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Press Release

March 5, 2009

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 09-08

Unemployment rate at 7.9 percent in January



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January was 7.9 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The rates for all 12 months of 2008 were revised as part of normal annual processing and December's revised rate was 6.8 percent.

The large December to January increase is partly due to the revision process and the fact that revised data from a previous calendar year are not strictly comparable to rates in the current year. The rates are produced in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the same basic methodology is used for all states.

What January's rate suggests is that Alaska's rates are continuing their upward trend and that the U.S. recession and global economic slowdown are affecting the state.

Payroll employment remained well above year-ago levels, however, indicating that the increase in unemployed people is mostly due to something other than job cuts by Alaska companies. January's employment of 304,200 was up 5,200 from January 2008.

Some of that growth – about 1,200 jobs – is due to the timing of the University of Alaska's pay schedule and the break between academic semesters. Still, Alaska's payroll job counts have held up well so far in light of national job losses that reached 3.6 million in January.

One reason that Alaska has fared better than the nation so far is the state's industry mix. Manufacturing jobs make up over a million of the total U.S. losses and most of those cuts have come from companies that manufacture durable goods – cars and trucks, machinery, and metal products, among other things. Alaska has never had a significant number of those jobs to lose.

Construction jobs accounted for another 800,000 of the U.S. losses. Alaska has been losing a more modest share of its construction jobs since 2006, but for reasons unrelated to the sub-prime mortgage problems and related housing downturn. January's estimated construction job count for Alaska was just 100 lower than in January 2008.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

	Preliminary 1/09	Revised 12/08	Revised 1/08	Changes from 12/08 1/08	
Total Nonfarm Employment	304,200	309,200	299,000	-5,000	5,200
Natural Resources and Mining	15,600	15,700	14,200	-100	1,400
Oil and Gas	13,100	13,100	12,100	0	1,000
Construction	13,600	15,200	13,700	-1,600	-100
Manufacturing	10,700	7,200	10,700	3,500	0
Seafood Processing	7,100	3,400	7,000	3,700	100
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	61,200	63,200	60,800	-2,000	400
Retail Trade	35,100	36,500	35,000	-1,400	100
Information	7,000	7,100	6,800	-100	200
Financial Activities	14,400	14,600	14,400	-200	0
Professional and Business Services	24,300	24,700	24,000	-400	300
Educational ² and Health Services	37,400	37,600	36,800	-200	600
Health Care	27,100	27,300	26,700	-200	400
Leisure and Hospitality	27,100	28,200	27,000	-1,100	100
Accommodations	6,100	6,600	6,100	-500	0
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	17,100	17,800	17,400	-700	-300
Other Services	11,000	11,400	10,900	-400	100
Government ³	81,900	84,300	79,700	-2,400	2,200

¹ Not seasonally adjusted

² Private education only

³ Government includes public schools, the University of Alaska and federally recognized tribal entities.

Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

	1/09	12/08	1/08
Alaska	7.9%	6.8%	6.4%
U.S.	7.6%	7.2%	4.9%

Sources for graph and tables: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Contact: Dan Robinson, Economist (907) 465-6036
Research and Analysis' Web site: laborstats.alaska.gov

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted¹

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	1/09	12/08	1/08	1/09	12/08	1/08	1/09	12/08	1/08	1/09	12/08	1/08
Alaska Statewide	356,164	356,301	351,517	32,283	27,051	25,339	9.1	7.6	7.2	323,881	329,250	326,178
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	199,361	200,875	195,398	15,279	12,715	11,648	7.7	6.3	6.0	184,082	188,160	183,750
Municipality of Anchorage	157,074	158,621	154,406	10,707	9,012	8,303	6.8	5.7	5.4	146,367	149,609	146,103
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	42,287	42,254	40,992	4,572	3,703	3,345	10.8	8.8	8.2	37,715	38,551	37,647
Gulf Coast Region	36,224	35,764	35,622	4,227	3,752	3,437	11.7	10.5	9.6	31,997	32,012	32,185
Kenai Peninsula Borough	25,460	25,308	24,908	3,134	2,524	2,455	12.3	10.0	9.9	22,326	22,784	22,453
Kodiak Island Borough	6,118	5,802	6,172	448	711	456	7.3	12.3	7.4	5,670	5,091	5,716
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,646	4,654	4,542	645	517	526	13.9	11.1	11.6	4,001	4,137	4,016
Interior Region	51,854	53,277	52,024	5,094	4,194	3,859	9.8	7.9	7.4	46,760	49,083	48,165
Denali Borough	938	927	871	192	144	137	20.5	15.5	15.7	746	783	734
Fairbanks North Star Borough	44,481	45,830	44,897	3,913	3,255	2,900	8.8	7.1	6.5	40,568	42,575	41,997
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,585	3,666	3,510	472	365	372	13.2	10.0	10.6	3,113	3,301	3,138
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,850	2,854	2,746	517	430	450	18.1	15.1	16.4	2,333	2,424	2,296
Northern Region	12,564	12,370	12,140	1,120	923	982	8.9	7.5	8.1	11,444	11,447	11,158
Nome Census Area	4,108	4,010	4,108	523	413	431	12.7	10.3	10.5	3,585	3,597	3,677
North Slope Borough	5,442	5,376	5,002	217	199	210	4.0	3.7	4.2	5,225	5,177	4,792
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,014	2,984	3,030	380	311	341	12.6	10.4	11.3	2,634	2,673	2,689
Southeast Region	38,208	38,123	37,987	4,057	3,197	3,188	10.6	8.4	8.4	34,151	34,926	34,799
Haines Borough	1,080	1,102	1,091	183	134	160	16.9	12.2	14.7	897	968	931
Juneau Borough	18,549	18,238	18,446	1,304	1,087	947	7.0	6.0	5.1	17,245	17,151	17,499
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,590	7,762	7,519	781	587	562	10.3	7.6	7.5	6,809	7,175	6,957
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area	2,341	2,215	2,273	523	363	425	22.3	16.4	18.7	1,818	1,852	1,848
Sitka Borough	4,275	4,350	4,328	366	286	314	8.6	6.6	7.3	3,909	4,064	4,014
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	1,510	1,499	1,471	428	368	353	28.3	24.5	24.0	1,082	1,131	1,118
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	2,566	2,675	2,577	433	339	402	16.9	12.7	15.6	2,133	2,336	2,175
Yakutat Borough	297	282	282	39	33	25	13.1	11.7	8.9	258	249	257
Southwest Region	17,951	15,893	18,345	2,506	2,271	2,223	14.0	14.3	12.1	15,445	13,622	16,122
Aleutians East Borough	1,348	641	1,339	119	145	114	8.8	22.6	8.5	1,229	496	1,225
Aleutians West Census Area	3,743	2,101	3,924	206	290	217	5.5	13.8	5.5	3,537	1,811	3,707
Bethel Census Area	6,948	7,026	7,083	1,152	983	977	16.6	14.0	13.8	5,796	6,043	6,106
Bristol Bay Borough	468	587	451	71	60	55	15.2	10.2	12.2	397	527	396
Dillingham Census Area	1,927	1,812	1,948	238	198	204	12.4	10.9	10.5	1,689	1,614	1,744
Lake and Peninsula Borough	829	960	925	107	80	101	12.9	8.3	10.9	722	880	824
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,688	2,766	2,675	613	515	555	22.8	18.6	20.7	2,075	2,251	2,120

Note: 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.

¹ Unemployment rates that are not seasonally adjusted should not be compared with those that are.

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