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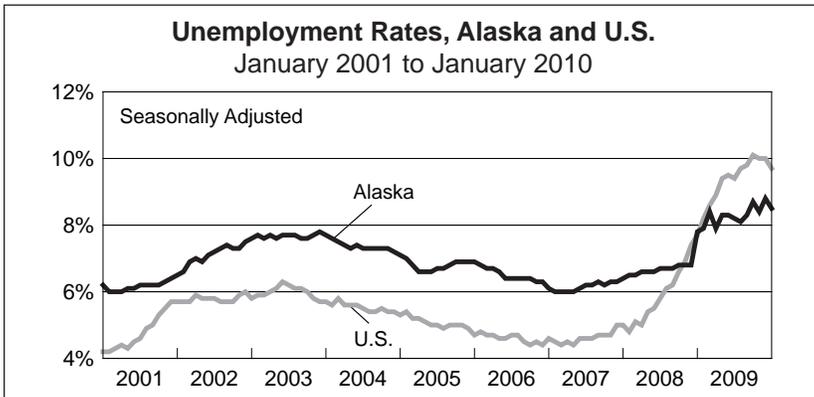
Press Release

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COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Unemployment rate begins the year at 8.5 percent



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January was 8.5 percent according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. All of the labor force data for 2009 were revised as part of the annual production of these statistics, and December's revised unemployment rate was 8.8 percent.

The comparable national rate for January fell three-tenths of a percentage point to 9.7 percent. The unemployment rates for both Alaska and the U.S. in January were higher than they were year-ago but both rates also improved between December 2009 and January 2010. It is still too early to tell if this monthly improvement is developing into a more permanent trend.

During the upcoming months it will be important to keep an eye on both the state's and the nation's jobless rates. If the national unemployment rates continue to improve, it should eventually take some pressure off of Alaska's jobless picture.

When we drill down more deeply into Alaska's boroughs and census areas, the labor force picture in January was disparate. With the exception of Anchorage/Mat-Su, all of the other regions in the state (using not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates) were in the double digits – not an altogether unusual occurrence during the winter months. Five areas of the state had jobless rates of more than 20 percent – or more than double the nation's.

	Revised			Year-over-year change		
	1/10	12/09	1/09	1/09	90% confidence interval ⁵	
					low	high
Total Nonfarm Employment ²	306,800	307,200	302,700	4,100	-3,283	11,483
Mining and Logging	14,300	14,600	15,400	-1,100	-1,893	-307
Oil and Gas	12,200	12,200	13,400	-1,200	-	-
Construction	12,300	13,600	12,900	-600	-3,183	1,983
Manufacturing	12,100	6,500	10,500	1,600	606	2,594
Seafood Processing	8,100	3,000	6,900	1,200	-	-
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	60,600	61,600	60,000	600	-1,772	2,972
Retail Trade	34,900	35,600	34,200	700	-1,328	2,728
Information	6,400	6,400	6,700	-300	-881	281
Financial Activities	14,100	14,400	14,300	-200	-2,143	1,743
Professional and Business Services	23,600	24,500	25,200	-1,600	-3,393	193
Educational ³ and Health Services	40,100	39,700	37,900	2,200	932	3,468
Health Care	29,000	28,800	27,400	1,600	-	-
Leisure and Hospitality	27,500	28,700	26,500	1,000	-1,037	3,037
Accommodations	6,100	6,200	6,000	100	-	-
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	17,600	18,600	16,900	700	-	-
Other Services	11,500	11,500	11,100	400	-2,777	3,577
Government ⁴	84,400	85,800	82,200	2,200	-	-

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

¹ Not seasonally adjusted

² Excludes the self-employed, fishermen and other agricultural workers, and private household workers

³ Private education only

⁴ Includes public schools, the University of Alaska and federally recognized tribal entities

⁵ 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>.

	1/10	12/09	1/09
Alaska	8.5%	8.8%	7.8%
U.S.	9.7%	10.0%	7.7%

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

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has implemented a change to the method used to produce statewide wage and salary employment estimates. This change has resulted in increased monthly volatility in the wage and salary estimates for many states, including Alaska. This increased volatility was evident in Alaska's statewide January employment estimates. Therefore, one should be very 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 source of information for trends analysis. (<http://labor.alaska.gov/qcew.htm>)

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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					
	1/10 ^P	12/09	1/09	Number			Rate		
				1/10 ^P	12/09	1/09	1/10 ^P	12/09	1/09
Alaska Statewide	360,662	355,292	358,668	34,474	29,122	31,742	9.6	8.2	8.8
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	202,148	198,002	201,564	16,876	13,805	15,373	8.3	7.0	7.6
Municipality of Anchorage	158,174	155,037	157,907	11,919	9,631	10,927	7.5	6.2	6.9
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	43,974	42,965	43,657	4,957	4,174	4,446	11.3	9.7	10.2
Gulf Coast Region	37,526	36,763	37,137	4,537	3,783	4,487	12.1	10.3	12.1
Kenai Peninsula Borough	26,550	25,893	26,461	3,477	2,805	3,158	13.1	10.8	11.9
Kodiak Island Borough	6,448	6,393	6,131	480	410	806	7.4	6.4	13.1
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,528	4,477	4,545	580	568	523	12.8	12.7	11.5
Interior Region	52,640	52,370	53,736	5,360	4,615	4,809	10.2	8.8	8.9
Denali Borough	790	828	747	192	175	179	24.3	21.1	24.0
Fairbanks North Star Borough	45,473	45,272	46,506	4,123	3,521	3,718	9.1	7.8	8.0
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,557	3,489	3,554	492	421	418	13.8	12.1	11.8
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,820	2,781	2,929	553	498	494	19.6	17.9	16.9
Northern Region	12,490	12,693	12,385	1,270	1,042	1,182	10.2	8.2	9.5
Nome Census Area	4,025	4,134	4,001	564	486	526	14.0	11.8	13.1
North Slope Borough	5,581	5,573	5,557	284	207	269	5.1	3.7	4.8
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,884	2,986	2,827	422	349	387	14.6	11.7	13.7
Southeast Region	37,901	37,576	38,357	3,995	3,653	3,596	10.5	9.7	9.4
Haines Borough	1,079	1,052	1,066	158	167	142	14.6	15.9	13.3
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	909	934	1,000	257	275	264	28.3	29.4	26.4
Juneau Borough	18,324	18,216	18,231	1,344	1,193	1,178	7.3	6.5	6.5
Ketchikan Gateway Borough ²	7,543	7,432	7,817	819	681	752	10.9	9.2	9.6
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area ²	2,353	2,347	2,385	483	484	405	20.5	20.6	17.0
Sitka Borough	4,333	4,295	4,463	375	330	352	8.7	7.7	7.9
Skagway Municipality	487	493	535	105	108	104	21.6	21.9	19.4
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ²	2,585	2,537	2,561	407	380	354	15.7	15.0	13.8
Yakutat Borough	288	270	299	47	35	45	16.3	13.0	15.1
Southwest Region	17,954	17,889	15,488	2,435	2,224	2,294	13.6	12.4	14.8
Aleutians East Borough	1,259	1,274	663	109	104	121	8.7	8.2	18.3
Aleutians West Census Area	3,529	3,566	2,039	230	188	285	6.5	5.3	14.0
Bethel Census Area	7,149	7,059	6,978	1,111	1,017	1,006	15.5	14.4	14.4
Bristol Bay Borough	435	441	439	58	63	49	13.3	14.3	11.2
Dillingham Census Area	2,060	2,024	1,731	241	212	206	11.7	10.5	11.9
Lake and Peninsula Borough	830	867	967	110	95	93	13.3	11.0	9.6
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,692	2,658	2,671	576	545	534	21.4	20.5	20.0

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 new Skagway Borough and Hoonah-Angoon Census Area will be available in 2010. Data for the other new boroughs and 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