

Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

December 19, 2014

No. 14-48

Unemployment rate at 6.6 percent in November

Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.6 percent in November, down slightly from October's 6.7 percent. The comparable national rate was 5.8 percent.

The seasonally adjusted jobless rate has remained relatively stable in Alaska for the past two years. The national rate has continued to decline, and it's not yet clear when it will stabilize. In the 10 years before the most recent national recession, Alaska's rate was usually about 2 percentage points higher than the national level.

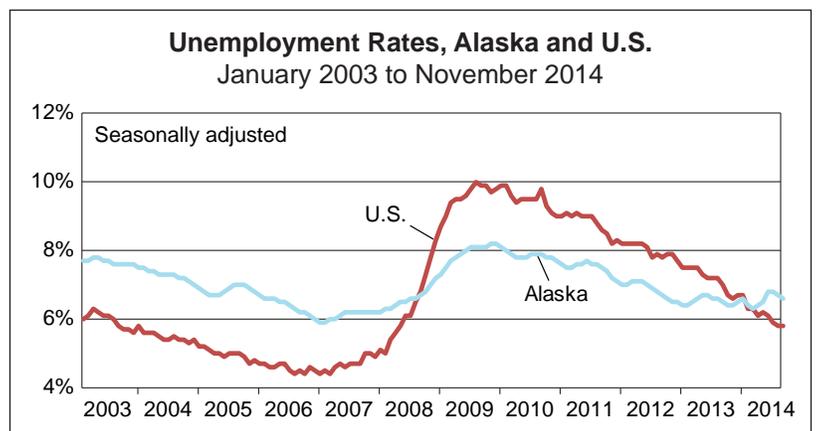
Alaska's not-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.2 percent in November, up three-tenths of a percentage point from October's 5.9 percent. November's rate was essentially the same as the prior year's 6.3 percent.

Around the state, jobless rates increased in 24 out of 29 boroughs and census areas, typical for November. The lowest rate was in the North Slope Borough, where winter construction bucks the normal statewide seasonal trend. Anchorage and Juneau also had low rates, at 4.8 and 4.7 percent, respectively. The highest unemployment rate was in the Municipality of Skagway at 19.2 percent, narrowly edging out Wade Hampton Census Area at 19.0 percent.

Volatility in monthly job estimates

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates Alaska's employment using a survey of about 1,200 employers each month, or about 5 percent of all employers. The estimates are generally imprecise and require significant revisions at the end of each year during the benchmarking process, when the monthly estimates are reconciled to final employment levels.

The first graph on the next page shows the difference between the preliminary estimate and the benchmark revisions for the previous two



	11/14	10/14	11/13
Alaska	6.6%	6.7%	6.5%
U.S.	5.8%	5.9%	7.0%

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

For detailed employment estimates, see <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/ces/>. The estimates are preliminary and subject to potentially large revisions.

years. Although the basic seasonal pattern of the preliminary estimate is correct, over-the-year comparisons are often misleading. Further, estimates at the industry level are especially volatile. One example is the construction industry, shown in the second graph on the next page.

According to the November estimates, total nonfarm employment fell by 6,400 jobs from October, a normal seasonal decline. Compared to the previous year, November's level was down by 1,000 jobs, or -0.3 percent.

Growth in oil and gas, retail trade, and

transportation, warehousing, and utilities will likely be revised down. The dramatic over-the-year loss of 1,200 jobs in leisure and hospitality is likely overstated, given industry trends.

The estimates show significant losses in government employment, which is directionally correct but also likely exaggerated in magnitude.

Alaska's employment was most likely flat or down slightly compared to November 2013. For more information on employment in Alaska's regions, see <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/ces>.

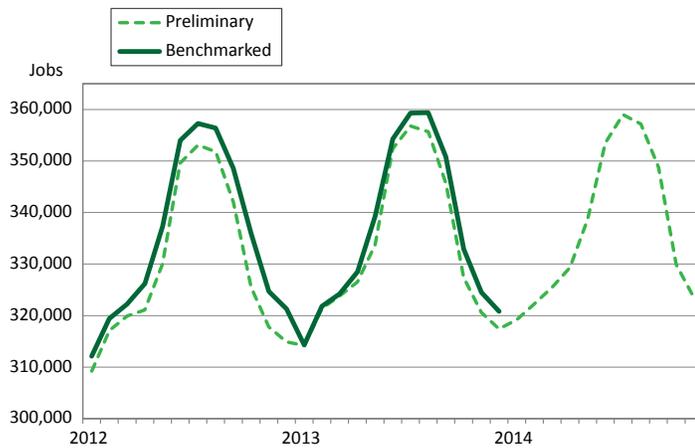
Contact: Caroline Schultz, Economist (907) 465-6027
 Research and Analysis Web site: laborstats.alaska.gov

Alaska Nonfarm Employment

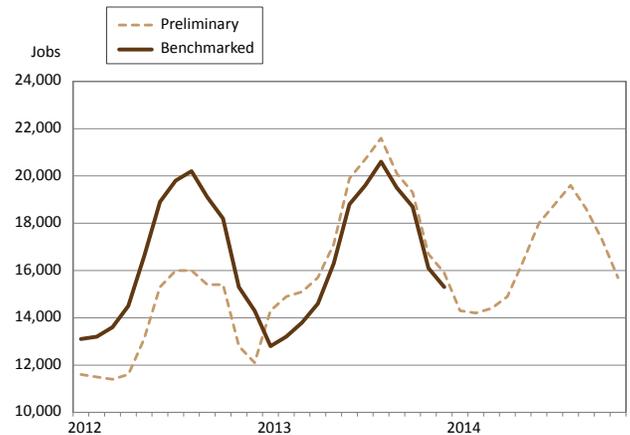
ALASKA	11/14	10/14	11/13	Change from 11/13
Total Nonfarm	323,500	329,900	324,500	-1,000
Total Private	241,400	247,400	241,300	100
Mining and Logging	18,400	18,800	17,400	1,000
Oil, Gas Extr Drilling	15,000	15,100	14,200	800
Construction	15,700	17,300	16,100	-400
Manufacturing	9,800	12,000	10,100	-300
Wholesale Trade	6,300	6,400	6,300	0
Retail Trade	37,200	37,000	36,100	1,100
Trans, Warehouse, Util	20,200	20,700	19,700	500
Information	6,100	6,100	6,300	-200
Financial Activities	11,800	11,700	11,900	-100
Prof and Business Svcs	29,500	30,100	29,200	300
Educational and Health	46,800	46,400	47,300	-500
Health Care	33,500	33,300	33,600	-100
Leisure and Hospitality	28,100	29,300	29,300	-1,200
Other Services	11,500	11,600	11,600	-100
Government	82,100	82,500	83,200	-1,100
Federal Government	14,300	14,500	14,600	-300
State Government	26,200	26,400	26,700	-500
Local Government	41,600	41,600	41,900	-300

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

Total Jobs: Preliminary vs. Benchmarked



Construction: Preliminary vs. Benchmarked



Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted¹

	Civilian Labor Force			Unemployed					
	11/14 ^P	10/14	11/13	Number			Rate		
				11/14 ^P	10/14	11/13	11/14 ^P	10/14	11/13
Alaska	362,495	364,190	361,724	22,606	21,564	22,663	6.2	5.9	6.3
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	202,384	200,374	201,727	10,608	10,039	10,320	5.2	5.0	5.1
Anchorage, Municipality of	158,121	156,697	157,503	7,613	7,320	7,285	4.8	4.7	4.6
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	44,263	43,677	44,224	2,995	2,719	3,035	6.8	6.2	6.9
Gulf Coast Region	39,801	40,359	39,721	2,827	2,625	2,893	7.1	6.5	7.3
Kenai Peninsula Borough	28,328	28,456	27,993	2,035	1,918	2,019	7.2	6.7	7.2
Kodiak Island Borough	6,744	6,879	6,943	353	279	402	5.2	4.1	5.8
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,729	5,024	4,785	439	428	472	9.3	8.5	9.9
Interior Region	53,523	54,241	52,793	3,489	3,276	3,446	6.5	6.0	6.5
Denali Borough	694	1,348	714	108	95	128	15.6	7.0	17.9
Fairbanks North Star Borough	46,583	46,621	45,591	2,619	2,452	2,472	5.6	5.3	5.4
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,196	3,245	3,268	334	320	360	10.5	9.9	11.0
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	3,050	3,027	3,220	428	409	486	14.0	13.5	15.1
Northern Region	12,887	13,023	13,085	1,067	1,081	1,180	8.3	8.3	9.0
Nome Census Area	4,169	4,327	4,371	425	444	444	10.2	10.3	10.2
North Slope Borough	5,642	5,489	5,558	236	219	266	4.2	4.0	4.8
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,076	3,207	3,156	406	418	470	13.2	13.0	14.9
Southeast Region	37,103	38,289	37,061	2,531	2,352	2,488	6.8	6.1	6.7
Haines Borough	1,082	1,164	1,073	107	95	111	9.9	8.2	10.3
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	883	1,103	850	158	124	171	17.9	11.2	20.1
Juneau, City and Borough of	17,448	17,609	17,640	826	790	800	4.7	4.5	4.5
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,664	7,918	7,587	509	484	479	6.6	6.1	6.3
Petersburg Census Area	1,555	1,598	1,552	148	122	160	9.5	7.6	10.3
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	2,325	2,421	2,275	319	317	291	13.7	13.1	12.8
Sitka, City and Borough of	4,304	4,363	4,267	225	196	230	5.2	4.5	5.4
Skagway, Municipality of	574	732	549	110	104	114	19.2	14.2	20.8
Wrangell, City and Borough of	1,023	1,057	1,009	107	96	103	10.5	9.1	10.2
Yakutat, City and Borough of	245	324	259	22	24	29	9.0	7.4	11.2
Southwest Region	16,800	17,902	17,337	2,088	2,190	2,337	12.4	12.2	13.5
Aleutians East Borough	917	1,175	937	94	93	139	10.3	7.9	14.8
Aleutians West Census Area	2,535	2,817	2,784	194	228	301	7.7	8.1	10.8
Bethel Census Area	7,213	7,539	7,368	970	1,022	1,023	13.4	13.6	13.9
Bristol Bay Borough	505	558	554	34	33	41	6.7	5.9	7.4
Dillingham Census Area	1,784	1,866	1,820	179	186	193	10.0	10.0	10.6
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,000	1,107	964	75	77	75	7.5	7.0	7.8
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,846	2,840	2,910	542	551	565	19.0	19.4	19.4

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.

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