

Click Bishop
Commissioner

P.O. Box 111149
Juneau, AK 99811-1149

www.labor.alaska.gov

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Beth Leschper
Communications Director

907.465.2700
cell: 907.723.1321

beth.leschper@alaska.gov

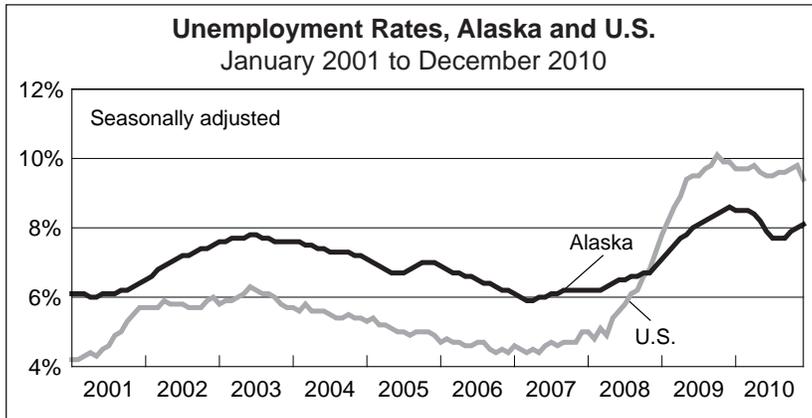
Press Release

January 21, 2011

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 11-04

Unemployment rate at 8.1 percent in December



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December inched up slightly to 8.1 percent. November's rate was 8.0 percent.

Alaska's jobless rate remains lower than the rest of the United States. The comparable national unemployment rate for December was 9.4 percent, down from 9.8 percent in November. Exactly a year ago, the national unemployment rate was 9.9 percent, compared to 8.6 percent for Alaska.

The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in nearly all of the state's regions in December. In most cases, the jobless numbers are close to year-ago levels.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

	Preliminary 12/10	Revised 11/10	Revised 12/09	Year-over-year change	
				12/09	90% confidence interval ²
Total Nonfarm Employment ³	308,200	311,700	307,200	1,000	-6,383 8,383
Mining and Logging	14,100	14,200	14,600	-500	-1,293 293
Oil and Gas	12,000	11,900	12,200	-200	- -
Construction	12,600	13,900	13,600	-1,000	-3,583 1,583
Manufacturing	6,900	10,400	6,500	400	-594 1,394
Seafood Processing	2,900	4,700	3,000	-100	- -
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	61,000	60,600	61,600	-600	-2,972 1,772
Retail Trade	35,300	34,900	35,600	-300	-2,328 1,728
Information	6,200	6,300	6,400	-200	-781 381
Financial Activities	14,600	15,000	14,400	200	-1,743 2,143
Professional and Business Services	25,000	24,600	24,500	500	-1,293 2,293
Educational ⁴ and Health Services	41,700	42,700	39,700	2,000	732 3,268
Health Care	29,900	30,700	28,800	1,100	- -
Leisure and Hospitality	28,800	26,800	28,700	100	-1,937 2,137
Accommodations	6,400	5,900	6,200	200	- -
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	18,500	17,400	18,600	-100	- -
Other Services	11,200	11,400	11,500	-300	-3,476 2,876
Government ⁵	86,100	85,800	85,700	400	- -

In December, jobless rates hit the double digits in 20 out of 28 areas in the state — a characteristic of winter in Alaska — with unemployment highest in Skagway and Hoonah-Angoon. The economies with the highest unemployment tend to be smaller communities with strong ties to fishing and tourism, and/or those with a chronic lack of year-round employment opportunities.

Larger communities with less-pronounced seasonal employment tend to have the lowest rates. However, the relatively small North Slope Borough was an exception in December. Its unemployment rate is low because of its oil industry workforce, which tends not to be seasonal.

Notes:

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

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

Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

	12/10	11/10	12/09
Alaska	8.1%	8.0%	8.6%
U.S.	9.4%	9.8%	9.9%

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's Bureau of Labor Statistics has implemented a change to the method used to produce statewide wage and salary employment estimates. That change has resulted in increased monthly volatility in the wage and salary estimates for many states, including Alaska. 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>).

Contact: Neal Fried, Economist (907) 269-4861
Research and Analysis Web site: <http://laborstats.alaska.gov>

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted¹

	Civilian Labor Force			Unemployed					
	12/10 ^P	11/10	12/09	Number			Rate		
				12/10 ^P	11/10	12/09	12/10 ^P	11/10	12/09
Alaska Statewide	360,334	359,933	358,668	29,297	28,221	31,742	8.1	7.8	8.8
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	202,394	200,829	201,564	14,270	13,970	15,373	7.1	7.0	7.6
Municipality of Anchorage	158,637	157,555	157,907	10,131	10,047	10,927	6.4	6.4	6.9
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	43,757	43,274	43,657	4,139	3,923	4,446	9.5	9.1	10.2
Gulf Coast Region	37,137	37,694	37,137	4,019	3,746	4,487	10.8	9.9	12.1
Kenai Peninsula Borough	26,155	26,170	26,461	2,806	2,671	3,158	10.7	10.2	11.9
Kodiak Island Borough	6,170	6,616	6,131	697	580	806	11.3	8.8	13.1
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,812	4,908	4,545	516	495	523	10.7	10.1	11.5
Interior Region	54,428	54,138	53,736	4,375	4,222	4,809	8.0	7.8	8.9
Denali Borough	844	802	747	154	156	179	18.2	19.5	24.0
Fairbanks North Star Borough	46,877	46,669	46,506	3,331	3,218	3,718	7.1	6.9	8.0
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,710	3,660	3,554	402	383	418	10.8	10.5	11.8
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,997	3,007	2,929	488	465	494	16.3	15.5	16.9
Northern Region	12,398	12,380	12,385	1,125	1,141	1,182	9.1	9.2	9.5
Nome Census Area	4,181	4,191	4,001	498	494	526	11.9	11.8	13.1
North Slope Borough	5,061	5,031	5,557	254	272	269	5.0	5.4	4.8
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,156	3,158	2,827	373	375	387	11.8	11.9	13.7
Southeast Region	38,320	38,404	38,357	3,298	3,052	3,596	8.6	7.9	9.4
Haines Borough	1,181	1,208	1,066	143	120	142	12.1	9.9	13.3
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area ²	868	888	1,000	186	172	264	21.4	19.4	26.4
City and Borough of Juneau	18,424	18,285	18,231	1,074	1,049	1,178	5.8	5.7	6.5
Ketchikan Gateway Borough ²	7,605	7,661	7,817	673	623	752	8.8	8.1	9.6
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area ²	2,438	2,419	2,385	395	344	405	16.2	14.2	17.0
City and Borough of Sitka	4,368	4,458	4,463	325	288	352	7.4	6.5	7.9
Skagway Municipality ²	553	566	535	154	147	104	27.8	26.0	19.4
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ²	2,613	2,651	2,561	310	274	354	11.9	10.3	13.8
Yakutat Borough	270	268	299	38	35	45	14.1	13.1	15.1
Southwest Region	15,656	16,486	15,488	2,210	2,089	2,294	14.1	12.7	14.8
Aleutians East Borough	599	816	663	109	102	121	18.2	12.5	18.3
Aleutians West Census Area	1,888	2,443	2,039	227	187	285	12.0	7.7	14.0
Bethel Census Area	7,371	7,224	6,978	1,007	982	1,006	13.7	13.6	14.4
Bristol Bay Borough	496	527	439	47	40	49	9.5	7.6	11.2
Dillingham Census Area	1,730	1,838	1,731	203	193	206	11.7	10.5	11.9
Lake and Peninsula Borough	835	899	967	93	75	93	11.1	8.3	9.6
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,737	2,739	2,671	524	510	534	19.1	18.6	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 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; and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics