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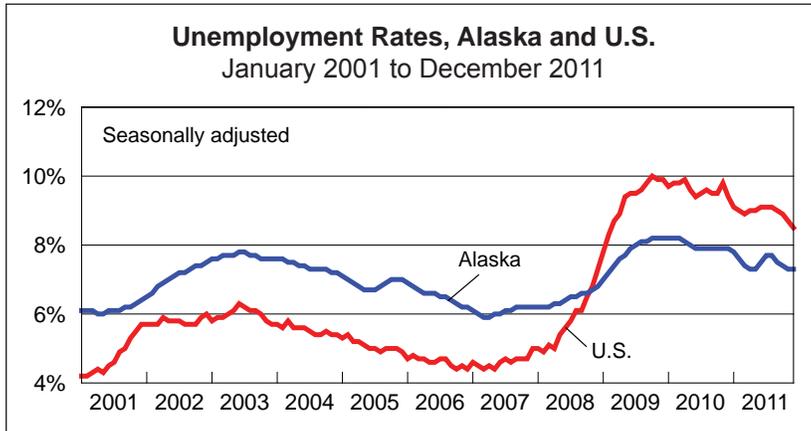
Press Release

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COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 12-05

Unemployment rate at 7.3 percent in December



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained unchanged in December, at 7.3 percent.

The comparable national jobless rate for December was 8.5 percent, down from 8.7 percent in November. Both rates were lower than a year ago, when the national unemployment rate was 9.4 percent and Alaska's was 7.9 percent.

Not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in all six of the state's regions, as they typically do in December. Rates were lower than December 2010 in four regions, about the same in the Northern Region, and noticeably higher in the Southwest Region. The largest increases in Southwest were in the Aleutians East Borough and in the Aleutians West and Wade Hampton census areas.

Nineteen of 30 areas in the state had unemployment rates in the double digits, and five of those exceeded 20 percent — not unusual for Alaska in the winter. Rates were highest in Skagway and the Aleutians East Borough, whose economies are tied to fishing and tourism and/or suffer from a lack of year-round employment opportunities. The areas with the lowest rates tend to be the state's larger communities, where seasonal employment is less pronounced.

Wage and salary employment continued its typical seasonal decline in December, with job counts falling the most in construction and manufacturing, which is mostly seafood processing. Job numbers were below December 2010 levels, but the preliminary estimates are subject to potentially large revisions.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

	Preliminary 12/11	Revised 11/11	Revised 12/10	Year-over-year change		
				12/10	90% confidence interval ²	
Total Nonfarm Employment ³	313,100	317,400	313,400	-300	-7,683	7,083
Mining and Logging	16,300	16,600	15,700	600	-193	1,393
Oil and Gas	13,400	13,600	13,100	300	-	-
Construction	13,100	14,400	13,400	-300	-2,883	2,283
Manufacturing	5,200	7,200	6,700	-1,500	-2,494	-506
Retail Trade	35,500	35,800	35,000	500	-1,528	2,528
Information	6,500	6,500	6,400	100	-481	681
Financial Activities	14,700	14,900	15,400	-700	-2,643	1,243
Professional and Business Services	25,700	26,300	25,500	200	-1,593	1,993
Educational ⁴ and Health Services	43,800	43,700	42,400	1,400	132	2,668
Health Care	32,100	31,900	30,400	1,700	-	-
Leisure and Hospitality	29,200	29,300	29,000	200	-1,837	2,237
Other Services	11,200	11,000	11,200	0	-3,176	3,176
Government ⁵	85,200	85,100	85,900	-700	-	-

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

¹Not seasonally adjusted.

²Based 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>.

³Excludes the self-employed, fishermen and other agricultural workers, and private household workers.

Only select categories are included, so sector values will not sum to the total employment.

⁴Private education only.

⁵Includes public schools, the University of Alaska, and federally recognized tribal entities

Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

	12/11	11/11	12/10
Alaska	7.3%	7.3%	7.9%
U.S.	8.5%	8.7%	9.4%

Beginning with the production of preliminary estimates for March 2011, production of employment estimates has transitioned from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Research and Analysis Section to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Concurrent with this transition, BLS implemented several changes to the methods to help standardize estimation across states. While these changes reduce the potential for statistical bias in state and metropolitan area estimates, they may increase month-to-month variability. More detailed information on the changes is available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm>.

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

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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					
	12/11 ^P	11/11	12/10	Number			Rate		
	12/11 ^P	11/11	12/10	12/11 ^P	11/11	12/10	12/11 ^P	11/11	12/10
Alaska Statewide	365,301	365,891	359,651	28,007	26,038	29,060	7.7	7.1	8.1
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	202,675	202,322	202,320	12,894	12,288	14,167	6.4	6.1	7.0
Municipality of Anchorage	158,419	158,270	158,312	8,892	8,544	10,068	5.6	5.4	6.4
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	44,256	44,052	44,008	4,002	3,744	4,099	9.0	8.5	9.3
Gulf Coast Region	38,304	38,811	36,879	3,943	3,501	3,992	10.3	9.0	10.8
Kenai Peninsula Borough	26,983	26,953	25,981	2,593	2,400	2,788	9.6	8.9	10.7
Kodiak Island Borough	6,597	7,046	6,123	812	622	695	12.3	8.8	11.4
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,724	4,812	4,775	538	479	509	11.4	10.0	10.7
Interior Region	55,545	55,142	54,302	4,314	4,000	4,342	7.8	7.3	8.0
Denali Borough	857	825	853	183	168	151	21.4	20.4	17.7
Fairbanks North Star Borough	48,017	47,689	46,772	3,209	2,997	3,310	6.7	6.3	7.1
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,589	3,554	3,671	411	372	397	11.5	10.5	10.8
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	3,082	3,074	3,006	511	463	484	16.6	15.1	16.1
Northern Region	13,242	13,205	12,782	1,167	1,135	1,114	8.8	8.6	8.7
Nome Census Area	4,292	4,278	4,151	481	454	493	11.2	10.6	11.9
North Slope Borough	5,772	5,714	5,513	253	264	253	4.4	4.6	4.6
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,178	3,213	3,118	433	417	368	13.6	13.0	11.8
Southeast Region	38,898	38,860	37,814	3,107	2,821	3,253	8.0	7.3	8.6
Haines Borough	1,091	1,134	1,167	130	109	143	11.9	9.6	12.3
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area ²	856	835	845	184	151	185	21.5	18.1	21.9
Juneau, City and Borough of	18,819	18,745	18,180	938	919	1,055	5.0	4.9	5.8
Ketchikan Gateway Borough ²	7,836	7,845	7,502	635	573	662	8.1	7.3	8.8
Petersburg Census Area ²	1,719	1,675	–	248	175	–	14.4	10.4	–
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area ²	2,437	2,437	–	372	331	–	15.3	13.6	–
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area ²	–	–	2,407	–	–	391	–	–	16.2
Sitka, City and Borough of	4,324	4,372	4,306	296	272	319	6.8	6.2	7.4
Skagway, Municipality of ²	563	580	561	149	159	154	26.5	27.4	27.5
Wrangell, City and Borough of ²	992	992	–	121	103	–	12.2	10.4	–
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ²	–	–	2,579	–	–	306	–	–	11.9
Yakutat, City and Borough of	261	245	267	34	29	38	13.0	11.8	14.2
Southwest Region	16,636	17,550	15,553	2,582	2,293	2,192	15.5	13.1	14.1
Aleutians East Borough	799	940	607	212	167	107	26.5	17.8	17.6
Aleutians West Census Area	2,206	2,790	1,878	437	347	225	19.8	12.4	12.0
Bethel Census Area	7,447	7,372	7,287	1,028	942	1,001	13.8	12.8	13.7
Bristol Bay Borough	600	597	502	47	41	46	7.8	6.9	9.2
Dillingham Census Area	1,825	1,865	1,701	208	196	201	11.4	10.5	11.8
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,127	1,096	861	85	71	93	7.5	6.5	10.8
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,632	2,890	2,717	565	529	519	21.5	18.3	19.1

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.

¹Unemployment rates that are not seasonally adjusted should not be compared with those that are.

²Because 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 City and Borough of Wrangell, Petersburg Census Area, and Prince of Wales-Hyder went into effect in January 2011. Prior to January 2011, data were published for Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area and Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area.

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