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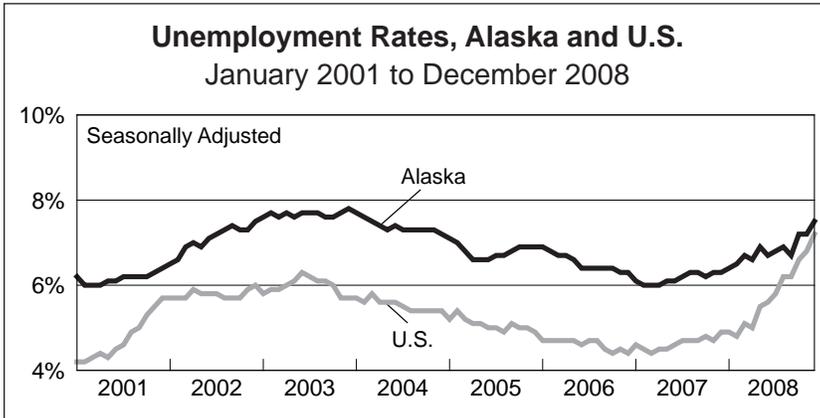
# Press Release

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COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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## Unemployment rate at 7.5 percent in December



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose three-tenths of a percentage point in December to 7.5 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Over the last three months the rate has climbed eight-tenths of a percentage point and is at its highest level since March 2004.

The estimated number of unemployed people in Alaska increased by more than 5,000 from December 2007 to December 2008, although there hasn't been a corresponding loss of jobs. In fact, payroll employment was up an estimated 3,200 over-the-year in December.

Unemployment rates can climb without job losses if a rising number of unemployed people from other states migrate to Alaska or if a decreasing number of unemployed Alaskans migrate out of the state. Both are more likely when the state's economy is relatively healthy compared to the nation's.

The rates can also be pushed higher if an increasing number of people enter the labor force and seek employment. For example, if formerly retired people or stay-at-home parents begin looking for work, they go from being considered outside the labor force to being considered unemployed.

To a small degree, that appears to have happened in 2008. The labor force participation rate – the percentage of the working-age population either employed or actively seeking employment – climbed from 70.3 percent in January to 71.1 percent in December.

The national picture is clearer: unemployment rose by more than 3.5 million from December 2007 to December 2008 and payroll jobs fell by nearly 2.6 million over the same period.

The country is in a deep recession that hasn't yet caused significant job losses in Alaska, according to Dan Robinson, an economist with the Alaska Department of Labor.

"Alaska is one of the few states whose economy continued to grow in 2008. But rising unemployment rates in Alaska are almost certainly the result of the struggling national economy."

### Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment<sup>1</sup>

	Preliminary 12/08	Revised 11/08	Revised 12/07	Changes from	
				11/08	12/07
Total Nonfarm Employment	306,600	311,200	303,400	-4,600	3,200
Natural Resources and Mining	15,400	15,400	14,200	0	1,200
Oil and Gas	13,100	13,000	11,800	100	1,300
Construction	15,000	16,100	15,100	-1,100	-100
Manufacturing	6,500	9,000	6,800	-2,500	-300
Seafood Processing	2,700	5,200	2,900	-2,500	-200
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	62,500	63,200	62,000	-700	500
Retail Trade	36,100	36,300	35,900	-200	200
Information	7,000	7,000	6,900	0	100
Financial Activities	14,500	14,500	14,700	0	-200
Professional and Business Services	24,600	24,800	24,100	-200	500
Educational <sup>2</sup> and Health Services	37,300	37,300	36,700	0	600
Health Care	27,300	27,100	26,700	200	600
Leisure and Hospitality	28,200	28,200	28,400	0	-200
Accommodations	6,400	6,200	6,400	200	0
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	17,900	18,100	18,200	-200	-300
Other Services	11,500	11,600	11,400	-100	100
Government <sup>3</sup>	84,100	84,100	83,100	0	1,000

<sup>1</sup> Not seasonally adjusted

<sup>2</sup> Private education only

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

### Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

	12/08	11/08	12/07
Alaska	7.5%	7.2%	6.3%
U.S.	7.2%	6.8%	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 Adjusted<sup>1</sup>

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	12/08	11/08	12/07	12/08	11/08	12/07	12/08	11/08	12/07	12/08	11/08	12/07
<b>Alaska Statewide</b>	<b>358,770</b>	<b>357,313</b>	<b>351,844</b>	<b>27,679</b>	<b>25,029</b>	<b>23,601</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>331,091</b>	<b>332,284</b>	<b>328,243</b>
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su Region</b>	<b>200,988</b>	<b>198,593</b>	<b>197,082</b>	<b>13,166</b>	<b>12,201</b>	<b>11,135</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>187,822</b>	<b>186,392</b>	<b>185,947</b>
Municipality of Anchorage	159,412	157,699	156,577	9,362	8,791	8,025	5.9	5.6	5.1	150,050	148,908	148,552
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	41,576	40,894	40,505	3,804	3,410	3,110	9.1	8.3	7.7	37,772	37,484	37,395
<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	<b>36,318</b>	<b>36,170</b>	<b>35,299</b>	<b>3,853</b>	<b>3,298</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>32,465</b>	<b>32,872</b>	<b>32,099</b>
Kenai Peninsula Borough	25,689	25,470	25,026	2,589	2,297	2,206	10.1	9.0	8.8	23,100	23,173	22,820
Kodiak Island Borough	5,868	5,983	5,678	725	505	531	12.4	8.4	9.4	5,143	5,478	5,147
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,761	4,717	4,595	539	496	463	11.3	10.5	10.1	4,222	4,221	4,132
<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>53,962</b>	<b>54,118</b>	<b>53,252</b>	<b>4,187</b>	<b>3,766</b>	<b>3,431</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>49,775</b>	<b>50,352</b>	<b>49,821</b>
Denali Borough	898	884	758	147	124	126	16.4	14.0	16.6	751	760	632
Fairbanks North Star Borough	46,741	46,909	46,290	3,217	2,884	2,588	6.9	6.1	5.6	43,524	44,025	43,702
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,566	3,567	3,530	377	338	331	10.6	9.5	9.4	3,189	3,229	3,199
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,757	2,758	2,674	446	420	386	16.2	15.2	14.4	2,311	2,338	2,288
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>12,568</b>	<b>12,318</b>	<b>11,935</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>11,619</b>	<b>11,415</b>	<b>11,028</b>
Nome Census Area	4,067	4,059	4,006	425	381	384	10.4	9.4	9.6	3,642	3,678	3,622
North Slope Borough	5,455	5,158	4,886	205	218	218	3.8	4.2	4.5	5,250	4,940	4,668
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,046	3,101	3,043	319	304	305	10.5	9.8	10.0	2,727	2,797	2,738
<b>Southeast Region</b>	<b>38,734</b>	<b>39,263</b>	<b>38,317</b>	<b>3,289</b>	<b>2,915</b>	<b>2,796</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>35,445</b>	<b>36,348</b>	<b>35,521</b>
Haines Borough	1,149	1,253	1,092	139	124	145	12.1	9.9	13.3	1,010	1,129	947
Juneau Borough	18,458	18,555	18,553	1,119	1,016	875	6.1	5.5	4.7	17,339	17,539	17,678
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,896	7,857	7,707	609	537	487	7.7	6.8	6.3	7,287	7,320	7,220
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area	2,268	2,297	2,191	374	323	314	16.5	14.1	14.3	1,894	1,974	1,877
Sitka Borough	4,405	4,504	4,441	294	269	286	6.7	6.0	6.4	4,111	4,235	4,155
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	1,510	1,610	1,578	371	346	334	24.6	21.5	21.2	1,139	1,264	1,244
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	2,743	2,859	2,529	349	274	331	12.7	9.6	13.1	2,394	2,585	2,198
Yakutat Borough	305	328	226	34	26	24	11.1	7.9	10.6	271	302	202
<b>Southwest Region</b>	<b>16,203</b>	<b>16,852</b>	<b>15,958</b>	<b>2,235</b>	<b>1,947</b>	<b>2,130</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>13,968</b>	<b>14,905</b>	<b>13,828</b>
Aleutians East Borough	587	802	641	122	99	143	20.8	12.3	22.3	465	703	498
Aleutians West Census Area	2,112	2,305	2,180	229	180	300	10.8	7.8	13.8	1,883	2,125	1,880
Bethel Census Area	7,339	7,231	7,144	1,010	911	910	13.8	12.6	12.7	6,329	6,320	6,234
Bristol Bay Borough	588	864	511	62	56	48	10.5	6.5	9.4	526	808	463
Dillingham Census Area	1,849	1,916	1,822	203	177	174	11.0	9.2	9.5	1,646	1,739	1,648
Lake and Peninsula Borough	983	1,001	1,031	83	60	61	8.4	6.0	5.9	900	941	970
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,745	2,733	2,629	526	464	494	19.2	17.0	18.8	2,219	2,269	2,135

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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