



MEDIA RELEASE

Jobs are Alaska's Future



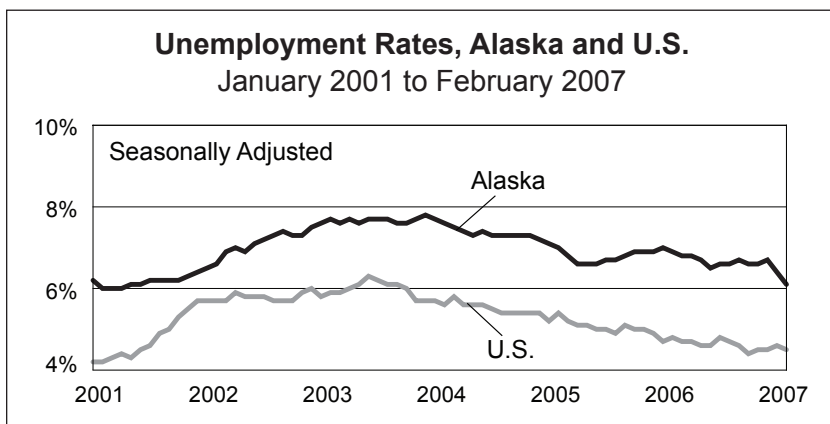
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Commissioner Click Bishop

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Unemployment rate falls to 6.1 percent in February



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell three-tenths of a percentage point in February to 6.1 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

February marked the second consecutive month the rate dropped three-tenths of a percentage point and the 6.1 percent rate is the lowest since June 2001. A falling number of unemployed people – as opposed to strong growth in employment – is the most likely cause of the lower rates, although a margin of error of plus or minus 1 percent dictates caution in interpreting the declines.

According to Dan Robinson, an economist with the department, unemployment often falls when job growth picks up, but that doesn't appear to be happening. Instead, the pool of available workers may be shrinking.

"Birth rates have been slowly declining for years and Alaska has had slightly less migration into the state recently. A smaller number of working-age people combined with steady job growth tends to push unemployment rates lower," he said.

Payroll employment rose by about 6,000 in February (not seasonally adjusted), a slightly smaller increase than in February 2006 but not a significant departure from Alaska's typical seasonal pattern.

Over-the-year growth of 4,500 jobs was also roughly consistent with the long-running pattern of modest but consistent employment gains. At the industry level, construction employment continued to fall below year-ago counts and the manufacturing, information and financial activities categories were also down slightly. Growth remained strong in the oil and gas industry, which was up 1,500 jobs from February 2006.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

	Preliminary 2/07	Revised 1/07	Revised 2/06	Changes from	
				1/07	2/06
Total Nonfarm Employment	302,600	296,600	298,100	6,000	4,500
Natural Resources and Mining	13,100	12,900	11,400	200	1,700
Oil and Gas	10,900	11,000	9,400	-100	1,500
Construction	14,300	14,000	14,700	300	-400
Manufacturing	11,900	10,800	12,100	1,100	-200
Seafood Processing	8,500	7,300	8,600	1,200	-100
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	60,000	60,100	59,000	-100	1,000
Retail Trade	34,200	34,300	33,600	-100	600
Information	6,900	6,900	7,000	0	-100
Financial Activities	14,400	14,500	14,500	-100	-100
Professional and Business Services	23,500	22,900	22,900	600	600
Educational ² and Health Services	37,700	37,000	36,900	700	800
Health Care	26,900	26,600	26,200	300	700
Leisure and Hospitality	27,000	26,700	26,500	300	500
Accommodations	6,100	6,000	5,900	100	200
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	17,100	16,900	17,000	200	100
Other Services	11,300	11,400	11,000	-100	300
Government ³	82,500	79,400	82,100	3,100	400

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

February 2007:	Alaska	6.1%	U.S.	4.5%
January 2007:	Alaska	6.4%	U.S.	4.6%
February 2006:	Alaska	6.9%	U.S.	4.8%

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

Seasonal Adjustment

Seasonal adjustment is a statistical technique that eliminates the influences of weather changes, holidays, the opening and closing of schools, and other annually recurring events from economic time series such as unemployment rates. Eliminating seasonal fluctuations makes it easier to compare data from month to month and identify underlying trends.

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Research and Analysis Web site: almis.labor.state.ak.us

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	2/07	1/07	2/06	2/07	1/07	2/06	2/07	1/07	2/06	2/07	1/07	2/06
Alaska Statewide	342,990	344,818	343,115	24,998	25,393	28,059	7.3	7.4	8.2	317,992	319,425	315,056
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	189,768	190,789	188,491	11,676	11,677	12,972	6.2	6.1	6.9	178,092	179,112	175,519
Municipality of Anchorage	151,814	152,641	150,725	8,295	8,300	9,280	5.5	5.4	6.2	143,519	144,341	141,445
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	37,954	38,148	37,766	3,381	3,377	3,692	8.9	8.9	9.8	34,573	34,771	34,074
Gulf Coast Region	35,106	35,440	35,352	3,496	3,574	3,873	10.0	10.1	11.0	31,610	31,866	31,479
Kenai Peninsula Borough	24,282	24,577	24,422	2,517	2,537	2,812	10.4	10.3	11.5	21,765	22,040	21,610
Kodiak Island Borough	6,164	6,167	6,215	400	449	440	6.5	7.3	7.1	5,764	5,718	5,775
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,660	4,696	4,715	579	588	621	12.4	12.5	13.2	4,081	4,108	4,094
Interior Region	50,959	51,336	51,518	3,763	3,784	4,196	7.4	7.4	8.1	47,196	47,552	47,322
Denali Borough	892	880	869	132	143	138	14.8	16.3	15.9	760	737	731
Fairbanks North Star Borough	44,097	44,317	44,505	2,774	2,807	3,156	6.3	6.3	7.1	41,323	41,510	41,349
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,336	3,427	3,363	401	385	458	12.0	11.2	13.6	2,935	3,042	2,905
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,634	2,712	2,781	456	449	444	17.3	16.6	16.0	2,178	2,263	2,337
Northern Region	11,328	11,495	10,946	1,001	1,010	1,237	8.8	8.8	11.3	10,327	10,485	9,709
Nome Census Area	3,912	3,898	4,029	418	417	551	10.7	10.7	13.7	3,494	3,481	3,478
North Slope Borough	4,556	4,591	3,967	251	251	327	5.5	5.5	8.2	4,305	4,340	3,640
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,860	3,006	2,950	332	342	359	11.6	11.4	12.2	2,528	2,664	2,591
Southeast Region	37,386	37,726	37,933	3,058	3,232	3,507	8.2	8.6	9.2	34,328	34,494	34,426
Haines Borough	1,017	1,064	1,046	138	143	168	13.6	13.4	16.1	879	921	878
Juneau Borough	18,155	18,223	18,381	959	1,003	1,146	5.3	5.5	6.2	17,196	17,220	17,235
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,267	7,427	7,327	583	597	642	8.0	8.0	8.8	6,684	6,830	6,685
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area	2,203	2,356	2,323	403	417	444	18.3	17.7	19.1	1,800	1,939	1,879
Sitka Borough	4,352	4,332	4,443	255	269	333	5.9	6.2	7.5	4,097	4,063	4,110
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	1,591	1,493	1,573	328	346	354	20.6	23.2	22.5	1,263	1,147	1,219
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	2,557	2,575	2,570	360	423	363	14.1	16.4	14.1	2,197	2,152	2,207
Yakutat Borough	244	256	270	32	34	57	13.1	13.3	21.1	212	222	213
Southwest Region	18,442	18,030	18,875	2,002	2,115	2,274	10.9	11.7	12.0	16,440	15,915	16,601
Aleutians East Borough	1,363	1,401	1,359	78	103	102	5.7	7.4	7.5	1,285	1,298	1,257
Aleutians West Census Area	4,418	3,847	4,481	149	237	172	3.4	6.2	3.8	4,269	3,610	4,309
Bethel Census Area	6,872	7,017	7,065	896	895	1,019	13.0	12.8	14.4	5,976	6,122	6,046
Bristol Bay Borough	472	467	486	63	66	83	13.3	14.1	17.1	409	401	403
Dillingham Census Area	1,978	1,878	2,016	199	203	227	10.1	10.8	11.3	1,779	1,675	1,789
Lake and Peninsula Borough	801	850	877	80	84	97	10.0	9.9	11.1	721	766	780
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,538	2,570	2,591	537	527	574	21.2	20.5	22.2	2,001	2,043	2,017

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

Unemployment rates that are not seasonally adjusted, such as those in this table, should not be compared with those that are, such as the statewide rates on the first page of this release. 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.