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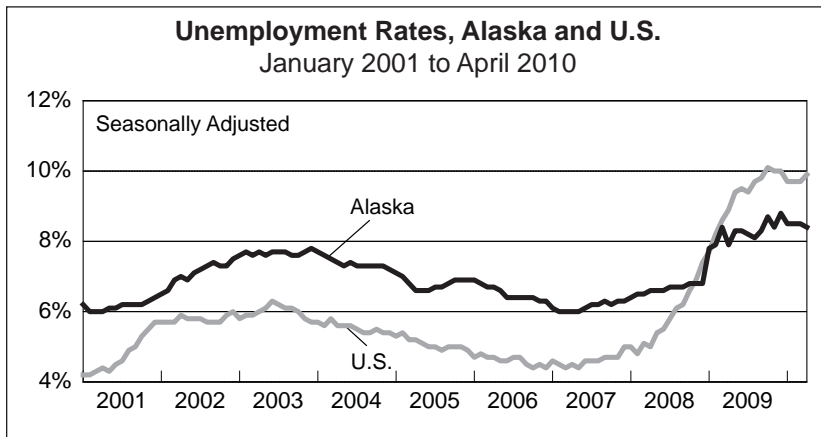
Press Release

May 21, 2010

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 10-35

Unemployment rate at 8.4 percent in April



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April fell slightly to 8.4 percent. March's preliminary rate was revised down one-tenth of a percentage point to 8.5 percent.

The comparable national rate for April was 9.9 percent, up from 9.7 percent in March.

The monthly unemployment rates for both Alaska and the U.S. were higher than they were in April 2009, but Alaska's picture is still brighter than the nation's. In fact, last year was the first year since 1982 that Alaska's annual unemployment rate came in below the nation's. April also marked the 15th month in a row that Alaska's monthly jobless rate was lower than the nation's.

The slight improvement in Alaska's jobless rate is a positive sign for the state's job market, and despite the increase in the national unemployment rate, the nation's employment has been growing since January.

That could eventually help take some pressure off Alaska's labor market if it translates into fewer job seekers heading north looking for work. Whether that happens in 2010 or 2011 is still not clear. However, since Alaska's jobless picture remains considerably better than in most other states, Alaska will probably remain a relatively attractive place to look for work through 2010.

Despite those signs of subtle improvement, there are indicators that continue to point to a very competitive job market for Alaskans. Claims for unemployment insurance – an important ingredient in the calculation of the state's unemployment rate – increased in April and were still running higher than year-ago levels.

The not seasonally adjusted jobless rates fell from March to April in nearly all regions of the state – a typical seasonal occurrence. In most cases, the unemployment rates for April were less than a percentage point higher than year-ago levels, and in several boroughs and census areas they fell.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

| | Preliminary 4/10 | Revised 3/10 | Revised 4/09 | Year-over-year change | |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | | 4/09 | 90% confidence interval ² |
| Total Nonfarm Employment ³ | 316,700 | 313,600 | 313,600 | 3,100 | -4,283 10,483 |
| Mining and Logging | 15,700 | 15,300 | 15,400 | 300 | -493 1,093 |
| Oil and Gas | 12,600 | 12,600 | 13,200 | -600 | – – |
| Construction | 14,500 | 13,300 | 14,400 | 100 | -2,483 2,683 |
| Manufacturing | 11,300 | 13,400 | 11,300 | 0 | -994 994 |
| Seafood Processing | 7,400 | 8,400 | 7,600 | -200 | – – |
| Trade, Transportation and Utilities | 61,800 | 61,200 | 61,400 | 400 | -1,972 2,772 |
| Retail Trade | 35,700 | 35,200 | 34,700 | 1,000 | -1,028 3,028 |
| Information | 6,300 | 6,400 | 6,600 | -300 | -881 281 |
| Financial Activities | 13,800 | 13,800 | 14,400 | -600 | -2,543 1,343 |
| Professional and Business Services | 23,800 | 23,700 | 25,500 | -1,700 | -3,493 93 |
| Educational ⁴ and Health Services | 40,300 | 40,400 | 38,800 | 1,500 | 232 2,768 |
| Health Care | 29,100 | 29,100 | 27,800 | 1,300 | – – |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 29,100 | 27,800 | 28,100 | 1,000 | -1,037 3,037 |
| Accommodations | 6,500 | 6,100 | 6,300 | 200 | – – |
| Food Svcs. and Drinking Places | 18,200 | 17,700 | 17,700 | 500 | – – |
| Other Services | 11,000 | 11,100 | 11,400 | -400 | -3,576 2,776 |
| Government ⁵ | 89,100 | 87,200 | 86,300 | 2,800 | – – |

Notes:

A dash indicates that confidence intervals are not available at this level of detail.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics has implemented a change to the method used to produce statewide wage and salary employment estimates, which has resulted in increased monthly volatility in the wage and salary estimates for many states, including Alaska. Therefore, one should be cautious in interpreting any over-the-year or month-to-month change for these monthly estimates. The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages series may be a better information source (<http://labor.alaska.gov/qcew.htm>).

¹ Not seasonally adjusted

² Based on the margin of error of the estimate, a 90 percent confidence interval statistically determines a range of values within which the "true" value falls with a 90 percent level of confidence. For more information, go to <http://labor.alaska.gov/research/c-i.pdf>.

³ Excludes the self-employed, fishermen and other agricultural workers, and private household workers

⁴ Private education only

⁵ Includes public schools, the University of Alaska and federally recognized tribal entities

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

Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

| | 4/10 | 3/10 | 4/09 |
|--------|------|------|------|
| Alaska | 8.4% | 8.5% | 7.7% |
| U.S. | 9.9% | 9.7% | 8.9% |

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Research and Analysis' Web site: <http://laborstats.alaska.gov>

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted¹

| | Civilian Labor Force | | | Unemployed | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 4/10 ^P | 3/10 | 4/09 | Number | | | Rate | | |
| | | | | 4/10 ^P | 3/10 | 4/09 | 4/10 ^P | 3/10 | 4/09 |
| Alaska Statewide | 362,574 | 362,721 | 355,782 | 30,830 | 34,459 | 27,713 | 8.5 | 9.5 | 7.8 |
| Anchorage/Mat-Su Region | 200,894 | 201,737 | 195,878 | 15,511 | 17,226 | 13,455 | 7.7 | 8.5 | 6.9 |
| Municipality of Anchorage | 157,639 | 157,926 | 153,660 | 11,297 | 12,272 | 9,654 | 7.2 | 7.8 | 6.3 |
| Matanuska-Susitna Borough | 43,255 | 43,811 | 42,218 | 4,214 | 4,954 | 3,801 | 9.7 | 11.3 | 9.0 |
| Gulf Coast Region | 38,426 | 38,148 | 37,825 | 3,934 | 4,453 | 3,577 | 10.2 | 11.7 | 9.5 |
| Kenai Peninsula Borough | 26,827 | 26,545 | 26,328 | 2,978 | 3,379 | 2,674 | 11.1 | 12.7 | 10.2 |
| Kodiak Island Borough | 6,660 | 6,754 | 6,588 | 482 | 505 | 426 | 7.2 | 7.5 | 6.5 |
| Valdez-Cordova Census Area | 4,939 | 4,849 | 4,909 | 474 | 569 | 477 | 9.6 | 11.7 | 9.7 |
| Interior Region | 54,416 | 53,481 | 53,131 | 4,522 | 5,149 | 4,095 | 8.3 | 9.6 | 7.7 |
| Denali Borough | 1,032 | 734 | 868 | 140 | 164 | 123 | 13.6 | 22.3 | 14.2 |
| Fairbanks North Star Borough | 46,555 | 46,349 | 45,673 | 3,466 | 3,948 | 3,115 | 7.4 | 8.5 | 6.8 |
| Southeast Fairbanks Census Area | 3,735 | 3,549 | 3,573 | 412 | 479 | 373 | 11.0 | 13.5 | 10.4 |
| Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area | 3,094 | 2,849 | 3,017 | 504 | 558 | 484 | 16.3 | 19.6 | 16.0 |
| Northern Region | 12,502 | 12,664 | 12,359 | 1,290 | 1,366 | 1,117 | 10.3 | 10.8 | 9.0 |
| Nome Census Area | 4,018 | 4,037 | 4,006 | 574 | 597 | 505 | 14.3 | 14.8 | 12.6 |
| North Slope Borough | 5,443 | 5,552 | 5,418 | 276 | 299 | 230 | 5.1 | 5.4 | 4.2 |
| Northwest Arctic Borough | 3,041 | 3,075 | 2,935 | 440 | 470 | 382 | 14.5 | 15.3 | 13.0 |
| Southeast Region | 38,906 | 38,168 | 38,957 | 3,203 | 3,769 | 3,086 | 8.2 | 9.9 | 7.9 |
| Haines Borough | 1,194 | 1,144 | 1,199 | 136 | 162 | 146 | 11.4 | 14.2 | 12.2 |
| Hoonah-Angoon Census Area ² | 896 | 862 | 959 | 182 | 217 | 205 | 20.3 | 25.2 | 21.4 |
| Juneau Borough | 18,418 | 18,208 | 18,477 | 1,120 | 1,273 | 1,066 | 6.1 | 7.0 | 5.8 |
| Ketchikan Gateway Borough ² | 8,054 | 7,608 | 7,956 | 691 | 789 | 599 | 8.6 | 10.4 | 7.5 |
| Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area ² | 2,296 | 2,379 | 2,306 | 364 | 454 | 390 | 15.9 | 19.1 | 16.9 |
| Sitka Borough | 4,475 | 4,462 | 4,501 | 285 | 337 | 271 | 6.4 | 7.6 | 6.0 |
| Skagway Municipality ² | 515 | 511 | 523 | 97 | 134 | 82 | 18.8 | 26.2 | 15.7 |
| Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ² | 2,735 | 2,717 | 2,709 | 292 | 362 | 290 | 10.7 | 13.3 | 10.7 |
| Yakutat Borough | 323 | 277 | 327 | 36 | 41 | 37 | 11.1 | 14.8 | 11.3 |
| Southwest Region | 17,429 | 18,521 | 17,634 | 2,368 | 2,494 | 2,384 | 13.6 | 13.5 | 13.5 |
| Aleutians East Borough | 1,284 | 1,247 | 1,286 | 95 | 98 | 91 | 7.4 | 7.9 | 7.1 |
| Aleutians West Census Area | 2,869 | 4,086 | 3,046 | 186 | 168 | 253 | 6.5 | 4.1 | 8.3 |
| Bethel Census Area | 6,954 | 6,943 | 6,926 | 1,134 | 1,180 | 1,045 | 16.3 | 17.0 | 15.1 |
| Bristol Bay Borough | 505 | 421 | 516 | 49 | 54 | 49 | 9.7 | 12.8 | 9.5 |
| Dillingham Census Area | 2,093 | 2,109 | 2,109 | 230 | 259 | 230 | 11.0 | 12.3 | 10.9 |
| Lake and Peninsula Borough | 959 | 915 | 976 | 96 | 109 | 111 | 10.0 | 11.9 | 11.4 |
| Wade Hampton Census Area | 2,765 | 2,800 | 2,775 | 578 | 626 | 605 | 20.9 | 22.4 | 21.8 |

P = Preliminary. As more information becomes available, data are revised every month for the previous month and again at the end of every calendar year.

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.

² Because of the creation of new boroughs, this borough or census area has been changed or no longer exists. Data for the Skagway Municipality and Hoonah-Angoon Census Area (previously the Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area) became available in 2010. Data for the Wrangell Borough, and Petersburg and Prince of Wales-Hyder census areas will be available in 2011. Until then, data will continue to be published for the old areas.

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