,200 | 82,700 | 82,500 | 500 | 700 |

¹ Private education only

² Government includes public schools, the University of Alaska and federally recognized tribal entities.
Sources: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Total nonfarm employment rose by 3,000 in March to 301,400. The gains were scattered across a variety of industries as the state's seasonal employers continued their gradual build toward the peak months of summer.

Also contributing to the monthly gains were industries such as oil and gas and health care, both of which have been growing at a healthy rate unrelated to seasonal trends. Oil and gas employment increased by 200 in March and health care employment by 300.

The March job count was 5,300 higher than in March 2005, an over-the-year growth rate of 1.8 percent. Growth in that range continues the trend from 2005, which saw a modest acceleration in job growth from the two previous years. In 2005 the state added jobs at an average rate of 1.9 percent compared to 1.6 percent in 2004 and 1.4 percent in 2003.

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------|------|------|------|
| March 2006: | Alaska | 7.0% | U.S. | 4.7% |
| February 2006: | Alaska | 7.0% | U.S. | 4.8% |
| March 2005: | Alaska | 6.8% | U.S. | 5.1% |

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Research and Analysis Web site: <http://almis.labor.state.ak.us>

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area

| | Labor Force | | | Unemployment | | | Rate | | | Employment | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 03/06 | 02/06 | 03/05 | 03/06 | 02/06 | 03/05 | 03/06 | 02/06 | 03/05 | 03/06 | 02/06 | 03/05 |
| | Alaska Statewide | 339,339 | 340,199 | 333,265 | 26,291 | 27,899 | 25,158 | 7.7 | 8.2 | 7.5 | 313,048 | 312,300 |
| Anchorage/Mat-Su (MSA*) | 185,333 | 186,416 | 181,214 | 12,130 | 12,769 | 11,282 | 6.5 | 6.8 | 6.2 | 173,263 | 173,647 | 169,932 |
| Municipality of Anchorage | 149,490 | 150,403 | 146,429 | 8,747 | 9,348 | 8,392 | 5.9 | 6.2 | 5.7 | 140,743 | 141,055 | 138,037 |
| Mat-Su Borough | 35,993 | 36,013 | 34,785 | 3,383 | 3,421 | 2,890 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 8.3 | 32,520 | 32,592 | 31,895 |
| Gulf Coast Region | 34,628 | 34,542 | 34,981 | 3,474 | 3,819 | 3,531 | 10.0 | 11.1 | 10.1 | 31,154 | 30,723 | 31,450 |
| Kenai Peninsula Borough | 23,993 | 23,853 | 24,094 | 2,497 | 2,758 | 2,493 | 10.4 | 11.6 | 10.3 | 21,496 | 21,095 | 21,601 |
| Kodiak Island Borough | 6,043 | 6,160 | 6,064 | 425 | 457 | 433 | 7.0 | 7.4 | 7.1 | 5,618 | 5,703 | 5,631 |
| Valdez-Cordova Census Area | 4,592 | 4,529 | 4,823 | 552 | 604 | 605 | 12.0 | 13.3 | 12.5 | 4,040 | 3,925 | 4,218 |
| Interior Region | 51,814 | 51,831 | 50,493 | 4,014 | 4,222 | 3,838 | 7.7 | 8.1 | 7.6 | 47,800 | 47,609 | 46,655 |
| Denali Borough | 870 | 827 | 881 | 115 | 137 | 137 | 13.2 | 16.6 | 15.6 | 755 | 690 | 744 |
| Fairbanks North Star Borough (MSA*) | 44,415 | 44,501 | 43,560 | 3,041 | 3,188 | 2,871 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 41,374 | 41,313 | 40,689 |
| Southwest Fairbanks Census Area | 3,554 | 3,595 | 2,964 | 412 | 447 | 424 | 11.6 | 12.4 | 14.3 | 3,142 | 3,148 | 2,540 |
| Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area | 2,975 | 2,908 | 3,088 | 446 | 450 | 406 | 15.0 | 15.5 | 13.1 | 2,529 | 2,458 | 2,682 |
| Northern Region | 10,967 | 11,002 | 10,654 | 1,196 | 1,256 | 1,199 | 10.9 | 11.4 | 11.3 | 9,771 | 9,746 | 9,455 |
| Nome Census Area | 3,901 | 3,874 | 4,008 | 535 | 548 | 475 | 13.7 | 14.1 | 11.9 | 3,366 | 3,326 | 3,533 |
| North Slope Borough | 3,683 | 3,691 | 3,674 | 313 | 342 | 348 | 8.5 | 9.3 | 9.5 | 3,370 | 3,349 | 3,326 |
| Northwest Arctic Borough | 3,383 | 3,437 | 2,972 | 348 | 366 | 376 | 10.3 | 10.6 | 12.7 | 3,035 | 3,071 | 2,596 |
| Southeast Region | 38,069 | 37,524 | 37,456 | 3,249 | 3,536 | 3,218 | 8.5 | 9.4 | 8.6 | 34,820 | 33,988 | 34,238 |
| Haines Borough | 1,113 | 1,075 | 1,088 | 160 | 166 | 163 | 14.4 | 15.4 | 15.0 | 953 | 909 | 925 |
| Juneau Borough | 18,183 | 18,066 | 17,836 | 1,045 | 1,149 | 1,071 | 5.7 | 6.4 | 6.0 | 17,138 | 16,917 | 16,765 |
| Ketchikan Gateway Borough | 7,109 | 7,015 | 7,157 | 604 | 653 | 617 | 8.5 | 9.3 | 8.6 | 6,505 | 6,362 | 6,540 |
| Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area | 2,483 | 2,421 | 2,403 | 460 | 474 | 363 | 18.5 | 19.6 | 15.1 | 2,023 | 1,947 | 2,040 |
| Sitka Borough | 4,616 | 4,505 | 4,493 | 281 | 327 | 288 | 6.1 | 7.3 | 6.4 | 4,335 | 4,178 | 4,205 |
| Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area | 1,506 | 1,554 | 1,453 | 326 | 344 | 316 | 21.6 | 22.1 | 21.7 | 1,180 | 1,210 | 1,137 |
| Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area | 2,796 | 2,625 | 2,752 | 329 | 366 | 349 | 11.8 | 13.9 | 12.7 | 2,467 | 2,259 | 2,403 |
| Yakutat Borough | 263 | 263 | 274 | 44 | 57 | 51 | 16.7 | 21.7 | 18.6 | 219 | 206 | 223 |
| Southwest Region | 18,469 | 18,883 | 18,467 | 2,229 | 2,298 | 2,090 | 12.1 | 12.2 | 11.3 | 16,240 | 16,585 | 16,377 |
| Aleutians East Borough | 1,124 | 1,155 | 1,195 | 87 | 100 | 97 | 7.7 | 8.7 | 8.1 | 1,037 | 1,055 | 1,098 |
| Aleutians West Census Area | 4,120 | 4,456 | 4,193 | 159 | 166 | 161 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3,961 | 4,290 | 4,032 |
| Bethel Census Area | 7,142 | 7,151 | 6,972 | 985 | 1,013 | 880 | 13.8 | 14.2 | 12.6 | 6,157 | 6,138 | 6,092 |
| Bristol Bay Borough | 484 | 470 | 476 | 81 | 89 | 72 | 16.7 | 18.9 | 15.1 | 403 | 381 | 404 |
| Dillingham Census Area | 2,084 | 2,111 | 2,065 | 233 | 232 | 236 | 11.2 | 11.0 | 11.4 | 1,851 | 1,879 | 1,829 |
| Lake and Peninsula Borough | 868 | 864 | 933 | 97 | 107 | 90 | 11.2 | 12.4 | 9.6 | 771 | 757 | 843 |
| Wade Hampton Census Area | 2,647 | 2,676 | 2,633 | 587 | 591 | 554 | 22.2 | 22.1 | 21.0 | 2,060 | 2,085 | 2,079 |

* Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
 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. Many individuals in rural Alaska do not meet the definition because they have not conducted an active job search due to the scarcity of employment opportunities.