

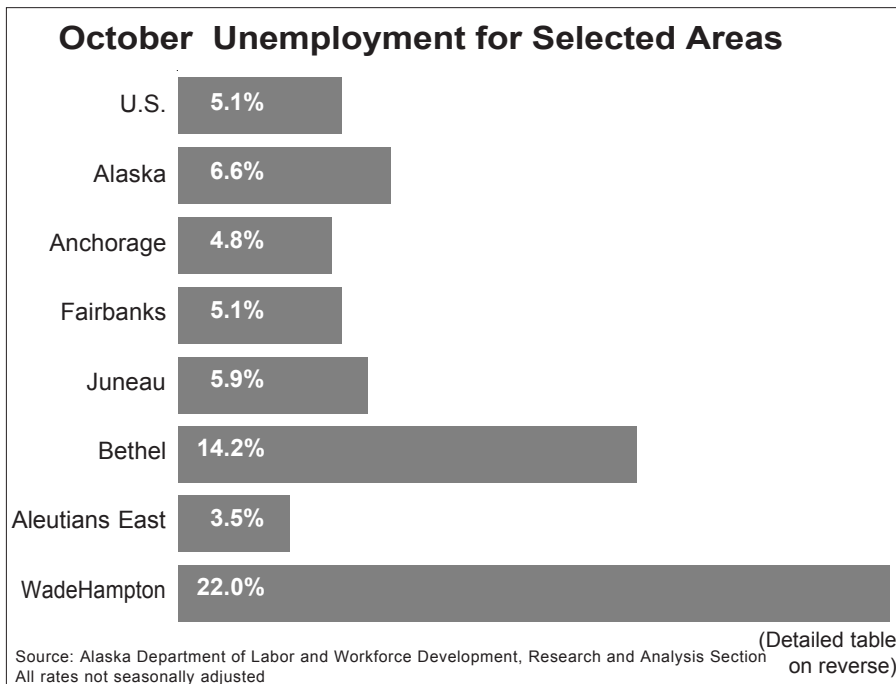
News Release

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October Unemployment Drops Slightly



Alaska's unemployment rate fell one-tenth of a percentage point in October to 6.6 percent according to Dan Robinson, an economist at the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Typically the state's unemployment rate rises in October as seasonal employment continues to wind down for the year. Over the last five years the average October increase has been four-tenths of a percentage point. This year's decline may not be significant, however, since it is well within the statistical margin of error.

Anchorage's unemployment rate fell from 5.1 percent to 4.8 percent, while Fairbanks' rate held constant at 5.1 percent. Juneau saw an increase of three-tenths of a percentage point to 5.9 percent. October marks the third consecutive month Juneau has recorded a higher unemployment rate than Fairbanks, a reversal of recent history for the two boroughs. Over the last five years Juneau's unemployment rates have been an average of nine-tenths of a percentage point lower than those of Fairbanks.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment

	preliminary 10/04	revised 09/04	revised 10/03	changes from 09/04	10/03
Total Nonfarm Employment	304,600	317,400	301,000	-12,800	3,600
Natural Resources & Mining	10,500	10,600	10,300	-100	200
Construction	19,700	21,200	18,500	-1,500	1,200
Manufacturing	10,500	13,600	10,500	-3,100	0
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	62,000	65,100	61,100	-3,100	900
Information	7,000	7,000	6,900	0	100
Financial Activities	14,500	14,800	14,500	-300	0
Professional & Business Services	23,200	23,700	23,000	-500	200
Education & Health Services	35,100	34,900	33,300	200	1,800
Leisure & Hospitality	28,900	33,700	28,600	-4,800	300
Other Services	10,800	10,700	11,300	100	-500
Government	82,400	82,200	82,800	200	-400

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 Rates

October 2004:	Alaska 7.2%	U.S. 5.5%
September 2004:	Alaska 7.6%	U.S. 5.4%
October 2003:	Alaska 8.1%	U.S. 6.0%

Preliminary October payroll estimates showed a decline of 12,800 jobs over the month, a large but expected drop. The construction industry lost 1,500 jobs in October, manufacturing jobs declined by 3,100, mostly in seafood processing, and jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector fell by 4,800. The over-the-month loss of 3,100 jobs in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector was primarily due to expected seasonal cut backs in scenic and sightseeing transportation and in retail trade.

Over-the-year comparisons show 3,600 jobs added since October 2003, a growth rate of 1.2 percent. The education and health services sector has added 1,800 jobs over that period, nearly all of them in health care and social services. Jobs in the construction industry were up by 1,200 in October, a strong over-the-year growth rate of 6.5 percent. After several years of decline, jobs in natural resources and mining are up 200 over the year.

The only two employment sectors with fewer jobs than a year ago were other services and government, although the loss of 500 jobs in other services is due mostly to a change in the way several employers are classified. All three levels of government—federal, state, and local—have cut a small percentage of jobs since October 2003.

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

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Labor Force by Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	10/04	9/04	10/03*	10/04	9/04	10/03*	10/04	9/04	10/03*	10/04	9/04	10/03*
Alaska Statewide	346,048	348,711	333,841	22,940	23,327	24,438	6.6	6.7	7.3	323,108	325,384	309,403
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	195,963	192,127	186,800	10,139	10,542	10,774	5.2	5.5	5.8	185,824	181,585	176,026
Municipality of Anchorage	156,923	152,948	150,878	7,461	7,775	8,014	4.8	5.1	5.3	149,462	145,173	142,864
Mat-Su Borough	39,040	39,179	35,922	2,678	2,767	2,760	6.9	7.1	7.7	36,362	36,412	33,162
Gulf Coast Region	33,550	34,653	32,825	3,353	3,123	3,609	10.0	9.0	11.0	30,197	31,530	29,216
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,894	22,823	21,628	2,105	2,160	2,482	9.6	9.5	11.5	19,789	20,663	19,146
Kodiak Island Borough	6,619	6,730	6,316	672	521	562	10.2	7.7	8.9	5,947	6,209	5,754
Valdez-Cordova CA	5,037	5,100	4,882	576	442	566	11.4	8.7	11.6	4,461	4,658	4,316
Interior Region	52,604	54,561	51,218	3,162	3,104	3,571	6.0	5.7	7.0	49,442	51,457	47,647
Denali Borough	1,260	1,229	1,305	142	66	228	11.3	5.4	17.5	1,118	1,163	1,077
Fairbanks North Star Bor.	46,342	48,206	45,100	2,373	2,445	2,727	5.1	5.1	6.0	43,969	45,761	42,373
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,661	2,738	2,553	292	273	270	11.0	10.0	10.6	2,369	2,465	2,283
Yukon-Koyukuk CA	2,341	2,387	2,259	355	320	345	15.2	13.4	15.3	1,986	2,067	1,914
Northern Region	9,214	9,296	9,204	1,364	1,569	1,432	14.8	16.9	15.6	7,850	7,727	7,772
Nome Census Area	3,381	3,440	3,382	460	565	490	13.6	16.4	14.5	2,921	2,875	2,892
North Slope Borough	3,431	3,417	3,485	456	489	540	13.3	14.3	15.5	2,975	2,928	2,945
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,402	2,439	2,337	448	515	402	18.7	21.1	17.2	1,954	1,924	1,935
Southeast Region	38,106	40,542	37,615	2,747	2,491	2,964	7.2	6.1	7.9	35,359	38,051	34,651
Haines Borough	1,201	1,256	1,215	110	82	146	9.2	6.5	12.0	1,091	1,174	1,069
Juneau Borough	17,067	18,303	16,753	1,014	1,028	1,021	5.9	5.6	6.1	16,053	17,275	15,732
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,196	7,584	7,093	578	462	607	8.0	6.1	8.6	6,618	7,122	6,486
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	2,579	2,786	2,559	258	288	284	10.0	10.3	11.1	2,321	2,498	2,275
Sitka Borough	4,493	4,793	4,468	223	198	283	5.0	4.1	6.3	4,270	4,595	4,185
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	2,039	2,039	2,005	279	145	280	13.7	7.1	14.0	1,760	1,894	1,725
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	3,210	3,470	3,236	226	259	312	7.0	7.5	9.6	2,984	3,211	2,924
Yakutat Borough	321	311	289	59	29	32	18.4	9.3	11.1	262	282	257
Southwest Region	16,611	17,533	16,181	2,176	2,499	2,090	13.1	14.3	12.9	14,435	15,034	14,091
Aleutians East Borough	1,693	1,781	1,674	59	79	79	3.5	4.4	4.7	1,634	1,702	1,595
Aleutians West Census Area	2,908	2,956	2,773	306	246	233	10.5	8.3	8.4	2,602	2,710	2,540
Bethel Census Area	6,602	7,068	6,460	936	1,167	929	14.2	16.5	14.4	5,666	5,901	5,531
Bristol Bay Borough	509	543	504	43	58	50	8.4	10.7	9.9	466	485	454
Dillingham Census Area	1,971	2,081	1,914	231	269	216	11.7	12.9	11.3	1,740	1,812	1,698
Lake & Peninsula Borough	572	591	554	81	79	75	14.2	13.4	13.5	491	512	479
Wade Hampton CA	2,356	2,514	2,301	519	601	508	22.0	23.9	22.1	1,837	1,913	1,793

*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.*