ALASKA ECONOMIC

TRENDS

January 1997

A *TRENDS* Profile— Ketchikan

MILL CLOSURE IMPACTS FAR REACHING

OCTOBER WINTERIZES ECONOMY

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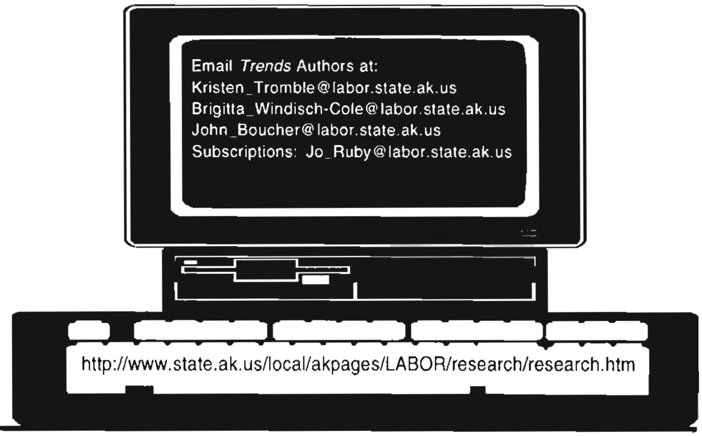

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A Trends Profile—

Ketchikan

by Kristen Tromble and John Boucher

John Boucher and Kristen Tromble are labor economists with the Research and Analysis Section, Administrative Services Division, Alaska Department of Labor. They are located in Juneau.

Economy is resource driven

Ketchikan is a narrow, waterfront community that stretches about three miles along the shoreline of Revillagigedo Island at the southern end of the Southeast Alaska Panhandle. Perched between the waters of the Tongass Narrows and steep, forested mountain slopes, it is Alaska's southernmost major city and the state's fifth largest, with a population of about 8,700. The surrounding Ketchikan Gateway Borough is home to nearly 15,000 Alaskans.

As elsewhere in Alaska, Ketchikan's economy has always been tightly connected to the natural resources of the area. Ketchikan began as a mining community in the late 1800s. When mineral prices slumped, fish harvesting and processing eclipsed mining as the primary economic activity. In the 1950s, the timber industry assumed the primary position when Ketchikan Pulp Company (KPC) opened. The pulp mill, which became the community's largest employer, was sustained by timber supplied from the Tongass National Forest through a 50-year contract with the U.S. Forest Service.

As 1996 drew to a close, Ketchikan braced for economic change. In October, Louisiana-Pacific, KPC's parent company, announced it would close the pulp mill in March 1997. The future of the company's associated sawmills is, at this writing, uncertain.

This profile looks at Ketchikan before the mill closure. It provides baseline measures that can be used in future analyses of the effects of the closure on the community. Impacts on outlying areas such as Prince of Wales Island and Annette Island, where KPC's logging and sawmill sites are also threatened, are beyond the scope of this article. The information presented in this report indicates that after a decade of generally improving economic performance, the pulp mill closure could precipitate a sharp reversal.

Several indicators of economic performance have improved during the last few years. Population, employment and wages are up; unemployment, down. Per capita income has risen and is running higher than the statewide average. The number of tourists visiting Ketchikan is expected to continue to climb. More businesses are operating. Sales tax collected has increased steadily since at least 1988. In 1995, gross business sales were down slightly from the previous year, but were still more than 20 percent higher than their 1990 level. While the transition will be rough, Ketchikan's strengths should assure that the community survives.

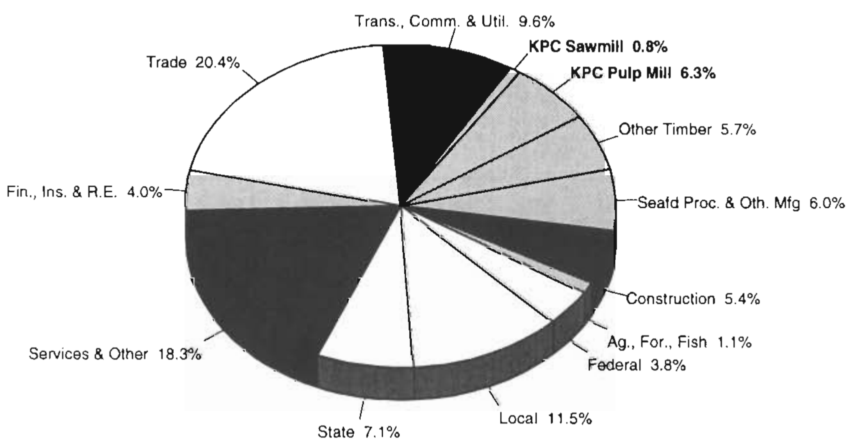
Timber drives a diverse economy

Ketchikan's recent employment trends have been tied to the timber industry's performance. From 1980-1985, a down period in the timber industry, Ketchikan's growth rate was 0.4%. Meanwhile, the rest of Southeast grew at a respectable 2.3% rate, and the

Figure • 1

1995 Employment Reflects Diverse Economy

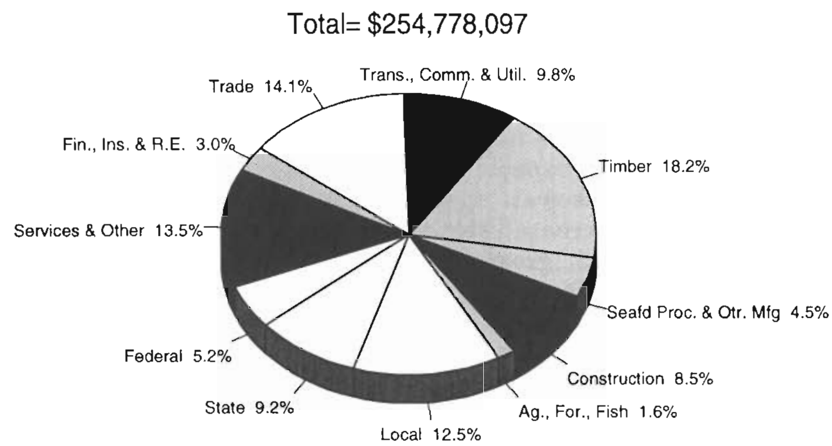
Total= 7,980



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Figure • 2

Manufacturing Provides 22.7% of Wages 1995



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

state hummed along with 6.0% growth. A logging boom propelled Ketchikan's growth rate to 4.8% during 1985-1990. In this period, the rest of Southeast Alaska grew at a 2.3% rate, while the statewide rate fell to 0.6%. Since 1990, the timber industry downturn was a big factor in slowing Ketchikan's growth rate to 1.0%. The remainder of Southeast Alaska grew at 1.1%, and the state at 1.9%.

Despite recent slower growth in 1995, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's wage and salary employment hit a new high of nearly 8,000 wage and salary jobs. Gains in trade and services offset dips in manufacturing and government. (See Table 1.) This number excludes most seafood harvesters and other self-employed persons.

In addition to employment growth, Ketchikan has enjoyed more economic diversity than many communities in Southeast Alaska. In 1995, four industries, timber, fish,

Table • 1

Ketchikan Gateway Borough Wage and Salary Employment 1980-1995

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Total	5,842	5,598	5,715	6,024	5,723	5,971	6,141	6,434	6,853	7,187	7,602
Mining	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	1
Construction	392	258	270	424	435	336	268	366	375	299	320
Manufacturing 1/	1,239	959	973	822	560	937	1,197	1,282	1,378	1,668	1,645
Transportation	627	630	499	488	430	441	509	584	675	590	668
Trade	969	980	1,061	1,189	1,091	1,113	1,105	1,132	1,225	1,305	1,438
Wholesale	114	81	96	192	150	138	142	154	177	212	270
Retail	856	899	965	997	941	975	963	979	1,048	1,093	1,168
Finance-Ins. & R.E.	229	234	212	202	210	216	231	230	209	243	290
Services & Misc. 2/ 3/	872	947	1,036	1,119	1,146	1,129	1,108	1,121	1,265	1,302	1,382
Ag., Forestry & Fishing	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	29	26	29
Nonclassified	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	0	1
Government	1,484	1,542	1,641	1,766	1,818	1,769	1,696	1,681	1,695	1,754	1,828
Federal	359	321	342	309	313	282	269	262	251	273	288
State	431	445	531	561	587	542	556	510	523	535	535
Local	695	776	768	896	919	945	872	910	921	945	1,006

1/ Manufacturing employment adjusted in 1990 & 1991 to account for a multi-area logging firm whose employment was all counted in Ketchikan.
2/ Through 1987, services includes employment in ag., forestry & fishing and nonclassified.
3/ Services employment adjusted to include multi-worksite employer whose employment was counted elsewhere.
Subtotals may not add to totals due to rounding.
Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

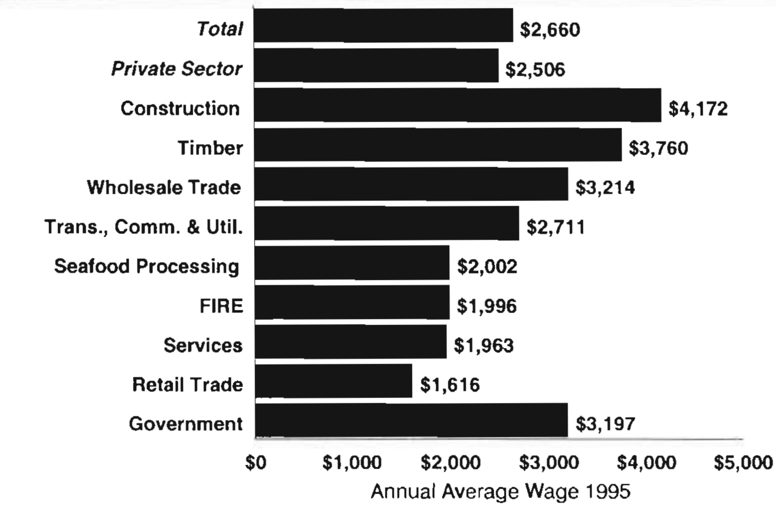
tourism and government, each served as a major economic support. This mix is reflected in the employment pattern shown in Figure 1. Government (federal, state, and local) was Ketchikan's largest provider of wage and salary jobs. Tourism's influence partially accounts for the strong trade and services sectors. Timber and seafood processing form the bulk of manufacturing. The seafood industry's presence is under-represented in this figure, as harvesting employment is not counted.

With this diverse mix, Ketchikan was less dependent on government and more dependent on manufacturing than the region as a whole. Ketchikan's diversity is also revealed by its largest employers. Every major industry except mining is represented by establishments employing more than 50 workers. (See Table 2.)

Ketchikan's wages were also more distributed by industry. Government provides the

Figure • 3

Timber Industry Boosts Average Wage



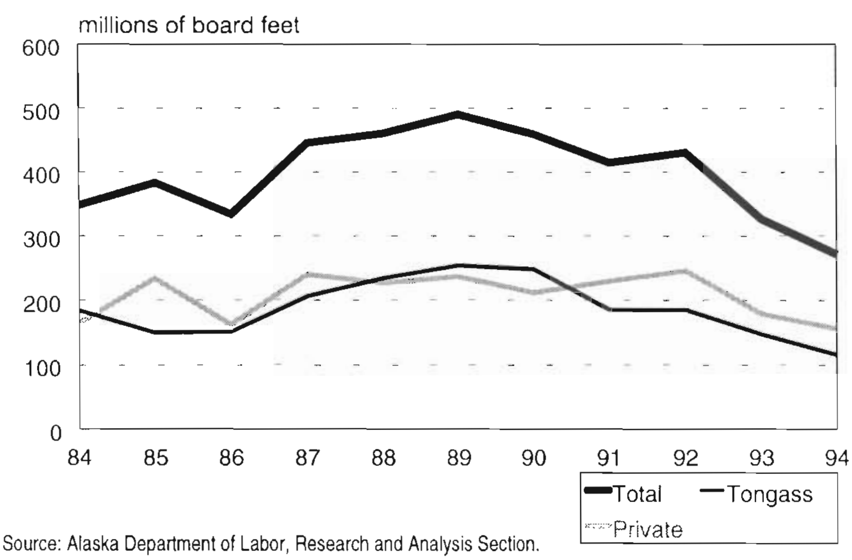
Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Table • 1

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
7,167	7,417	7,582	7,733	7,981
1	1	1	5	1
348	308	421	370	432
1,453	1,451	1,496	1,522	1,507
623	821	798	753	770
1,367	1,427	1,434	1,554	1,625
226	239	213	236	224
1,141	1,188	1,221	1,318	1,402
284	254	273	291	319
1,224	1,234	1,236	1,333	1,445
56	53	54	81	87
9	6	9	12	11
1,802	1,863	1,859	1,811	1,783
289	320	322	309	300
519	563	561	560	567
994	980	976	943	916

Figure • 4

Area Timber Harvest Falls 44.9% From 1989
Ketchikan & Prince of Wales



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

biggest chunk of the total wage pie, with manufacturing the largest private industry wage payor. Timber generated over 18 percent of wages and 80 percent of manufacturing wages. (See Figure 2.) The higher proportion of wages to employment reflects the above average wages paid in the timber and government sectors. (See Figure 3.) Another reason these industries have a higher percentage of the wage pie is that, in Ketchikan, they are also more likely to offer full-time, year-round employment. Construction and wholesale trade also paid above average wages, but they represent smaller slices of the employment pie.

Table • 2

Employers with more than 50 Workers in Ketchikan—1995

Rank	Firm	Annual Avg. Employment
1	Ketchikan Pulp Company	570
2	City of Ketchikan*	326
3	Ketchikan General Hospital	300
4	Ketchikan Gateway Bor. School Dist.*	274
5	Alaska Dept. of Transportation* 1/	238
6	U.S. Coast Guard*	212
7	U.S. Forest Service*	181
8	Williams Inc 2/	150
9	Norquest Seafoods	149
10	South Coast Inc	132
11	Phoenix Logging Co	131
12	Carr Gottstein Foods Co	122
13	Ketchikan Gateway Borough*	118
14	Ketchikan Air Service	93
15	Wards Cove Packing Co Inc	90
16	Boyer Towing	86
17	1st Bank	78
18	Alaska General Processors	75
19	Community Connections Inc	71
20	Alaska Dept. of Administration* 3/	70
21	The Landing	65
22	TyMatt Inc	62
23	Trident Seafoods Corp	61
24	Tongass Trading Co	59
25	Tatsuda's Supermarket Inc	58
26	Southeast Stevedoring Corp	57
26	Ketchikan Entertainment Center	57
26	Seaborne Lumber Co LTD 4/	57
27	Westmark Hotels Inc 5/	55
27	Cape Fox Corp	55
28	University of Alaska*	54
29	Alaska Airlines Inc	53
30	McDonalds of Ketchikan	51

1/ Includes the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry workers.
2/ Employer's estimate.
3/ Includes the Pioneers' Home.
4/ Facility ceased operations in 1996.
5/ Estimate.
* Indicates government agency. In this article, the hospital iscounted in the private sector.
Nonagricultural wage and salary employment. Does not include self-employed.
Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Ketchikan's average wage lower, but has grown faster

Ketchikan's wages have traditionally been lower than the statewide average, but this partly reflects high wages in the state's oil and gas industry that are not an influence in Ketchikan. Over the last 10 years, as Ketchikan's manufacturing sector assumed increasing importance, Ketchikan's wages have closed in on the statewide average. By 1995, Ketchikan's average wage had almost caught up with the state's.

Despite a slightly lower average wage, Ketchikan residents' per capita income is well above the average for both the state and the nation. Earnings from self-employment, including fishing, help boost Ketchikan's per capita income above the statewide average. As Ketchikan's average wage has approached the state's, the per capita income gap between Ketchikan and the rest of Alaska has widened.

However, neither the state's nor Ketchikan's wage growth has kept pace with inflation. Since 1985, when adjusted for inflation (based on CPI-U for Anchorage), Ketchikan's average real monthly wage fell by almost $100, while the statewide average dropped by over $400.

Unemployment approaches the state average

Recently, Ketchikan's unemployment rate has also shown positive trends. After several years of higher rates, Ketchikan's unemployment rate has approached the regional and statewide average for the last two years. The peak winter rate has also declined so that Ketchikan's seasonal movement now closely tracks Southeast's.

Timber industry continues to reel

While Ketchikan's economy has performed fairly well, the announced pulp mill closure and changes in other important sectors have tarnished the outlook. For the timber industry, the mill closure is the largest blow in a series of setbacks. In 1994, the total timber harvest in the combined Ketchikan and Prince of Wales area was down about 45 percent from its high in 1989. (See Figure 4.) In the last two years, Ketchikan's logging employment has fallen to its lowest levels since at least 1988. Seaborne Lumber, a sawmill which employed about 60 workers, ceased operations in April 1996.

With the mill closure, Ketchikan's timber industry will have to restructure. While employment numbers are certain to decline over the next few years, there are hopes that new wood processing facilities will eventually replace some of the lost employment. Current possibilities include expansion of a kiln that is testing a new dehumidification process, a sawmill at the proposed Lewis Reef Industrial Park, and a sawmill or other facility at the pulp mill site. The size of a revamped timber industry will depend in part on harvest levels set by the revised Tongass Land Management Plan, due soon.

Fishing outlook mixed

As Ketchikan struggles to counter losses in the timber industry, changes in another resource-based industry, fishing, are also cause for concern. Both the number of people holding permits and the number of permits fished by residents have declined. In 1994 and 1995, pushed by losses in the two largest fisheries, salmon and halibut, permit holders and permits fished hit the lowest levels since at least 1982. (See Table 3.) Low prices for pink salmon may have led some harvesters to sit out this fishery. The institution of Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQ) had a noticeable effect on the halibut fishery, where the number of permit holders and the number of permits fished tumbled from 110 in 1994 to 33 in 1995.

While fewer salmon and halibut permits were fished, activity increased in alternative fisheries such as herring spawn on kelp, shrimp, clam and sea cucumber. A new sea urchin fishery in the Ketchikan area started this December. The ability of these small fisheries to make up for losses in salmon and halibut is limited. Already, rapid growth in

Table • 3

Fewer Ketchikan Residents Hold Fish Permits

Year	Number of Permit Holders	Number of Permits Fished 1/ Total	Salmon	Halibut	Other
1982	391	555	-	-	-
1983	427	637	-	-	-
1984	388	599	-	-	-
1985	384	589	-	-	-
1986	370	604	-	-	-
1987	351	652	-	-	-
1988	367	683	-	-	-
1989	347	623	-	-	-
1990	334	595	228	131	236
1991	339	607	231	146	230
1992	345	591	229	132	230
1993	322	543	221	117	205
1994	312	532	190	110	232
1995	314	513	188	33	292

1/ Detail permit data for prior to 1990 not available for this article.
Source: Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

Table • 4

Catch and Value of Ketchikan Fisheries (In thousands of Pounds and Dollars)

	Salmon		Other Fisheries		Total	
	Weight	Value	Weight	Value	Weight	Value
1980	11,509	$6,935	4,360	$1,670	15,869	$8,605
1981	11,880	7,296	4,366	1,704	16,246	9,000
1982	13,645	6,989	5,707	2,485	19,352	9,474
1983	16,918	6,508	7,172	3,702	24,090	10,210
1984	16,530	7,917	6,196	2,757	22,726	10,674
1985	27,288	11,454	5,353	3,582	32,641	15,036
1986	31,425	12,982	7,902	5,684	39,327	18,666
1987	10,215	8,818	8,389	5,516	18,604	14,334
1988	12,302	15,825	10,551	3,864	22,853	19,689
1989	38,587	20,086	12,309	6,176	50,896	26,262
1990	22,041	12,356	7,966	5,588	30,007	17,944
1991	28,451	9,262	7,792	5,506	36,243	14,768
1992	25,448	13,454	9,172	5,761	34,620	19,215
1993	32,959	12,150	12,386	6,572	45,345	18,722
1994	29,915	11,842	8,237	10,359	38,152	22,201
1995	33,250	9,347	5,198	n/a	38,448	n/a

n/a = not available
All fisheries with nondisclosable data are included in other fisheries.
Source: Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

dive fisheries, such as sea cucumber and sea urchin, has led to the imposition of a four-year moratorium on entry into these fisheries.

However, the existence of fewer permit holders does not necessarily translate into less weight or value for fisheries. Total harvest for 1994 was second in value only to 1989's, and the total weight caught remained above average. (See Table 4.) The second highest salmon catch by weight in the last 15 years occurred in 1995, but its value was down. The 1995 salmon harvest by Ketchikan fishers was the third lowest in value in the last 10 years. While final numbers for 1996 are not yet available, a good harvest of pink salmon was plagued with even lower prices.

The value of non-salmon fisheries has been rising. In 1994, the most recent year for which data are available, these fisheries earned nearly 60 percent more than the previous year.

Table • 5

A Snapshot of Ketchikan GatewayBorough Current Statistics - 1995 unless noted

	Alaska	Ketchikan
Population (1996)	607,800	14,728
Ketchikan's population is older...		
Median age	30.0	33.6
less racially diverse...		
White	75.7	83.4
Native American	15.7	11.9
Black	4.4	0.5
Asian & Pacific Islander	4.2	4.3
has fewer children, more seniors...		
Percent under 20	33.0	29.5
Percent 20 to 64	62.4	63.3
Percent 65 years & over	4.6	7.2
and an average proportion of females.		
Percent female	48.0	48.0
Fewer residents have degrees...		
High school graduate or higher (1990) 1/	86.6	85.4
Bachelors degree or higher (1990) 1/	23.0	20.2
and slightly more are unemployed.		
Percent of all 16 years+ in labor force	63.1	63.0
Percent unemployed	7.3	7.6
Income is higher, wages average		
Personal per capita income (1994)	$23,344	$29,148
Annual average monthly earnings	$2,691	$2,660
Housing is tighter...		
Percent vacancy rate	7.0	5.0
while rents compare favorably. 2/		
Juneau Borough		868
Sitka Borough		836
Ketchikan Gateway Borough		769
Statewide		713
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area		678

1/ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

2/ Average monthly rent for apartment, condominiums and other rental units, not including single family residences or mobile homes. Rent adjusted to include utilities.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Tourism offers hope

While the resource-based industries struggle, tourism just keeps on growing. Symbolic of the shift from timber to tourism is the ongoing conversion of an old spruce mill site to retail space and a hotel. Another tourist-related proposal would build a $12 million aquarium.

Cruise ships bring the bulk of the tourists who arrive in Ketchikan, and their current passenger load is more than five times greater than the 1982 level. In 1996, cruise ships brought 430,000 passengers to Ketchikan. While tourist growth has been spectacular, at an estimated average of nine percent per year since 1990, this rate is likely to slow.

Ketchikan also benefits from its proximity to Prince of Wales Island (POW). Many parties travel to Ketchikan enroute to this popular fishing destination. In addition, Ketchikan serves as a regional hub, providing goods and services to POW communities. However, as the population on POW has soared, increasing over 80 percent since 1980, shopping and service choices in POW communities have expanded. Ketchikan may notice some effect from the increased competition.

Public projects support construction

Though timber losses will negatively impact the construction industry, public projects should help sustain it over the next few years. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities plans to spend over $47 million on Ketchikan projects over the next five years. The largest will channel $10-15 million into reconstructing, extending and improving Third Avenue. Construction should start in 1998 and last three years. Other projects include a $3 million expansion of the seaplane float on Gravina Island, which should be completed in time for next summer's tourist season. Another $2.5 million over the next two years will reconstruct the Gravina Island shuttle's ferry terminal at the airport. Widening and reconstruction of North Tongass Highway moves into the design stage this year, with construction in two years. Smaller projects include improvements at the Ketchikan

Creek and Herring Cove bridges, and resurfacing the South Tongass Highway.

In other public projects, at the federal level, the Forest Service also plans road work. Locally, voters recently approved bonds for a $10 million expansion to the city's hospital. Construction of a new patient care wing and upgrade to existing rooms and equipment should start in late fall of 1997.

Additional work may be generated next year as the military looks at building a road from Metlakatla to Walden Point as a preparedness exercise. If the road is built, a ferry terminal at a Ketchikan site would be needed.

Government's a substantial presence

Government plays an important role in Ketchikan's economy. After Ketchikan Pulp Company, five of the next six largest employers are government entities. For purposes of this article, the hospital is included in the private sector. In local government, the city, school district and borough combined provide over 700 jobs. The U.S. Coast Guard and Forest Service provide the largest federal government contingents. The state's presence in Ketchikan includes Alaska Marine Highway System ferry workers, a Pioneers' Home and a campus of the University of Alaska Southeast.

In the near future, timber's struggles will impact government's performance, too. At the local level, total revenues could fall by $4 million annually. Federally, if timber sales decline, the Forest Service may also need fewer people.

Proposed projects look to future

Other projects that may fuel future development include shipyard expansion, an electrical intertie, and a new industrial area. Improvements at the shipyard could draw more maintenance and ship-building work. An intertie from Swan Lake to Lake Tyee could move into the environmental impact assessment stage early next year. The long-planned Lewis Reef Industrial Park is again generating interest. A final plan of businesses for the site is needed to finish the permit process. Wood and seafood processing facilities are possibilities.

After the pulp mill closes, its site could be converted to other use. The site has many assets including a deep water port, power plant, warehouse, water filtration system, effluent treatment plant, machine shop and auto repair shop. Another asset is ownership of tidelands in Ward Cove. One possible use being explored is a regional solid waste management facility where burning garbage would generate electricity. Others are an industrial park with timber or seafood processing facilities or a marina.

Ketchikan would also benefit from a feeder ferry system spearheaded by communities on Prince of Wales Island. This system would enhance Ketchikan's position as a regional supplier, providing improved sales and service opportunities to Ketchikan businesses and increased recreational opportunities to residents. A new ferry terminal in Ketchikan may also be needed.

Summary: Ketchikan on the verge of an economic change

Ketchikan's economy has had a good run, but storm clouds are gathering. One base industry, timber, will shrink with the closure of the pulp mill. Indirectly, this loss could drag government, another important support, to lower levels. Meanwhile, the outlook for the seafood industry is mixed. In the near future, however, only tourism is expected to grow. Ketchikan may weather the storm, but in 10 years, its economy will look much different than it does today.

Mill Closure Impacts Far Reaching

The Ketchikan Pulp Company's (KPC) pulp mill closure is a severe blow to Ketchikan's economy. The closure of Ketchikan's largest private employer means a direct loss of 500-550 jobs, many of them year-round, relatively highly paid positions. Loss of the mill will effectively cut off a large portion of the local economy's manufacturing leg. More manufacturing jobs are at risk at KPC's sawmill.

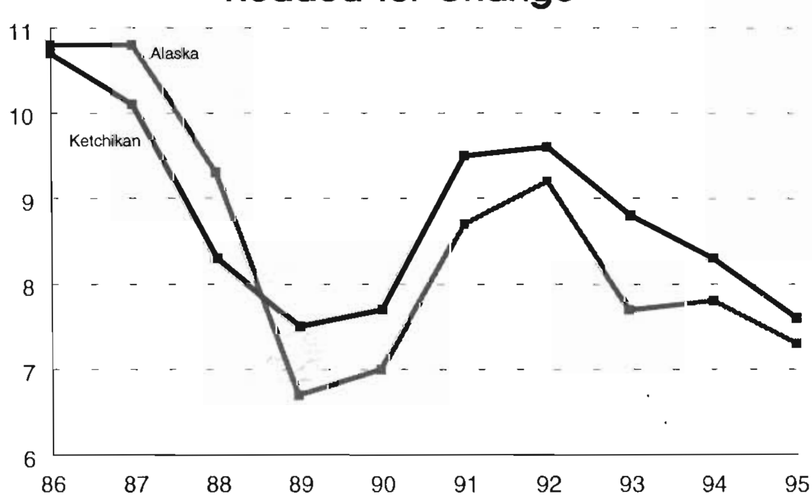
Indirect and induced economic effects of the mill closure will vary depending upon a number of factors. For example, the economic impact of closing just the KPC pulp mill would be different from closing both the pulp mill and sawmill. A recent McDowell Group study, which assumed that both the pulp mill and sawmill closed, indicated that indirect job loss could more than double the total jobs lost at the pulp mill and sawmill.[1/] It is unlikely that all of the indirect and induced job loss would occur immediately. A large percentage of the job loss would occur in the first few years, but economic effects could still be present five to seven years after the closure. The total number of jobs lost likely will not be shown in future Ketchikan employment counts because employment gains in other industries will help offset job losses associated with the closure. The study indicates that logging firms, support services, construction, and transportation firms are likely to suffer the largest effects in the private sector.

Ketchikan's public sector will not be immune to the closure's economic effects. The McDowell Group study estimated that lower property and sales tax revenues, combined with lost revenue from state and federal sources, could amount to a 15-18 percent revenue loss to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. The study assumes that a smaller Ketchikan population would mean a loss in state municipal assistance and revenue sharing, and that federal revenue from the Tongass timber receipt program would be lower until Tongass timber allocated to KPC through the 50-year contract is reallocated to other users. Ketchikan Public Utilities, the government-operated utility that provides electrical, telephone, water and wastewater services, could also lose more than $1 million in annual revenue.

The role of KPC in the region's economy, particularly in sawmill and logging operations in the surrounding areas, also has important economic benefits for Ketchikan. As a regional supplier, Ketchikan's losses will increase if the economies of the surrounding areas suffer significant hardships.

Figure • 1

Ketchikan's Unemployment Trends Headed for Change



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

1. *Impacts of the Forest Products Industry on Ketchikan: A Study of Ketchikan's Forest Products Industry and the Economic Impacts of Mill Closure.* McDowell Group, September 1996.

Unemployment likely to rise, population fall

When the pulp mill closes, the recent improvement in unemployment trends will reverse. In 1995, unemployment averaged 7.6%, with just under 600 persons unemployed. (See Figure 1.) After the closure, this rate could easily double, placing Ketchikan's rate well above the average rate for Alaska. The loss of a substantial number of year-round jobs may also increase seasonal swings.

Table • 1

Occupational Profile of Ketchikan Workers 3rd Quarter 1995[1]

Occupational Group	Number of Workers
Total	10,123
Service	1,803
Seafood processing	1,558
Administrative support, including clerical	1,217
Sales	1,175
Professional specialty	858
Transportation & material moving	659
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers & laborers	635
Executive, administrative & managerial	491
Mechanics & repairers	391
Production except seafood	372
Construction & extractive	299
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	273
Other or unknown	246
Technical	146

1/ Includes wage and salary workers.Excludes the self employed and federal workers.
Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section, Occupational Database.

The borough's population is also likely to fall as households dependent upon income from KPC jobs relocate due to economic factors. A survey of KPC employees conducted for the McDowell Group study indicated that nearly two-thirds of the households could relocate in the three years following the closure, with half of the population drop occurring immediately and the other half occurring gradually over the next several years.

Effects already taking hold

The announcement of impending closure is already sending ripples through the community. Some KPC workers have already left town to look for new employment. Some retailers have reported reduced sales as residents start to conserve. The city reports that following an otherwise strong year, building permits have recently declined.

Severance package, government aid will help

Laid-off mill workers will receive severance pay of two weeks for each year worked with the company. This benefit will help workers through a difficult transition and help lessen the effect that lost KPC wages will have on the economy. In addition, the Alaska Department of Labor (AKDOL) recently changed a regulation that treated lump sum severance packages as wages spread out over many weeks, which precluded laid-off workers from being eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits. The regulation change is expected to be in place before the mill closure.

Additional government aid will come from the AKDOL Ketchikan Employment Center in the form of employment assistance to those affected by the mill closure. The Employment Center provides access to job listings and labor market information for the local area and has access to job listings for other communities in Southeast Alaska, the rest of the state and nationwide as well.

Other services designed to assist with a person's search for work include vocational counseling and workshops on resume writing, job search skills, interviewing and other subjects related to finding employment.

The AKDOL is working in concert with the Department of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) and a number of other local, state and federal agencies to establish a transition center designed to offer these and other services specifically to mill employees. Under the umbrella of the Governor's Coordinated Response Partnership, these agencies are identifying and organizing resources and programs available to affected workers. The intent is to assure a safe landing for those in Ketchikan and other Southeast communities once their employment with Ketchikan Pulp has ended.

Representatives from the Alaska Employment Service and DCRA's Job Training Partnership Office recently conducted a series of town meetings in the Prince of Wales communities of Craig, Coffman Cove, Naukati and Thorne Bay, and in Metlakatla. Similar meetings were conducted in Ketchikan earlier and are designed to inform affected workers of the assistance and benefits which may be available to them.

Over the next four years, assistance from the federal government also is earmarked to alleviate Ketchikan's plight. Ketchikan is scheduled to receive $25 million in federal economic disaster money to fund economic diversification projects. Already, money has been spent to support seafood product marketing and develop a red sea urchin fishery. Further uses of this aid money will be decided by a mayor's blue ribbon economic development committee by the first of March 1997.

Opportunities for reemployment

Proportionally, the mill closure will most impact non-seafood production occupations, mechanics, construction, handlers and technical occupations.

Comparison of the pulp mill's occupational profile to the occupational profile in the non-timber portion of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough indicates that about 60 percent of the mill's employees work in occupations that appear similar to occupations found elsewhere in Ketchikan. These occupations include clerical and service workers, mechanics and construction workers, and laborers. If positions are available, some of these workers, depending on their degree of specialization, could qualify for other jobs in Ketchikan. The remaining 40 percent of mill employees work in occupations that do not have equivalents or related counterparts in either the Ketchikan or the Southeast Alaska economy. They work primarily in specialty production or scientific/technical positions. Without changing occupations, these specialized mill workers will find staying in either the local or even the regional economy unlikely.

Ketchikan's overall occupational profile can give an inkling as to what kinds of jobs are prevalent in the local economy. In the third quarter of 1995, over half of Ketchikan's wage and salary jobs (excluding federal government) fell into four occupational categories: service, seafood processing, administrative support and sales. (See Table 1.) Increased seafood and tourism activity influences the occupational mix during this peak summer employment season. Both full- and part-time jobs are included in the table.

In the short-term, construction projects could help alleviate KPC-related job losses. Environmental cleanup at the pulp mill site could also provide jobs for some laid-off workers. Some workers who want to stay in Ketchikan may move into commercial fishing, charter boats or other tourist-related businesses.

October Winterizes Economy

by Brigitta Windisch-Cole

Although Alaska's unemployment rate increased from October to November by nearly a full percentage point to 6.8% (not seasonally adjusted), it showed improvement when compared to the year-ago rate. (See Table 4.) October is the third month this year that Alaska's jobless rate has registered below last year's rate. (See Figure 1.)

After the visitor and peak fishing seasons came to an end, over 2,700 more workers were unemployed than in September. In October, the number of jobless Alaskans climbed to 21,250. The post-season impact shows dramatically in the Denali Borough where the jobless rate increased by six percentage points and in the Haines Borough where the unemployment rate climbed over five percentage points in one month. Both regions are visitor meccas. The seasonal slowdown in fishing-related employment is best reflected in Kodiak, where the jobless rate moves in concert with fish processing activities. As in the Kodiak Island Borough, the regional unemployment rates in most fishing areas have started to climb.

The seasonal slowdown has set in

October's seasonal slowdown in wage and salary employment claimed 11,700 jobs. (See Table 1.) Over 32 percent of October's job losses can be attributed to seafood processing employment. The seasonal decline attributable to the visitor-industry slowdown is not as evident. However, a large portion of the employment losses in retail, service and transportation industries results from the ending season. The construction industry also shed jobs with the sudden arrival of a frigid winter.

Although the annual slowdown often spreads gloom in Alaska's economy, a large seasonal swing in employment numbers could actually accentuate the strength of a season. While visitor statistics are not yet available for 1996, experts believe that the number of visitors to the state will exceed 1995 counts by six to seven percent. If predictions hold, the number of visitors during the 1996 season could surpass the 1.2 million mark. This would mean an eighth consecutive year of growth in the number of visitors to Alaska.

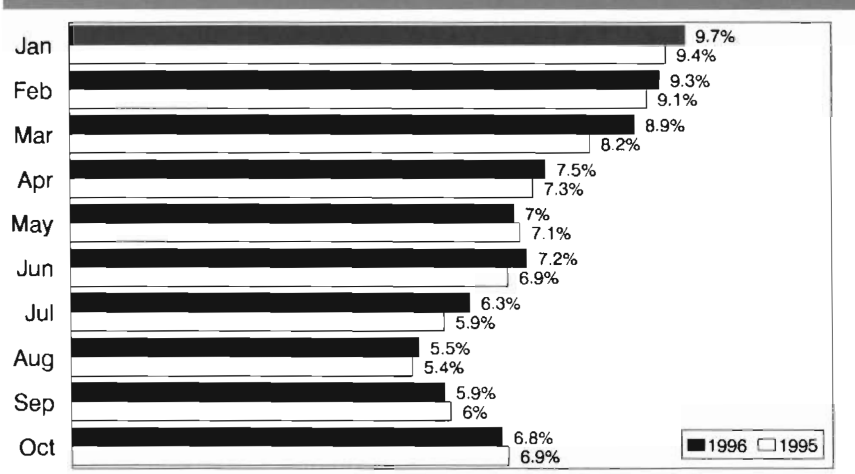
October turns out early Christmas shoppers

While most retailers shed jobs during October, general merchandisers countered the

Brigitta Windisch-Cole is a labor economist with the Research and Analysis Section, Administrative Services Division, Alaska Department of Labor. She is located in Anchorage.

Figure • 1

For the third time this year the jobless rate remained below last year's rate



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Table • 1

Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment by Place of Work

Alaska	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	Changes from 10/95	9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	265,800	277,500	263,300	-11,700	2,500
Goods-producing	39,700	45,200	40,000	-5,500	-300
Service-producing	226,100	232,300	223,300	-6,200	2,800
Mining	9,900	10,000	10,100	-100	-200
Construction	15,300	16,600	15,200	-1,300	100
Manufacturing	14,500	18,600	14,700	-4,100	-200
Durable Goods	3,300	3,600	3,600	-300	-300
Lumber & Wood Products	2,200	2,300	2,600	-100	-400
Nondurable Goods	11,200	15,000	11,100	-3,800	100
Seafood Processing	8,000	11,800	8,000	-3,800	0
Pulp Mills	500	500	500	0	0
Transportation	22,700	24,400	22,700	-1,700	0
Trucking & Warehousing	3,200	3,300	3,200	-100	0
Water Transportation	2,100	2,400	2,100	-300	0
Air Transportation	7,100	7,600	7,100	-500	0
Communications	3,900	3,800	3,800	100	100
Trade	55,100	57,300	54,000	-2,200	1,100
Wholesale Trade	8,600	9,000	8,400	-400	200
Retail Trade	46,500	48,300	45,600	-1,800	900
Gen. Merch. & Apparel	9,500	9,400	9,700	100	-200
Food Stores	7,200	7,400	7,100	-200	100
Eating & Drinking Places	15,400	16,700	14,900	-1,300	500
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	11,700	11,800	11,900	-100	-200
Services & Misc.	62,300	65,300	60,600	-3,000	1,700
Hotels & Lodging Places	5,900	7,600	5,800	-1,700	100
Health Services	13,800	13,700	13,300	100	500
Government	74,300	73,500	74,100	800	200
Federal	16,900	17,400	17,300	-500	-400
State	22,100	22,200	22,100	-100	0
Local	35,300	33,900	34,700	1,400	600

Municipality of Anchorage	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	Changes from 10/95	9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	123,300	124,700	122,100	-1,400	1,200
Goods-producing	12,000	12,500	12,100	-500	-100
Service-producing	111,300	112,200	110,000	-900	1,300
Mining	2,500	2,600	2,700	-100	-200
Construction	7,500	7,800	7,300	-300	200
Manufacturing	2,000	2,100	2,100	-100	-100
Transportation	11,800	12,200	11,900	-400	-100
Air Transportation	4,200	4,300	4,200	-100	0
Communications	2,200	2,200	2,200	0	0
Trade	30,300	30,700	29,700	-400	600
Wholesale Trade	6,400	6,600	6,400	-200	0
Retail Trade	23,900	24,100	23,300	-200	600
Gen. Merch. & Apparel	4,900	4,800	4,800	100	100
Food Stores	3,100	3,200	3,100	-100	0
Eating & Drinking Places	8,500	8,800	8,200	-300	300
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	7,000	7,000	7,100	0	-100
Services & Misc.	34,100	34,600	33,100	-500	1,000
Hotels & Lodging Places	2,400	2,600	2,500	-200	-100
Health Services	7,100	6,900	6,800	200	300
Government	28,100	27,700	28,200	400	-100
Federal	10,000	10,200	10,300	-200	-300
State	8,300	8,200	8,400	100	-100
Local	9,800	9,300	9,500	500	300

Table • 2

Alaska Hours and Earnings for Selected Industries

	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95
Mining	$1,324.84	$1,275.39	$1,282.40	53.1	51.2	52.3	$24.95	$24.91	$24.52
Construction	1,147.98	1,202.06	1,232.34	45.7	47.4	47.0	25.12	25.36	26.22
Manufacturing	581.40	610.50	545.83	51.0	53.6	45.6	11.40	11.39	11.97
Seafood Processing	448.24	490.20	415.27	56.1	57.2	48.4	7.99	8.57	8.58
Trans., Comm. & Utilities	682.50	692.94	696.12	35.0	35.3	35.3	19.50	19.63	19.72
Trade	409.36	419.34	421.60	33.2	33.9	34.0	12.33	12.37	12.40
Wholesale	633.69	656.50	649.34	37.9	38.8	38.4	16.72	16.92	16.91
Retail	370.33	378.33	380.47	32.4	33.1	33.2	11.43	11.43	11.46
Finance-Ins. & R.E.	497.00	508.01	495.20	35.5	36.6	36.6	14.00	13.88	13.53

Notes to Tables 1-3:

Tables 1 and 2- Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 3- Prepared in part with funding from the Employment Security Division.

p/ denotes preliminary estimates.

r/ denotes revised estimates.

Government includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska.

Average hours and earnings estimates are based on data for full- and part-time production workers (manufacturing) and non-supervisory workers (nonmanufacturing). Averages are for gross earnings and hours paid, including overtime pay and hours.

Benchmark: March 1995

Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment by Place of Work

Southeast Region

	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	Changes from 9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	36,350	39,950	36,000	-3,600	350
Goods-producing	5,950	7,600	6,100	-1,650	-150
Service-producing	30,400	32,350	29,900	-1,950	500
Mining	300	300	200	0	100
Construction	1,850	1,950	1,800	-100	50
Manufacturing	3,800	5,350	4,100	-1,550	-300
Durable Goods	1,650	1,750	1,900	-100	-250
Lumber & Wood Products	1,500	1,600	1,750	-100	-250
Nondurable Goods	2,150	3,600	2,200	-1,450	-50
Seafood Processing	1,400	2,850	1,450	-1,450	-50
Pulp Mills	500	500	550	0	-50
Transportation	2,850	3,450	2,850	-600	0
Trade	6,600	7,350	6,600	-750	0
Wholesale Trade	550	550	550	0	0
Retail Trade	6,050	6,800	6,050	-750	0
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	1,400	1,450	1,450	-50	-50
Services & Misc.	6,650	7,450	6,400	-800	250
Government	12,900	12,650	12,600	250	300
Federal	2,000	2,000	1,950	0	50
State	5,450	5,450	5,350	0	100
Local	5,450	5,200	5,300	250	150

Anchorage/Mat-Su Region

	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	Changes from 9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	134,700	136,250	132,900	-1,550	1,800
Goods-producing	12,900	13,700	13,200	-800	-300
Service-producing	121,800	122,550	119,700	-750	2,100
Mining	2,500	2,550	2,700	-50	-200
Construction	8,200	8,850	8,250	-650	-50
Manufacturing	2,200	2,300	2,250	-100	-50
Transportation	12,900	13,250	12,950	-350	-50
Trade	33,300	33,600	32,400	-300	900
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	7,500	7,500	7,550	0	-50
Services & Misc.	36,900	37,400	35,650	-500	1,250
Government	31,200	30,800	31,150	400	50
Federal	10,100	10,300	10,400	-200	-300
State	9,250	9,250	9,200	0	50
Local	11,850	11,250	11,550	600	300

Gulf Coast Region

	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	Changes from 9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	26,000	28,500	26,350	-2,500	-350
Goods-producing	6,150	7,450	6,550	-1,300	-400
Service-producing	19,850	21,050	19,800	-1,200	50
Mining	950	950	1,250	0	-300
Construction	1,400	1,500	1,450	-100	-50
Manufacturing	3,800	5,000	3,850	-1,200	-50
Seafood Processing	2,500	3,700	2,550	-1,200	-50
Transportation	2,250	2,350	2,250	-100	0
Trade	4,800	5,400	4,800	-600	0
Wholesale Trade	550	700	550	-150	0
Retail Trade	4,250	4,700	4,250	-450	0
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	700	700	700	0	0
Services & Misc.	5,150	5,800	5,050	-650	100
Government	6,950	6,800	7,000	150	-50
Federal	650	700	650	-50	0
State	1,750	1,800	1,850	-50	-100
Local	4,550	4,300	4,500	250	50

Interior Region

	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	Changes from: 9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	37,250	39,400	36,250	-2,150	1,000
Goods-producing	4,650	4,850	4,200	-200	450
Service-producing	32,600	34,550	32,050	-1,950	550
Mining	1,150	1,050	850	100	300
Construction	2,900	3,150	2,750	-250	150
Manufacturing	600	650	600	-50	0
Transportation	2,800	3,350	2,750	-550	50
Trade	7,650	8,200	7,500	-550	150
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	1,050	1,050	1,050	0	0
Services & Misc.	8,300	9,000	7,950	-700	350
Government	12,800	12,950	12,800	-150	0
Federal	3,400	3,650	3,500	-250	-100
State	4,800	4,650	4,800	150	0
Local	4,600	4,650	4,500	-50	100

Fairbanks North Star Borough

	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	Changes from: 9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	32,600	33,750	31,300	-1,150	1,300
Goods-producing	4,200	4,350	3,500	-150	700
Service-producing	28,400	29,400	27,800	-1,000	600
Mining	900	850	650	50	250
Construction	2,750	2,900	2,300	-150	450
Manufacturing	550	600	550	-50	0
Transportation	2,250	2,600	2,200	-350	50
Trucking & Warehousing	550	600	550	-50	0
Air Transportation	550	550	550	0	0
Communications	250	300	250	-50	0
Trade	7,050	7,550	6,950	-500	100
Wholesale Trade	800	850	800	-50	0
Retail Trade	6,250	6,700	6,150	-450	100
Gen. Merch. & Apparel	1,350	1,300	1,300	50	50
Food Stores	750	800	750	-50	0
Eating & Drinking Places	2,200	2,650	2,200	-450	0
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	950	950	950	0	0
Services & Misc.	7,650	8,150	7,250	-500	400
Government	10,500	10,150	10,450	350	50
Federal	2,900	2,950	2,950	-50	-50
State	4,550	4,300	4,550	250	0
Local	3,050	2,900	2,950	150	100

Southwest Region

	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	Changes from: 9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	16,400	17,650	16,150	-1,250	250
Goods-producing	4,350	5,550	4,250	-1,200	100
Service-producing	12,050	12,100	11,900	-50	150
Seafood Processing	3,950	5,150	3,850	-1,200	100
Government	5,500	5,350	5,600	150	-100
Federal	450	550	600	-100	-150
State	500	550	500	-50	0
Local	4,550	4,250	4,500	300	50

Northern Region

	p/ 10/96	r/ 9/96	10/95	Changes from: 9/96	10/95
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	15,650	15,950	15,700	-300	-50
Goods-producing	5,700	5,850	5,700	-150	0
Service-producing	9,950	10,100	10,000	-150	-50
Mining	5,000	5,100	5,100	-100	-100
Government	4,900	4,850	4,950	50	-50
Federal	200	200	250	0	-50
State	300	300	300	0	0
Local	4,400	4,350	4,400	50	0

trend. The disbursement of Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) earnings filled stores with shoppers in October. By month's end, over 530,000 residents had received their checks.

Since 1982, Alaskans have enjoyed this cash boost just before the holiday season. This year's PFD check of $1,130.68 topped all previous dividend distributions. The size of this year's top-notch check reflects the good performance of permanent fund investments and the state's slow population growth. So far in the bullish nineties, all dividends were above $800. (See Figure 2.) By the end of October, over $530 million of PFD money was circulating in Alaska's economy. This prompted general merchandisers to hire staff in October. (See Table 1.)

Trade and service industries spur employment growth

Sectors of the economy that showed the most gain from year-ago levels are service and trade industries. Combined, these industries have created 2,800 new jobs. (See Table 1.) While the health care industry has contributed most of the employment gain in services, restaurants have created most of the new jobs in the trade category. In Anchorage alone, for example, restaurants have added over 300 new jobs in a year. (See Table 1.) Employment in specialty retail and building supply stores also compares favorably with year-ago levels.

Manufacturing employment suffers job losses

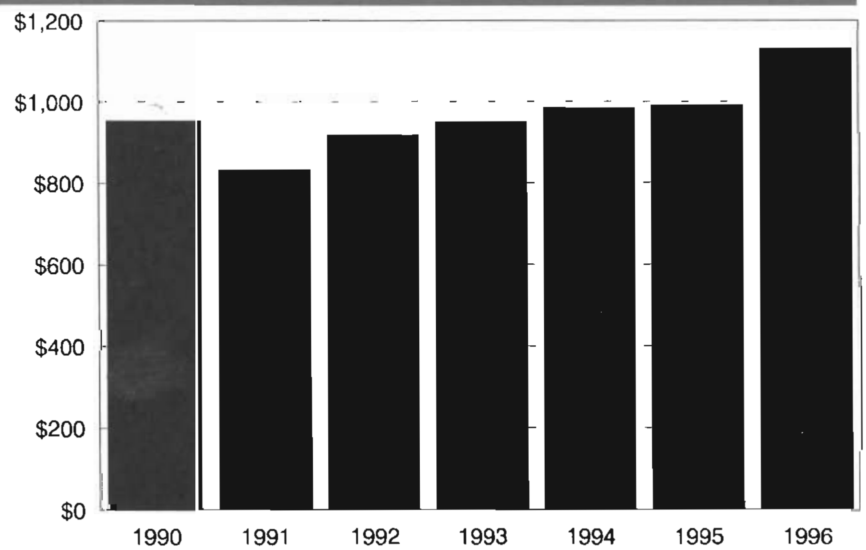
Although gains exceeded losses in Alaska's employment picture, some industries face harder times. Without question, the timber-related industries remain the hardest hit. Seafood-processing industry employment has also suffered. On the fish processing side, the summer fishery progressed with less vigor than in previous years because of market problems for salmon products. Although the groundfish and herring fishery produced good results, lower employment counts in this industry reflect the problems of the salmon fishery.

Airline employment is on the path to recovery

Just a year ago there was turbulence in the air transportation industrywhen MarkAir Express shut its doors. The 1995 shutdowns of MarkAir and MarkAir Express precipitated a year-long employment drop in the airline industry that only recently has reversed. In May of this year, air transportation employment regained its 1994 level. Now the industry appears poised to overcome the hits it took in 1995. Cargo carriers and freight forwarders have not

Figure • 2

Permanent Fund Check is Largest Ever



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

only helped to mitigate employment losses but have committed to further expansion. For example, United Airlines will start flying cargo through Anchorage and United Parcel Service is expanding operations. Moreover, international passenger traffic is growing at the Anchorage terminal. International air cargo traffic may increase with the U.S. Department of Transportation's approval to allow international airlines to reshuffle freight at Alaska's international airports. Airline industry employment growth is likely.

Construction employment posts gains

Compared to last October, construction employment shows a small gain of 100 jobs.(See Table 1.) Soon construction workers will leave Fort Knox, Alaska's largest work site for the past two years, as the project nears completion. However, work will continue for about 250-300 construction workers on the Healy Clean Coal project through the winter months. Also, the proposed statewide 1997 construction schedule holds promise of another good season. Among the larger projects slated for construction are the Red Dog mine expansion, the Kensington mine, Anchorage-Fairbanks school projects, the Northern Intertie, and the University of Alaska Anchorage's student housing complex.

Summary

October's employment and unemployment statistics showed an improved jobless rate for the third time this year, although employment growth remained below one percent. Seasonal employment losses stem from the slowdown in fish processing and the end of the visitor season. The Permanent Fund Dividend checks kicked off an early Christmas shopping spree and general merchandisers hired staff to accommodate the preseason shoppers. Industry performances are mixed. While retail and service industries have created most jobs, manufacturing industries have suffered job losses. Air transportation industries have absorbed some of last year's employment losses and are facing better times. Construction employment is up and the proposed construction schedule for 1997 outlines another decent season.

Table • 4

Unemployment Rates by Region & Census Area

	Percent Unemployed		
	p/	r/	
Not Seasonally Adjusted	**10/96**	**9/96**	**10/95**
United States	4.9	5.0	5.2
Alaska Statewide	6.8	5.9	6.9
Anch.-MatSu Region	5.6	5.3	5.8
Municipality of Anchorage	4.9	4.7	5.2
MatSu Borough	8.9	8.3	8.9
Gulf Coast Region	11.3	8.7	10.6
Kenai Peninsula Borough	13.1	10.6	12.7
Kodiak Island Borough	7.1	4.7	5.0
Valdez-Cordova	9.6	6.7	9.8
Interior Region	7.3	6.1	7.6
Denali Borough	10.7	4.7	12.1
Fairbanks North Star Borough	6.7	5.8	6.8
Southeast Fairbanks	10.6	8.3	13.0
Yukon-Koyukuk	15.2	11.4	15.1
Northern Region	8.7	9.3	9.5
Nome	8.6	9.8	11.5
North Slope Borough	4.6	4.2	4.5
Northwest Arctic Borough	14.8	15.8	13.6
Southeast Region	6.8	5.1	6.6
Haines Borough	11.6	6.4	7.7
Juneau Borough	6.0	4.6	6.3
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7.4	5.1	7.4
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	10.7	9.2	8.3
Sitka Borough	5.8	4.4	4.9
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon	4.6	3.4	4.6
Wrangell-Petersburg	6.9	5.2	8.0
Yakutat Borough	1.5	3.0	1.9
Southwest Region	6.1	5.9	7.2
Aleutians East Borough	2.5	3.1	10.9
Aleutians West	2.4	2.5	1.7
Bethel	8.3	7.9	8.2
Bristol Bay Borough	4.9	5.5	6.5
Dillingham	6.8	6.9	6.0
Lake & Peninsula Borough	5.8	4.9	5.5
Wade Hampton	9.1	7.9	12.2
Seasonally Adjusted			
United States	5.2	5.2	5.5
Alaska Statewide	7.2	7.3	7.2

p/ denotes preliminary estimates
r/ denotes revised estimates

Benchmark: March 1995

- *Comparisons between different time periods are not as meaningful as other time series published by the Alaska Department of Labor.*
- *The official definition of unemployment currently in place excludes anyone who has made no attempt to find work in the four-week period up to and including the week that includes the 12th of each month. Most Alaska economists believe that Alaska's rural localities have proportionately more of these discouraged workers.*

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

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A View of Alaska's
Air Transportation Industry
A *TRENDS* Profile—
City and Borough of Juneau
Highlights:
Alaska Population Overview:
1995 Estimates
ES—April Jobless Rate Drops to 7.5%

August

Alaska's Largest 100 Private Employers
in 1995: The *TRENDS* 100
New Hires 4th Quarter 1995:
Services Dominate Top Employers
ES—Alaska's Fire Season
Leaves a Strong Impression

September

Federal Agencies Prominent
Despite Downsizing
Defense: Still One of Alaska's
Biggest Exports
ES—Timber Debate Burns
Through Southeast

October

A *TRENDS* Profile—
Bethel Census Area
An Analysis of Employers by Firm Size
ES—Slow Growth Continues in July

November

Income and Wage Gains
Are Slow to Come
ES—August Jobless Rate Drops to 5.5%

December

Alaska Occupational Outlook to 2005
Industrial Employment Forecasts
for 2005
ES—Seasonal Changes
Drive Employment Numbers

Alaska Employment Service

Anchorage: Phone 269-4800

Bethel: Phone 543-2210

Dillingham: Phone 842-5579

Eagle River: Phone 694-6904/07

Mat-Su: Phone 376-2407/08

Fairbanks: Phone 451-2871

Glennallen: Phone 822-3350

Kotzebue: Phone 442-3280

Nome: Phone 443-2626/2460

Tok: Phone 883-5629

Valdez: Phone 835-4910

Kenai: Phone 283-4304/4377/4319

Homer: Phone 235-7791

Kodiak: Phone 486-3105

Seward: Phone 224-5276

Juneau: Phone 465-4562

Petersburg: Phone 772-3791

Sitka: Phone 747-3347/3423/6921

Ketchikan: Phone 225-3181/82/83

The Alaska Department of Labor shall foster and promote the welfare of the wage earners of the state and improve their working conditions and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.