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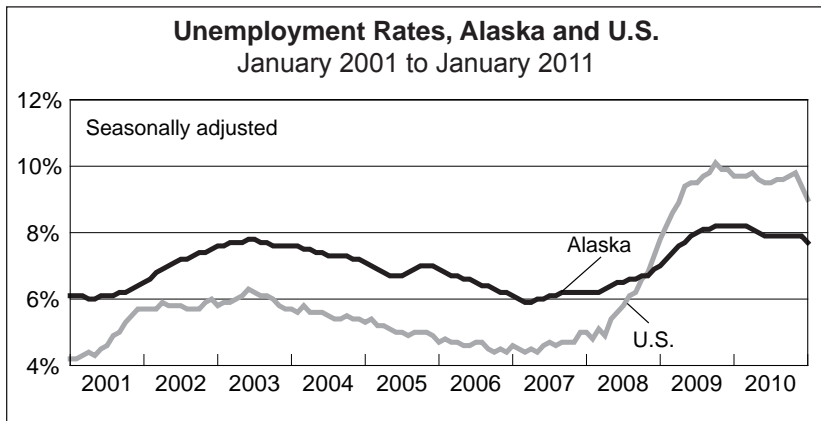
Press Release

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COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 11-12

Unemployment rate at 7.7 percent in January



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January fell to 7.7 percent, down from December's rate of 7.9 percent. December's rate was revised from 8.1 percent.

The comparable national jobless rate for January was 9.0 percent, down from 9.4 percent in December. Exactly a year ago, the national unemployment rate was 9.7 percent, compared to 8.2 percent for Alaska. Unemployment rates in Alaska and the nation are apparently improving in concert, and three months of strong recovery in the U.S. rate should bode well for Alaska's job seekers. As the employment picture improves in the Lower 48, fewer job seekers will venture to Alaska to look for work. More opportunities in the Lower 48 might also attract more Alaskan job seekers south.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

| | Preliminary 1/11 | Revised 12/10 | Revised 1/10 | Year-over-year change | |
|--|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | | 1/10 | 90% confidence interval ² |
| Total Nonfarm Employment ³ | 311,300 | 313,400 | 302,900 | 8,400 | 1,017 15,783 |
| Mining and Logging | 14,800 | 15,700 | 14,000 | 800 | 7 1,593 |
| Oil and Gas | 12,500 | 13,100 | 12,000 | 500 | - - |
| Construction | 12,500 | 13,400 | 12,800 | -300 | -2,883 2,283 |
| Manufacturing | 11,200 | 6,700 | 10,400 | 800 | -194 1,794 |
| Seafood Processing | 7,700 | 3,100 | 7,100 | 600 | - - |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 60,500 | 61,800 | 58,900 | 1,600 | -772 3,972 |
| Retail Trade | 34,200 | 35,000 | 34,000 | 200 | -1,828 2,228 |
| Information | 6,200 | 6,400 | 6,300 | -100 | -681 481 |
| Financial Activities | 15,200 | 15,400 | 14,600 | 600 | -1,343 2,543 |
| Professional and Business Services | 24,900 | 25,500 | 24,700 | 200 | -1,593 1,993 |
| Educational ⁴ and Health Services | 42,700 | 42,400 | 40,800 | 1,900 | 632 3,168 |
| Health Care | 30,800 | 30,400 | 29,400 | 1,400 | - - |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 28,600 | 29,000 | 26,400 | 2,200 | 163 4,237 |
| Accommodations | 6,400 | 6,800 | 5,900 | 500 | - - |
| Food Svcs. and Drinking Places | 18,200 | 17,100 | 16,900 | 1,300 | - - |
| Other Services | 11,400 | 11,200 | 10,900 | 500 | -2,676 3,676 |
| Government ⁵ | 83,300 | 85,900 | 83,100 | 200 | - - |

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

| | 1/11 | 12/10 | 1/10 |
|--------|------|-------|------|
| Alaska | 7.7% | 7.9% | 8.2% |
| U.S. | 9.0% | 9.4% | 9.7% |

The year 2009 was the first in Alaska's history that the annual unemployment rate was lower than the nation's. This trend continued in 2010, and it appears strong in 2011. However, if the nation's jobless rate continues to recover and approaches normal levels, the differences between Alaska and the rest of the U.S. will likely narrow, and could eventually reverse.

Not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates normally climb at least through February in most areas, and this year is following that pattern. January's rates increased in a majority of the state, but there were a number of exceptions. Unemployment fell in Kodiak, the Aleutians East Borough, and the Aleutians West census area as they entered the groundfish and opilio crab seasons.

In January, the North Slope Borough and Juneau had the lowest unemployment rates, and the Hoonah-Angoon census area and Skagway had the highest.

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>).

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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 | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1/11 ^P | 12/10 | 1/10 | Number | | | Rate | | |
| | | | | 1/11 ^P | 12/10 | 1/10 | 1/11 ^P | 12/10 | 1/10 |
| Alaska Statewide | 359,278 | 359,651 | 357,288 | 30,497 | 29,060 | 33,289 | 8.5 | 8.1 | 9.3 |
| Anchorage/Mat-Su Region | 200,103 | 202,320 | 199,078 | 14,655 | 14,167 | 16,305 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 8.2 |
| Municipality of Anchorage | 156,248 | 158,312 | 155,530 | 10,135 | 10,068 | 11,525 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 7.4 |
| Matanuska-Susitna Borough | 43,855 | 44,008 | 43,548 | 4,520 | 4,099 | 4,780 | 10.3 | 9.3 | 11.0 |
| Gulf Coast Region | 37,551 | 36,879 | 37,317 | 3,999 | 3,992 | 4,376 | 10.6 | 10.8 | 11.7 |
| Kenai Peninsula Borough | 26,192 | 25,981 | 26,215 | 3,009 | 2,788 | 3,360 | 11.5 | 10.7 | 12.8 |
| Kodiak Island Borough | 6,625 | 6,123 | 6,507 | 427 | 695 | 461 | 6.4 | 11.4 | 7.1 |
| Valdez-Cordova Census Area | 4,734 | 4,775 | 4,595 | 563 | 509 | 555 | 11.9 | 10.7 | 12.1 |
| Interior Region | 53,295 | 54,302 | 52,846 | 4,702 | 4,342 | 5,177 | 8.8 | 8.0 | 9.8 |
| Denali Borough | 833 | 853 | 820 | 189 | 151 | 184 | 22.7 | 17.7 | 22.4 |
| Fairbanks North Star Borough | 45,950 | 46,772 | 45,671 | 3,504 | 3,310 | 3,985 | 7.6 | 7.1 | 8.7 |
| Southeast Fairbanks Census Area | 3,544 | 3,671 | 3,539 | 459 | 397 | 475 | 13.0 | 10.8 | 13.4 |
| Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area | 2,968 | 3,006 | 2,816 | 550 | 484 | 533 | 18.5 | 16.1 | 18.9 |
| Northern Region | 12,819 | 12,782 | 12,466 | 1,189 | 1,114 | 1,223 | 9.3 | 8.7 | 9.8 |
| Nome Census Area | 4,198 | 4,151 | 4,201 | 519 | 493 | 545 | 12.4 | 11.9 | 13.0 |
| North Slope Borough | 5,522 | 5,513 | 5,225 | 230 | 253 | 273 | 4.2 | 4.6 | 5.2 |
| Northwest Arctic Borough | 3,099 | 3,118 | 3,040 | 440 | 368 | 405 | 14.2 | 11.8 | 13.3 |
| Southeast Region | 37,561 | 32,828 | 32,799 | 3,505 | 2,556 | 3,007 | 9.3 | 7.8 | 9.2 |
| Haines Borough | 1,066 | 1,167 | 1,059 | 146 | 143 | 154 | 13.7 | 12.3 | 14.5 |
| Hoonah-Angoon Census Area ² | 823 | 845 | 835 | 210 | 185 | 214 | 25.5 | 21.9 | 25.6 |
| City and Borough of Juneau | 18,278 | 18,180 | 18,350 | 1,091 | 1,055 | 1,283 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 7.0 |
| Ketchikan Gateway Borough ² | 7,429 | 7,502 | 7,479 | 719 | 662 | 786 | 9.7 | 8.8 | 10.5 |
| Petersburg Census Area ² | 1,638 | N/A | N/A | 267 | N/A | N/A | 16.3 | N/A | N/A |
| Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area ² | 2,357 | N/A | N/A | 434 | N/A | N/A | 18.4 | N/A | N/A |
| City and Borough of Sitka | 4,257 | 4,306 | 4,261 | 330 | 319 | 357 | 7.8 | 7.4 | 8.4 |
| Skagway Municipality ² | 539 | 561 | 548 | 161 | 154 | 166 | 29.9 | 27.5 | 30.3 |
| Wrangell Borough ² | 919 | N/A | N/A | 107 | N/A | N/A | 11.6 | N/A | N/A |
| Yakutat Borough | 255 | 267 | 267 | 40 | 38 | 47 | 15.7 | 14.2 | 17.6 |
| Southwest Region | 17,953 | 15,553 | 17,827 | 2,449 | 2,192 | 2,345 | 13.6 | 14.1 | 13.2 |
| Aleutians East Borough | 1,272 | 607 | 1,256 | 120 | 107 | 104 | 9.4 | 17.6 | 8.3 |
| Aleutians West Census Area | 3,604 | 1,878 | 3,603 | 225 | 225 | 220 | 6.2 | 12.0 | 6.1 |
| Bethel Census Area | 7,074 | 7,287 | 7,002 | 1,117 | 1,001 | 1,074 | 15.8 | 13.7 | 15.3 |
| Bristol Bay Borough | 451 | 502 | 459 | 51 | 46 | 55 | 11.3 | 9.2 | 12.0 |
| Dillingham Census Area | 1,980 | 1,701 | 1,981 | 225 | 201 | 230 | 11.4 | 11.8 | 11.6 |
| Lake and Peninsula Borough | 852 | 861 | 857 | 107 | 93 | 106 | 12.6 | 10.8 | 12.4 |
| Wade Hampton Census Area | 2720 | 2717 | 2669 | 604 | 519 | 556 | 22.2 | 19.1 | 20.8 |

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 Wrangell Borough, 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