

TRENDS



*Inside:
Occupational Fatalities Decline
Alaska Employment Scene:
Unemployment at New Low*

November
1998
Volume 18
Number 10
ISSN 0160-3345

ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/research/research.htm>

Tony Knowles, Governor of Alaska
Tom Cashen, Commissioner of Labor

Alaska Economic Trends is a monthly publication dealing with a variety of economic-related issues in the state.

Alaska Economic Trends is funded by the Employment Security Division and published by the Alaska Department of Labor, P.O. Box 21149, Juneau, Alaska 99802-1149.

Printed and distributed by Assets, Inc., a vocational training and employment program, at a cost of \$.82 per copy.

For more information, call the AKDOL Publications Office at (907) 465-6019 or email the authors.

Material in this publication is public information and, with appropriate credit, may be reproduced without permission.

Diana Kelm, Editor

Joanne Erskine, Associate Editor

Email contacts for *Trends* articles:

LeRoy_Davis@labor.state.ak.us

LeRoy Davis is Employment Services program manager, Employment Security Division, Alaska Department of Labor in Juneau.

Talitha_Lukshin@labor.state.ak.us

Talitha Lukshin is a labor economist with the Research and Analysis Section, Administrative Services Division, Alaska Department of Labor in Juneau.

John_Boucher@labor.state.ak.us

John Boucher is a labor economist with the Research and Analysis Section, Administrative Services Division, Alaska Department of Labor in Juneau.

Subscriptions: Jo_Ruby@labor.state.ak.us

Contents:

Employment Service Makes Connections	3
Occupational Fatalities Decline	11
Employment Scene	18
Record Low for Unemployment	

Employment Service Makes Connections

Internet job postings close the distance to job seekers

Prepared by staff in the
Employment Security Division

In an era of sharp competition to recruit both valued customers and talented workers, the smart business is constantly looking for an advantage. Many businesses are finding that competitive advantage through the Alaska Employment Service (AES) in the Alaska Department of Labor's Employment Security Division.

Access to the largest pool of skilled and experienced workers in the state and lightning fast publication of job vacancies are just two of the benefits open to employers through the AES. Employers filled more than 17,000 openings last year through the Employment Service. (See Exhibit 1.)

Although recruitment through the Employment Service gives Alaska businesses a competitive advantage, available at no cost to all, it remains an unfamiliar resource to many of the state's employers.

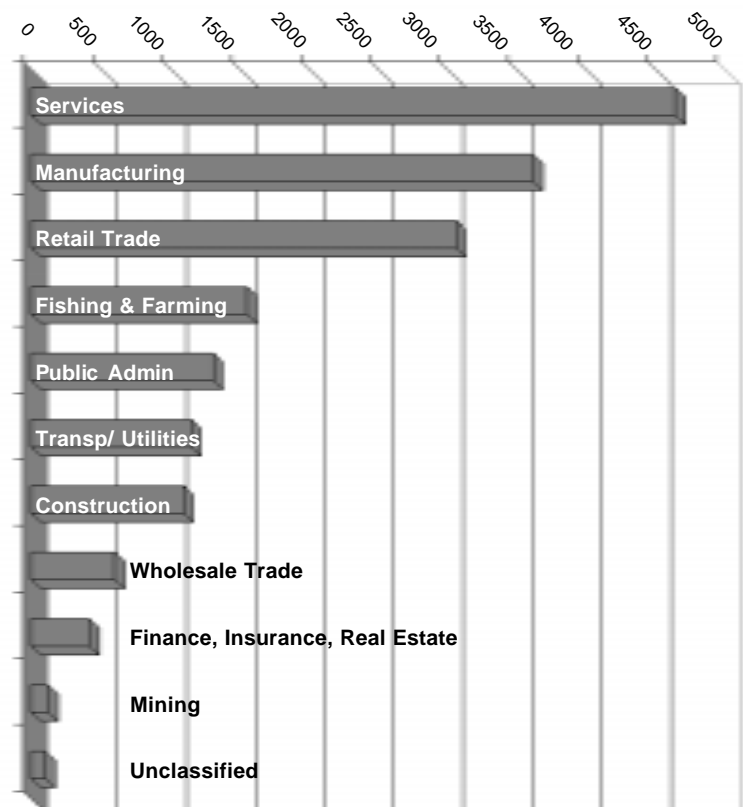
Workforce Investment Act

Two important laws, which will affect Alaska's employment and training community for many years, have been enacted recently. They must be considered in order to understand changes evolving in the Employment Service.

The Alaska Workforce Development Act, Senate Bill 334, was signed by Governor Knowles in July 1998. This law broadens the responsibility of the 26-member Alaska Human Resource Investment Council for the oversight of virtually all the employment and training programs operating in Alaska. Each of these programs must now

demonstrate its value and effectiveness through periodic performance reports. These reports will help the Governor and Legislature develop results-based budgets, while providing users of employment and training services a way to compare the many service providers operating in Alaska.

Job Openings Filled By industry group, 1997



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Employment Security Division

The recently passed federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) is the second law that provides new guidelines for the AES. This law takes effect in stages, phased in between now and July 2000. It requires each state to develop a one-stop delivery system for core employment-related services. Core services include job order listing, job search assistance, career exploration, labor market information, and resume preparation.

Under WIA, the one-stop system becomes the principal access point to other employment and training services. At the same time, WIA supports the unique and universal nature of the public labor exchange where there are no eligibility requirements, obligations or assessed fees.

These two new laws underscore the need for a dynamic labor exchange system that helps employers quickly fill vacancies with qualified job seekers. To ensure that Alaska employers

and workers can count on the continued presence and capabilities of such a system in the state, the AES has made two commitments:

1. to be a full partner and promoter of the one-stop service delivery model for employment and training activities, and
2. to use appropriate technologies to reduce the time and distance separating employers and job seekers.

One-Stop Initiative

In 1996, Alaska received a three-year one-stop implementation grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The purpose of the grant is to consolidate and streamline job services for the public at easy-to-reach sites. A steering committee of partnering state agencies and Alaska Private Industry Councils (PICs) guides the state's one-stop initiative—officially named

New

Alaska Employer Handbook

is newly available exclusively on the Alaska Department of Labor's Employer Web Page.

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/employer/employer.htm>

Employers can reach the Employment Service by:

- Calling the Alaska Employment Service
- Calling the local Job Center (Eagle River, Ketchikan, Juneau, Mat-Su, Bethel, Kenai and Fairbanks)
- Sending a fax
- Visiting the nearest Job Center or Employment Service office
- Posting jobs electronically over the Internet
- Calling 1-888-830-HIRE (4473)

The results will be the same: fast, courteous service and access to Alaska's largest pool of job seekers. The Employment Service is determined to be the most reliable and responsive connection between Alaska's employers and ready-to-work job seekers. At no cost!

the Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN). The three Alaska PICs draw their members from business, education, vocational rehabilitation, organized labor, public assistance, community-based organizations and the Employment Service. The overall AJCN steering committee provides direction and evaluation of local one-stop activities in each job center. The success of AJCN and its one-stop partnerships depends upon the active participation of businesses to ensure that employment and training activities are in harmony with current and long term local labor markets.

Alaska's experience with one-stop service delivery started several years ago with some ad hoc partnerships on the local level. Grassroots, one-stop efforts began with early collaborations in Eagle River and Ketchikan, which served as models for similar efforts elsewhere in the state. Juneau joined as a one-stop site in 1997, and four more sites have since been added.

A Name Change: Job Center

Through the years, employers and job seekers using public employment services in Alaska have looked for different names and logos: Manpower, Job Service, the Unemployment Office, and most recently the Alaska Employment Service. To commit to the one-stop system, AES offices are joining the Alaska Job Center Network and adopting the name "Job Center." Job Center reflects both enhanced levels of cooperation among the state's employment and training partners, as well as the Employment Security Division's role as Alaska's primary labor exchange.

As AES offices become AJCN members and affiliates, they are also adopting a new working motto: "Where People and Jobs Connect." A visitor to a Job Center will find an emphasis on the many connections between employers and workers. These include:

- assistance in finding a new job or a new worker
- reemployment services for those receiving unemployment benefits
- re-entry services for military veterans returning to the civilian labor market
- transition assistance for workers whose skills have become obsolete or whose principal industries have suffered severe economic downturns
- vocational assessment and guidance for workers to help select career paths connected to real work opportunities, and
- solid information on employee selection and retention methods to reduce employer costs associated with finding and training new workers.

Job Center is the new name for offices of the Employment Service that have located in one-stop offices of the AJCN (Alaska Job Center Network).

Job Centers are now open in Juneau, Ketchikan, Eagle River, Mat-Su, Bethel, Kenai and Fairbanks. More Job Centers are in planning stages.

Employer Web Page and Other Technologies

The Employment Service is quickly deploying new technologies to deliver comprehensive employment information and services to businesses and job seekers. The Internet, for example, has become a common business tool like the telephone, fax, or copier. It is also becoming the nation's number one

source for employment opportunities and current workforce information. Recent counts reveal that as many as 14,000 job seekers visit the electronic job listings of the Alaska Employment Service each day.

Because Alaska businesses need quick and convenient methods to access the huge amount of employment information currently available, the Employment Service has created an easily accessed website for employers. The information about services is organized on the Internet with easy-to-follow links.

Employer Website on the Internet

Alaska Department of Labor technical staff have created an employer website featuring information about programs that will interest and benefit Alaska's employers.

The "Employer" web page

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/employer/employer.htm>

can also be reached from the State of Alaska home page

<http://www.state.ak.us>

by clicking on the gold "employer" link in the blue banner along the left margin of the screen. The Employer page links to websites about specific topics such as tax credits, wage and hour information and the newly developed job order entry form.

Input from employers is always welcome! Ideas, suggestions, comments or questions about any topic within the Alaska Department of Labor website may be submitted via the email link near the bottom of the main web pages.

(Please see the graphic of the Web Page on the inside back cover.)

Internet access gives Alaska employers a rapid and effective way to recruit qualified workers. Rural businesses will find it enables them to reach skilled, experienced job seekers at no cost. Any employer in the state can place a job order online, check recent wage rates for various occupations and labor market areas, and get hiring tips, such as what questions are legal during an employment interview.

Job seekers find the Internet access valuable, making it easier to identify opportunities in local communities, statewide, or throughout the nation. Workers in Ketchikan and Nome can now seek work in Anchorage with equal ease. A job seeker from Alaska's Interior with access to the Internet can apply for seafood processing work in one of the state's coastal communities. With these technological improvements, quicker and more reliable job matches are made.

Alaska's Job Bank

The first place for an employer to look for qualified workers in Alaska is Alaska's Job Bank, an Internet site maintained by the Employment Service. When a business asks the AES to assist with employee recruitment, a job description appears electronically on Alaska's Job Bank. The job description is identical whether the employer posts it through the Internet, telephone, fax, or visits the local office. Alaska's Job Bank provides employers full access to the largest pool of qualified applicants in the state, at no charge to the user. The Employment Service referred more than 37,000 potential workers to employers last year.

The quickest way for qualified job seekers to respond to an employer's recruitment is through self-service referral. Alaska's Job Bank lists the required job experience and qualifications, duties, working conditions, pay and benefits. The listing then advises qualified workers on how to contact the employer and arrange for an interview.

Reducing the number of occasions an employment

specialist must handle the job order and employer information simplifies the process of matching workers to jobs. An employer no longer must wait for a job seeker to drop by a local employment office and happen to see posted job vacancies. Nor must the employer or job seeker wait for the next available employment office interviewer for contact information and referral instructions.

Everything the qualified worker needs to self-refer appears on the job listing. The job announcement appears on the Internet where interested job seekers can access it from their home, library, college placement office, private business, or other Internet accessible locations. On any given day, a job seeker can access as many as a thousand job orders on Alaska's Job Bank. Between April and September of 1998, Alaska's Job Bank averaged between 12,000 and 18,000 on-line visitors per day.

The employer is assured that job seekers have ready access to all posted job openings. The technology also guarantees the employer that the qualified job seeker has the information needed to submit a resume, call for an interview, or apply for the job.

Job Order Entry Form On-line

Employers now can submit recruitment requests (job orders) on the Internet. The interactive Internet job order form is accessible through a link on the AKDOL "Employer" page

**[http://www.labor.state.ak.us/
employer/employer.htm](http://www.labor.state.ak.us/employer/employer.htm)**

The form is designed to make the process of submitting job orders easier for businesses and to speed up employer recruitment efforts.

When an employer submits a job order, the order follows two electronic avenues. First, an AKDOL

staff member enters the information on a mainframe computer system that staff in 19 offices around the state use to recruit workers. Second, all open job orders are posted on Alaska's Job Bank. When an employer submits a job order, it will appear on Alaska's Job Bank the next work day after it is submitted.

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/esjobs/jobs>

Employers find it easy to place a self-referral job order with the local Job Center using the Internet. AES staff works closely with them to ensure that recruitment attracts qualified, available workers. An employer may also request that AES keep contact information confidential in order to match potential candidates before referral. This is particularly useful when seeking a replacement for someone still on the payroll.

America's Job Bank

When an employer's efforts to recruit a suitable worker from the local or statewide labor market prove unsuccessful, AES can help the employer widen the search through America's Job Bank (AJB), an initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor. AJB posts as many as 500,000 job openings nationwide each day. More than six-and-a-half million Internet users accessed AJB in September 1998. The website is:

<http://www.ajb.dni.us>

A feature of AJB is America's Talent Bank (ATB), an Internet site that stores the electronic resumes of job seekers. Employers may use words and phrases that reflect skills, abilities, experience, or education to locate resumes that match their job requirements. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, America's Job Bank will soon be the world's largest human resource database with more than 160,000 active resumes.

Employer Toll-Free Number

The Internet is a useful information tool, yet some employers do not have access or may live in rural areas where on-line service is not yet available or is too expensive. To provide full choice in using the no-cost statewide labor exchange, AES has also installed a toll-free number

1-888-830-HIRE (4473)

for placing job openings for any location in the state. Through the one-stop system's new technologies, the Employment Service assists all Alaska employers in finding qualified workers.

Commitment to Customers

Since 1937, the public employment service has been Alaska's primary labor exchange. Alaska's Employment Security Division approaches the 21st Century with a new name, a new legislative mandate, and new technologies that bring employers and job seekers closer together. The Alaska Employment Service and the Alaska Job Center Network should be the first place an Alaska business or job seeker turns for employment-related assistance and information.

Reemployment Services

The Alaska Department of Labor has taken a pro-active approach to preserving the Unemployment Insurance (UI) trust fund. Reemployment services guide unemployed workers back to work sooner, thereby reducing UI dollars paid out. The Reemployment Services Program is designed to identify UI claimants who are likely to exhaust benefits and are in need of resources to make the transition to new employment. Claimants identified as most likely to exhaust UI benefits meet with Alaska Employment Service staff to assess their individual situations and determine which reemployment services will best prepare them to return to work as soon as possible. The Employment Service provides most reemployment services in-house including but not limited to:

- workshops on resume writing and interviewing skills

- information about labor market conditions
- assistance with job search activities
- resource areas with computers and software training options
- access to Internet resources including
 - Alaska's Job Bank, statewide job listings
 - America's Job Bank, nationwide job listings
 - America's Talent Bank, where applicants post their resumes
- vocational assessment and counseling

Claimants may also be referred to services that are provided by other agencies such as the State Training and Employment Program (STEP) and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Claimants' adherence to "the reemployment plan" may affect their eligibility for UI benefits.

Reemployment services are available to all job seekers for no charge.

Employers and their Taxes

Unemployment Insurance Taxes

Employers pay unemployment insurance (UI) taxes that fund the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA). If these taxes are paid in full and timely, employers receive a refund of a portion of the taxes paid. FUTA in turn funds state administration of UI and Employment Services (ES) programs. Most states receive 60 percent or less of the taxes employers pay into FUTA. Alaska and five other states receive more than 100 percent return from the fund. In fact, Alaska currently enjoys a more than 300 percent return from FUTA to administer UI and ES programs. Several pieces of proposed federal legislation would adjust this imbalance. Whatever form final legislation takes, Alaska will most likely have to make do with less funding and adjust program services accordingly. Advanced technology will help maintain

existing levels of service in some areas, but some services will depend on other funding sources. Other avenues of funding will have to be secured or services scaled back or discontinued. Another option may be to apply a "fee-for-service" approach to some services, such as screening applicants.

The Alaska Department of Labor, Employment Security Division administers reemployment services that produce two advantages to employers. One, clients draw less unemployment benefits because they return to work sooner than they would without the services, preserving a portion of FUTA funds; and two, the Alaska workforce is strengthened as unemployed workers gain work skills from reemployment services.

Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit

The Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Tax Credit is a federal income tax credit that encourages employers to hire long-term welfare recipients. This tax credit can reduce employer federal tax liability by as much as \$3,500 the first year and \$5,000 the second year for each newly hired qualifying worker. Last year, 131 Alaska employers were certified for this tax credit.

To qualify, the employee must begin working between January 1, 1998 and April 30, 1999. The employee must also have been a member of a family that received benefits from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP) for at least 18 consecutive months before the date of hire.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Although the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) expired June 30, 1998, an extension to the program is likely, so employers are encouraged to continue submitting required forms within 21 days of hiring a worker. The WOTC program is similar to the WTW Tax Credit in that the federal government designed it as an incentive for employers to hire individuals from target groups. In addition to ATAP/AFDC recipients, the WOTC also targets food stamp recipients, veterans who have received food stamps, vocational rehabilitation recipients, ex-felons, and supplemental

security insurance recipients. Last year, 423 Alaska employers were certified for the WOTC.

More information on both of these tax credit programs is available by contacting the Tax Credit Administrator, Bill Ehlers, by telephone at (907) 465-5925 or by email at Bill_Ehlers@labor.state.ak.us. This information also appears on the Internet website Work Opportunity and Welfare to Work Tax Credit Programs at

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/wotc/wotc.htm>

Why Hire Veterans?

America's servicemen and women have fought to preserve the many freedoms our country enjoys. Veterans have earned the right to move to the front of the line when it comes to finding a job. The Alaska Department of Labor gives veterans preference for referral to jobs they are qualified for, as well as first priority for job seeker resources such as skill-building workshops. Veterans can bring skills and experience to the civilian labor market and to an employer's workplace that can be assets to a company. Besides technical and task-oriented job skills acquired in active duty, military personnel tend to bring with them attributes of teamwork, initiative, self-motivation, and a good work ethic.

Year 2000 Project Will Not Wait!

Businesses have programmers working feverishly to ensure their systems will operate correctly when the clock strikes 12:01 January 1, 2000. However, that is not enough. Companies also need to be concerned about Year 2000 (Y2K) compliance of the business chain from top to bottom. Some say this extends from power (energy) sources and government agencies to vendors that supply raw materials. There may not be 13 months left. What about the systems that process fiscal year 2000 data starting October 1, or July 1, 1999?

The truism, "Time waits for no one," has never been more apt. Good business sense charges leaders around the world with Y2K projects with a definite completion date. There is no flexibility to push these projects back. They warrant a high priority starting from the top of any business. Infrastructure runs almost invisibly on computer code. Programmers wrote a vast amount of the code in use today when a couple of bytes were a precious commodity, and they used two digits instead of four to designate years. Any system, computer or otherwise, that has an internal clock or processes information with dates may read the year 2000 and beyond in the wrong century! Imagination boggles at the consequences. The century date change will affect power grids around the world, government agencies, businesses, home computers, and many other aspects of our lives.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration has a website dedicated to Year 2000 resources.

<http://www.doleta.gov/y2000.htm>

Another good resource is the U.S. General Services website. From their Y2K page

<http://www.gsa.gov/gsacio>

information about any phase of a Y2K project or plan can be accessed. The State of Alaska also has a collection of links to useful websites. Information about the State's Y2K activities is available on the State of Alaska home page

<http://www.state.ak.us>

at the gold "Year 2000" link in the blue banner along the left margin of the screen.

Occupational Fatalities Decline

by
Talitha Lukshin
Labor Economist

Water vehicle deaths drop; air taxi deaths climb

Led by a sharp drop in deaths from water vehicle accidents, occupational fatalities in Alaska in 1997 declined to 51. Aircraft accidents were the leading cause of fatalities, with 19 for the year. (See Exhibit 1.)

In 1997, fewer people died from occupational injuries than in any year since the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI)¹ began in 1992. Prior to 1997, the water vehicle category accounted for an average of 33% of occupational fatalities, but the eight deaths in 1997 represented 16% of the count. (See Exhibit 2.) All other categories experienced slight increases or stayed the same for the year. Aircraft accidents accounted for 37% of fatalities.

Alaska's fatality rate dropping

Encouragingly, the number of fatalities is declining at a time when the statewide labor force is increasing. Over the past five years, the ratio of fatalities to workers has moved from a high of 31 to a new low of 17.² The five-year average of the most current counts also indicates a declining trend. (See Exhibit 3.) For the period of 1993 to 1997, the state rate dropped nine percent from the previous five-year period. Looking forward, if the fatality count stays the same or continues to decline, the next five-year rate will drop by more than five percent.

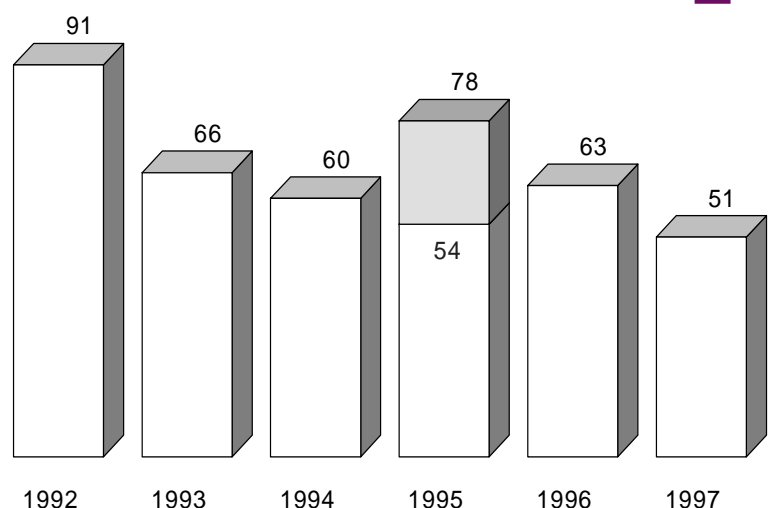
In the most recent comparison among states (1992-96), Alaska held the highest fatality rate in the nation. Alaska's rate of 22 fatalities per 100,000 workers led, with Wyoming next at 12.5 per 100,000. The national rate is stable at five per 100,000.³ The major causes of occupational fatalities in Alaska have always differed from

national trends. Water vehicle and aircraft fatality cases have dominated the count here. Nationally, the majority of deaths are in the "other transportation" and "violent acts" categories. (See Exhibit 2.)

Aircraft accidents leading cause of occupational death

During 1997, aircraft accidents were the leading cause of occupational death, capturing 37% of the deaths. Nineteen deaths occurred as a result of 14 airplane crashes; the pilot was killed in all 14 crashes. Of the passengers in an occupational

Occupational Fatalities Alaska 1992-1997



Note: 24 deaths in 1995 resulted from a single military air crash.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

2 Fatalities by Accident Type* 1992-97, Alaska and U.S.

	Alaska										U.S.			
	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	1992-1996		1997		1992-1996		1997		
						Avg.	%	%	Avg.	%	%			
Total	91	66	60	78	63	72		51		6,331		6,218		
Water Vehicle	38	21	14	21	26	24	33%	8	16%	106	2%	109	2%	
Aircraft	26	22	10	34	16	22	31	19	37	334	5	261	4	
Other Transportation	4	4	6	11	6	6	8	6	12	2,147	34	2,229	36	
Contact with Object	10	4	9	4	4	6	8	6	12	998	16	1,034	17	
Violent Acts	4	12	6	3	6	6	8	6	12	1,275	20	1,103	18	
Falls	-	-	-	1	0	1	1	0	0	645	10	715	11	
Fires & Explosions	0	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	4	193	3	196	3	
Exposure	6	0	10	3	4	5	7	4	8	596	9	550	9	
Other	-	-	-	1	0	0.4	1	0	0	37	1	21	0.3	

* Event groupings are coded using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structure (OIICS).
– Not publishable as presented.

Data revised, September, 1998

Sources: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section, and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

status, two were fish spotters, two were on business trips, and one was an airline ground crew member. (See Exhibit 4.)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in conjunction with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), is currently conducting audits of carriers of similar size class, location and operational complexity.⁴ Dissimilar practices between carriers with and without high numbers of accidents are being examined to identify solutions to Alaska's high accident rates. The first of two studies, released in April 1998, focused on takeoff and landing accidents, and the next will address visibility-related accidents.

Marked differences between the two groups in pay structures, management involvement in "go-no-go" decisions, and safety management styles were noted by the study. None of the carriers in the high accident group reported paying pilots a salary, but instead used flight hour incentives. Only half of the companies in the minimal-to-no-accident group

reported paying pilots with incentives. Further, almost all the companies in the low accident group reported management's involvement in "go-no-go" decisions, in contrast to much lower involvement of management at high-rate companies. Findings outside the scope of the audits, but also salient, were that pilot judgment has been the root cause of most of the accidents reviewed. The high-rate group evaluated for the audit had an accident rate of 0.223 per 1,000 flights versus 0.005 per 1,000 flights nationally.

Air taxi deaths rose sharply in 1997

The employee fatality rate⁵ rose dramatically in unscheduled air transportation in 1997. (See Exhibit 5.) Eleven pilots were killed. This industry group generally flies under FAA flight rules commonly known as "on-demand air taxi" commercial operations (CFR 14 Part 135). Nine of the 11 pilots killed had less than two years with the company, most less than a year. Six of the 11 had not established residency, and two more had done so only the year before.⁶

Is pilot experience linked to aircraft accidents?

Employment indicators suggest a strong job market for commercial pilots. From 1995 to 1997, summer quarter data from Alaska's Occupational Database reveal a 10% increase in the number of pilots reported. Wage and salary employment for the industry also increased strongly. A total of 193 jobs in unscheduled air transportation was added in 1996 and another 117 in 1997. This mirrors employment growth for pilots during the same period.

In 1996 and 1997, labor market forces may have drawn less experienced pilots, with low flight hours or flight experience in Alaska, or both, into the industry. From 1996 to 1997, the proportion of non-resident to resident new hires of pilots in the spring-summer season rose from 50/50 to a 57/43 split.⁷ Residency alone does not indicate experience or flight hours in Alaska. Some pilots return seasonally to fill positions in the tourism industry, but do not establish year-round residency.

The sharp increase in fatalities in 1997 leads to questions about a possible relationship between the level of pilot experience and fatal crashes. The number of fatalities in 1997 is insufficient to draw any conclusion, but does suggest an area for further research.

The commercial fishing industry also lost pilots during 1997. Four individuals, two pilots and two spotters, were killed while spotting for fish or while practicing for an upcoming opening. In 1995, a midair collision while fish-spotting killed two pilots.

Water vehicle fatalities drop sharply

In all, 18 fewer water vehicle-related deaths were reported in 1997 than in 1996. Unlike the two previous years, there was no major fatal loss from a crabbing vessel sinking or capsizing. (See *Alaska Economic Trends*, September 1997.) Fewer fishermen were lost overboard or pulled over by long lining or crabbing gear.

Three fishermen were lost in water vehicle-related accidents, compared to 33 in 1992. One skipper, attempting to save a sinking vessel near St. Paul, did not put on a survival suit before entering the water. His crew of three in survival suits lived. Another fisherman lost his life when he was pulled over after being caught in a line connecting crab gear. This is the eighth case involving a fisherman being pulled over since 1992.

Strong U.S. Coast Guard regulations requiring survival equipment on board are working. Fishermen abandoning ship are now able to stay alive longer and are located sooner after a vessel

Fatality Incidence Rates* **3** Alaska and U.S., 1992-97

Year	Alaska			U.S.
	Fatalities (CFOI)†	Employees (CPS)‡	Rate	Rate
1992	82	261,155	31	5
1993	64	274,788	23	5
1994	54	281,417	19	5
1995	51	281,502	19	5
1996	61	291,246	21	5
1997	50	291,102	17	5
1992-1996	62	278,022	22	5
1993-1997	56	284,011	20	5
1994-1997	54	286,317	19	5

*The incidence rate is calculated as $(N/W \times 100,000)$ where N is the number of fatal occupational injuries and W is workers employed, multiplied by a base number of 100,000 workers.

† These CFOI counts exclude military personnel, volunteer workers, and workers under 16 years of age.

‡ Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates the civilian labor force based on a monthly survey of Alaska households. Use of CPS data in this comparison is experimental. See Endnote² for CFOI/CPS limitations of comparability.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

4 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

Alaska 1997

Event

<u>Grouping*</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Industry†</u>
Water Vehicle				
	Pulled over by crab gear	1	Fisher	Commercial Fishing
	Fell overboard	1	Deckhand	Transportation, Water
	Fell overboard	1	Guide	Services, Lodge Operation
	Sinking or capsized	1	Crew	Transportation, Water
	Sinking or capsized	1	Fisher	Commercial Fishing
	Skiff fell during loading and struck worker	1	Fisher	Commercial Fishing
	Ship in distress	2	Deckhand	Transportation, Water
Aircraft				
		11	Pilots	Transportation, Air
		2	Pilots	Commercial Fishing
		2	Fish Spotters	Commercial Fishing
		1	Board Member	Finance, Native Corporation
		1	Manager	Education, School District
		1	Ground Crew	Transportation, Air
		1	Trapper	Trapping
Other Transportation				
	Highway accident	1	Manager	Retail, Food Services
		1	Marine Pilot	Transportation, Water
		1	N/R	
		1	Truck Driver	Transportation, Motor Freight
	Highway & rail accident	1	Manager	Manufacturing, Wood Products
	Roller compactor overturned during offloading	1	Truck Driver	Construction, Heavy
Contact with Objects				
	Crushed by falling ice	1	Miner	Mining, Metal
	Struck by falling trees	2	Logger	Manufacturing, Logging
	Struck by falling headache ball	1	Laborer	Construction, Heavy
	Struck by falling forklift tines	1	Stock Clerk	Manufacturing, Paper Products
	Caught in avalanche	1	Artist	Services, Not Classified
Exposure				
	Concrete pump truck contact with powerlines	1	Driver/Operator	Construction, Special Trades
	Diving to secure mooring line	1	Diver	Construction, Heavy
	Diving to inspect hull	1	N/R	
	Ran into deep water lake	1	Biologist	Government, Wildlife Conservation
Fire & Explosion				
	Dry-docked boat caught fire	1	N/R	
	Welding dry-docked skiff, explosion	1	Welder	Manufacturing, Shipbuilding & Repair
Violent Acts				
	Homicide, shot	1	Taxi Driver	Transportation, Local
	Homicide, other	1	Police	Government, Local
	Homicide, shot by student	1	Principal	Government, Education
	Homicide, shot by customer	1	Mechanic	Services, Auto Repair
	Homicide, stabbed in fight	1	Processor	Manufacturing, Fish Processing
	At-work suicide	1	N/R	

*Event is coded using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structure (OIICS).

† Industry is classified using the *Standard Industrial Classifications Manual*, 1987 edition.

N/R: Not releasable as presented. Data obtained from other than public information sources such as newspapers, OSHA, U.S. Coast Guard, or Workers' Compensation reports cannot be released.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

loss. Despite the intervention, this work remains hazardous. Already this year a number of fishermen have been killed and the count will be up again for 1998. Prevention of the accidents is now key to continued long-term reductions.

The water transportation industry had four work-related deaths compared to six in 1996. None of them was in the cruise ship industry. The grounding of a freighter during a storm claimed two lives. A crewman was lost when a tugboat sank in Bristol Bay. Survival suits and deployed rafts minimized the loss of life. Miraculously, the skipper of the boat, who did not have time to put on his survival suit because he was helping a crew member, survived by hanging onto a raft dropped by a U.S. Coast Guard C-130. The third incident and fourth fatality involved a deckhand falling overboard from a freighter.

AKDOL investigates 12% of deaths

The Alaska Department of Labor (AKDOL) Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) investigates fatalities that do not come under the jurisdiction of other agencies. In 1997, OSH investigated six deaths, concentrated in two major industry groups, construction and logging. As in years past, these fatalities often related to use of heavy equipment. This is the third straight year an industry has reported an electrocution due to equipment contact with overhead power lines. A truck driver was killed when the roller compactor he was off-loading from a trailer overturned. Other cases investigated by OSH for the year included two loggers killed while harvesting trees. (See Exhibit 6.)

No change or slight increases in all other event categories

Because of the sharp decline in water vehicle-related accidents, all other event categories saw a percentage increase for 1997. For example, "other transportation" rose from 10 percent to 12 percent, but the number of cases was unchanged. Of the six cases, five were highway or roadway accidents.

In 1997, exposure event cases other than the electrocution incident included two fatal diving accidents. In the past, diving accidents have been primarily related to fishermen diving to clear line and net from a vessel propeller. In 1997, however, a commercial diver was killed while diving to secure a mooring line and another worker was lost when diving to inspect a vessel hull.

Violent acts claimed five lives in five different occupations. Only two of the five homicides involved criminal intent. A police officer was killed in a confrontation with an assailant being chased from a stolen car, and a cab driver was killed in an apparent robbery. Three others were related to disputes over money or other motives.

Summary

The Alaska occupational fatality rate is declining. The five-year average from 1993 to 1997 dropped nine percent from the prior five-year average.

Unscheduled Air Transportation Fatality & Accident Rates 5

Incidents per 100,000 employees



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

Aviation experts are researching the high number of aircraft-related deaths. The first of two joint studies between the FAA and NIOSH found a relationship between company practices and takeoff and landing accidents. A sharp fatality rate increase in 1997 among wage and salary employees in air taxi operations occurred during a period of strong employment growth. With pilot error consistently being identified as the root cause of aviation accidents in Alaska, further research into the safety implications of pilot flight hours in and out of Alaska seems warranted.

The number of fishermen killed in water vehicle-related accidents was down significantly in 1997. Major safety intervention improvements are keeping fishermen alive longer and helping the

Coast Guard rescue them sooner. Despite the decline, the work remains hazardous, and lives lost are going up again in 1998. The focus must now be on preventing accidents.

Vehicle-related fatalities, although varied, consistently appear among those investigated by the AKDOL OSH. It was the third year an electrocution fatality was reported after equipment came in contact with overhead power lines.

With the sharp decline from 1996 to 1997 of water vehicle-related accidents, all other events rose in percentage representation in the census. However, the number of cases in all other event categories stayed the same or rose slightly.

Endnotes:

¹ The census records workplace fatalities under the broadest definitions of *labor force*, including military. Fatalities of unpaid family workers and volunteers in an otherwise compensated position at commercial operations are also included.

² The use of Current Population Survey (CPS) data presents limitations of comparability alongside CFOI figures and is experimental. CPS employment data are by place of residence and CFOI fatality data are by place of occurrence. However, the CPS employment rate currently remains the only available benchmark with which to assess national and state rates.

³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Fatal Workplace Injuries in 1996: A Collection of Data and Analysis," June 1998.

⁴ Federal Aviation Administration, "Audit of Alaska Air Carriers Focused on Take-off and Landing Accidents," April 30, 1998.

⁵ To calculate this rate, CFOI cases were matched to Alaska Department of Labor (AKDOL) workers' compensation claims to establish wage and salary

employment status. This method clearly distinguished the self-employed from other employees; to make valid comparisons to employment data, this delineation is important. Then, air carriers reporting a fatality were examined within the employment database to verify industry coding in unscheduled air transportation. Prior to 1997, one death equaled one accident. One midair collision in 1997 did result in the death of two pilots and is counted as one incident for the accident rate analysis. Actual flight hours or number of flights in relation to the industry were not available but would improve the precision of this analysis.

⁶ To be a resident, an individual must apply for the State of Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. The term "residency" used here follows previously established AKDOL, Research and Analysis methods as established in the publication, "Nonresidents Working in Alaska-1996," January 31, 1998.

⁷ A "new hire" is defined as an employee who was hired by the firm in the report quarter and has not been employed by the firm during any of the previous four quarters. This data set is influenced by both job creation and job turnover.

6 AKDOL OSH Investigations

1997 Reports

Construction

A concrete pumping truck operator had finished a delivery to a residential construction site and was cleaning the equipment. The operator, when folding the boom, made contact with an overhead power line and was electrocuted.

A truck driver was off-loading a roller compactor from a tilt-bed trailer when the compactor slipped off the ramp and overturned. The driver was crushed by the vehicle after attempting to jump clear.

A laborer, working as a rigger, was attempting to hook a bridle assembly to the block hook of a hydraulic crane. The operator "boomed out" and two-blocked the auxiliary hoist line headache ball. The ball fell, striking the laborer below.

Logging

A timber feller completed the back cut of a 16-inch diameter tree with a 10-inch rotten core. The tree twisted while falling, striking the feller.

A timber feller was cutting trees on steep terrain. One of the cut trees became lodged against a standing tree. The feller felled an adjacent tree to strike the lodged tree. However, upon striking the lodged tree, it rebounded and struck the timber feller.

A worker was operating a forklift that was leaking hydraulic fluid. He stopped the forklift and crawled under the raised forks to check the damaged hydraulic coupler. The coupling failed, causing the forks to fall, striking the worker below.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Labor Standards and Safety Division

Record Low for Unemployment

Record High for Permanent Fund Dividend

Led by extremely low unemployment rates in many urban areas, Alaska's civilian not seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate set a record low in August when it fell seven-tenths of a percentage point to 4.5%. (See Exhibit 6.) The previous record low was posted in August 1989, when the rate bottomed out at 5.0%.

The 4.5% statewide unemployment rate translated into just over 14,700 jobless Alaskans, 2,600 fewer unemployed than in July and nearly 4,600 fewer than in August 1997. The comparable national unemployment rate (civilian not seasonally adjusted) in August was a matching 4.5%. The last time the state's unemployment rate was at or below the national average was August 1995.

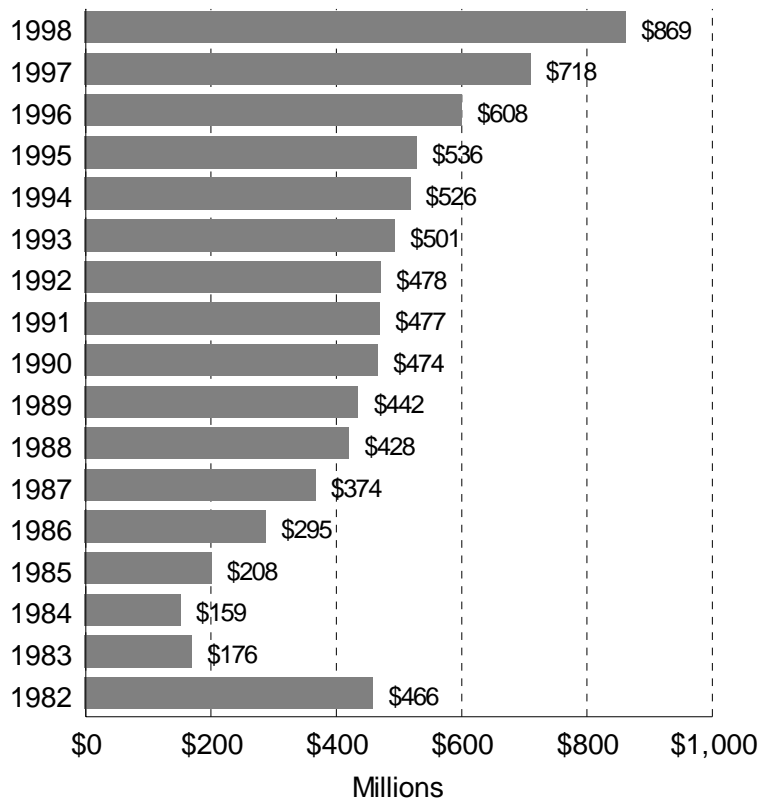
August's unemployment rate continued the trend of record-setting lows during 1998. Through August, the statewide rate has either matched or set a record low every month. If it maintains its current level, the unemployment rate for 1998 will easily surpass the previous record low of 6.7% set in 1989.

Anchorage and Mat-Su Borough rates also set records

Not surprisingly, August also saw record-breaking rates for some of Alaska's regions. Anchorage's unemployment rate of 3.5% and the Mat-Su Borough's 5.1% rate set records for all-time lows. At 4.3%, the Fairbanks North Star Borough's unemployment rate hasn't been this low since the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Although unemployment was at record low levels in some areas, portions of rural Alaska are experiencing unemployment in excess of 10.0%. The highest unemployment rate in the state was posted in the Wade Hampton Census Area where 14.3% of the labor force was unemployed.

1 PFD Pays Record \$869 Million Total PFD distributions 1982-98



1998 data are estimated as of September 23, 1998

Source: Alaska Department of Revenue, Permanent Fund Dividend Division

Job growth remains near 2.0%

Alaska's wage and salary employment in August was 5,600 ahead of 1997's level, a growth rate just shy of 2.0%. (See Exhibit 3.) August's wage and salary job count was dominated by events in the fishing industry. Job counts in all but two of the major industry categories rose in August, but total wage and salary employment dipped a bit. Offsetting the job gains were seasonal losses in the seafood processing sector of manufacturing. Seafood processing employment normally peaks in July and then begins to decline in August. In addition, this year's weaker salmon season caused these numbers to fall harder than usual. The industries posting the biggest job gains in August were construction and government. Construction usually experiences a late summer surge as certain weather sensitive projects, particularly highway and street paving, are in full swing. The government employment gain was a harbinger of the approaching school-related September employment surge.

Regionally, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks and the Gulf Coast regions are leading the state in job growth. The ailing fishing and timber sectors are keeping the Southeast and Southwest employment figures in the red.

PFD: An \$869 million boost for 1998

The 1998 Permanent Fund Dividend amounts to \$1,540.88 per recipient. This is an all time record for the annual payout from the state's oil royalty savings account. An estimated 564,085 individuals receive the dividend, and the total amount paid to Alaskans in 1998 will top \$869 million. Last year, the dividend put about \$718 million into Alaskans' pockets. This total has steadily increased from the \$176 million paid in 1983. (See Exhibit 1.) About 389,000 dividend recipients had their payment electronically transferred to their bank accounts in early October, with most of the checks to be mailed during the same month.

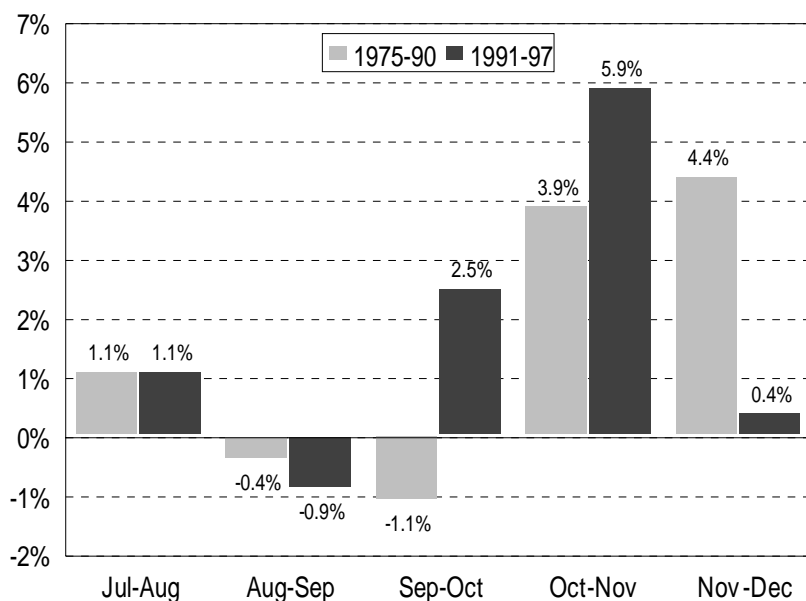
The Permanent Fund dividend has become a powerful economic engine. This year's dividend represents an 18 percent increase of the payment to individuals and a 63 percent increase over the last five years. Dividend targeted advertisements representing retailers, car dealers, airlines, service providers, financial institutions, and nearly every segment of the economy are one hint of just how much of a boost the dividend provides businesses.

To put into perspective how the influence of the Permanent Fund Dividend has increased, consider these comparisons. If the Permanent Fund were payroll, it would surpass the amount paid annually to state employees by \$85 million. If it were a private sector payroll, the dividend would have the third-largest industry payroll in the state behind services, transportation and retail trade. The \$869 million dollars is more than the wage and salary payroll of any month of the year. In other words, if the Permanent Fund Dividend were considered wages, it would add more than a 13th

PFD Boost Comes Earlier

Average monthly percent change in general merchandise employment 1975-90 & 1991-97

2



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

3 Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment by Place of Work

Alaska	preliminary	revised	Changes from:			Municipality of Anchorage	preliminary	revised	Changes from:		
	8/98	7/98	8/97	7/98	8/97		8/98	7/98	8/97	7/98	8/97
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	293,100	294,100	287,500	-1,000	5,600	Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	131,500	131,100	127,300	400	4,200
Goods-producing	48,100	50,500	47,500	-2,400	600	Goods-producing	13,600	13,300	12,800	300	800
Service-producing	245,000	243,600	240,000	1,400	5,000	Service-producing	117,900	117,800	114,500	100	3,400
Mining	11,100	10,800	10,700	300	400	Mining	2,700	2,700	2,500	0	200
Oil & Gas Extraction	9,200	9,000	8,800	200	400	Oil & Gas Extraction	2,500	2,500	2,300	0	200
Construction	17,000	16,400	16,300	600	700	Construction	8,700	8,400	8,200	300	500
Manufacturing	20,000	23,300	20,500	-3,300	-500	Manufacturing	2,200	2,200	2,100	0	100
Durable Goods	3,200	3,100	3,600	100	-400	Transportation/Comm/Utilities	13,400	13,300	12,700	100	700
Lumber & Wood Products	1,900	1,800	2,400	100	-500	Air Transportation	5,800	5,800	5,300	0	500
Nondurable Goods	16,800	20,200	16,900	-3,400	-100	Communications	2,600	2,600	2,400	0	200
Seafood Processing	14,000	17,300	14,100	-3,300	-100	Trade	31,900	32,000	31,500	-100	400
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	27,600	27,300	26,300	300	1,300	Wholesale Trade	6,500	6,500	6,600	0	-100
Trucking & Warehousing	3,100	3,200	3,000	-100	100	Retail Trade	25,400	25,500	24,900	-100	500
Water Transportation	2,500	2,500	2,500	0	0	Gen. Merchandise & Apparel	4,900	4,900	4,800	0	100
Air Transportation	9,600	9,600	9,100	0	500	Food Stores	3,000	3,000	3,100	0	-100
Communications	4,500	4,500	4,000	0	500	Eating & Drinking Places	9,300	9,200	9,000	100	300
Electric, Gas & Sanitary Svcs.	2,500	2,500	2,400	0	100	Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	7,400	7,500	7,400	-100	0
Trade	61,100	61,300	60,400	-200	700	Services & Misc.	37,500	37,300	36,000	200	1,500
Wholesale Trade	9,400	9,400	9,500	0	-100	Hotels & Lodging Places	2,900	3,000	2,900	-100	0
Retail Trade	51,700	51,900	50,900	-200	800	Business Services	6,700	6,500	6,400	200	300
Gen. Merchandise & Apparel	9,700	9,900	9,800	-200	-100	Health Services	8,000	7,900	7,700	100	300
Food Stores	7,400	7,400	7,500	0	-100	Legal Services	1,200	1,200	1,200	0	0
Eating & Drinking Places	18,500	18,400	18,000	100	500	Social Services	3,200	3,200	3,100	0	100
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	13,100	12,900	12,800	200	300	Engineering & Mgmt. Svcs.	5,700	5,600	5,300	100	400
Services & Misc.	72,800	72,300	70,300	500	2,500	Government	27,700	27,700	26,900	0	800
Hotels & Lodging Places	9,000	9,100	8,900	-100	100	Federal	10,000	10,100	10,000	-100	0
Business Services	9,400	9,300	9,000	100	400	State	8,000	8,000	7,800	0	200
Health Services	15,200	15,200	14,800	0	400	Local	9,700	9,600	9,100	100	600
Legal Services	1,700	1,700	1,700	0	0						
Social Services	7,100	7,000	6,900	100	200						
Engineering & Mgmt. Svcs.	8,000	7,900	7,400	100	600						
Government	70,400	69,800	70,200	600	200						
Federal	17,900	18,000	18,000	-100	-100						
State	20,300	20,800	20,400	-500	-100						
Local	32,200	31,000	31,800	1,200	400						

Notes to Exhibits 3, 4, 5—Nonagricultural excludes self-employed workers, fishers, domestics, and unpaid family workers as well as agricultural workers. Government category includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska.

Exhibits 3 & 4—Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Exhibit 5—Prepared in part with funding from the Employment Security Division.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

4 Hours and Earnings for Selected Industries

	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	preliminary 8/98	revised 7/98	8/97	preliminary 8/98	revised 7/98	8/97	preliminary 8/98	revised 7/98	8/97
Mining	\$1,319.28	\$1,216.91	\$1,404.38	47.8	45.8	53.5	\$27.60	\$26.57	\$26.25
Construction	1,229.49	1,167.75	1,182.55	46.1	44.3	45.5	26.67	26.36	25.99
Manufacturing	614.32	540.23	550.61	56.0	51.5	48.9	10.97	10.49	11.26
Seafood Processing	549.54	504.36	445.31	58.4	54.0	49.7	9.41	9.34	8.96
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	684.68	701.32	662.80	34.2	35.6	34.2	20.02	19.70	19.38
Trade	432.02	424.89	430.56	34.7	34.1	34.5	12.45	12.46	12.48
Wholesale Trade	673.77	671.40	645.12	38.7	38.3	38.4	17.41	17.53	16.80
Retail Trade	388.96	381.76	389.57	34.0	33.4	33.7	11.44	11.43	11.56
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	546.85	528.09	508.94	36.8	35.3	36.8	14.86	14.96	13.83

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

Benchmark: March 1997

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

5 Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment by Place of Work

Fairbanks

	preliminary		Changes from:		
	8/98	7/98	8/97	7/98	8/97
North Star Borough					
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	34,400	34,850	33,550	-450	850
Goods-producing	4,450	4,350	4,250	100	200
Service-producing	29,950	30,500	29,300	-550	650
Mining	1,350	1,300	1,350	50	0
Construction	2,450	2,400	2,250	50	200
Manufacturing	650	650	650	0	0
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	3,400	3,450	2,900	-50	500
Trucking & Warehousing	600	600	600	0	0
Air Transportation	750	750	750	0	0
Communications	500	500	300	0	200
Trade	7,050	7,150	7,100	-100	-50
Wholesale Trade	900	900	850	0	50
Retail Trade	6,150	6,250	6,250	-100	-100
Gen. Merchandise & Apparel	1,250	1,300	1,300	-50	-50
Food Stores	750	750	850	0	-100
Eating & Drinking Places	2,100	2,100	2,100	0	0
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	1,100	1,100	1,100	0	0
Services & Misc.	8,950	8,950	8,650	0	300
Hotels & Lodging Places	1,100	1,150	1,050	-50	50
Health Services	1,900	1,950	1,900	-50	0
Government	9,450	9,850	9,550	-400	-100
Federal	3,550	3,600	3,450	-50	100
State	3,450	3,800	3,450	-350	0
Local	2,450	2,450	2,650	0	-200

Southeast Region

Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	41,000	40,300	41,350	700	-350
Goods-producing	7,650	7,200	8,050	450	-400
Service-producing	33,350	33,100	33,300	250	50
Mining	400	400	350	0	50
Construction	1,900	1,900	2,050	0	-150
Manufacturing	5,350	4,900	5,650	450	-300
Durable Goods	1,600	1,650	1,900	-50	-300
Lumber & Wood Products	1,400	1,450	1,700	-50	-300
Nondurable Goods	3,750	3,250	3,750	500	0
Seafood Processing	3,400	2,900	3,350	500	50
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	3,700	3,650	3,800	50	-100
Trade	7,750	7,800	7,750	-50	0
Wholesale Trade	650	650	650	0	0
Retail Trade	7,100	7,150	7,100	-50	0
Food Stores	1,450	1,450	1,450	0	0
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	1,750	1,750	1,700	0	50
Services & Misc.	8,250	8,200	8,050	50	200
Health Services	1,700	1,700	1,600	0	100
Government	11,900	11,700	12,000	200	-100
Federal	2,000	2,000	2,100	0	-100
State	5,100	5,200	5,150	-100	-50
Local	4,800	4,500	4,750	300	50

Northern Region

Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	15,600	15,600	15,650	0	-50
Goods-producing	5,500	5,400	5,450	100	50
Service-producing	10,100	10,200	10,200	-100	-100
Mining	4,900	4,800	4,850	100	50
Oil & Gas Extraction	4,450	4,350	4,400	100	50
Government	4,200	4,300	4,400	-100	-200
Federal	200	200	200	0	0
State	350	300	350	50	0
Local	3,650	3,800	3,850	-150	-200

Interior Region

	preliminary		Changes from:		
	8/98	7/98	8/97	7/98	8/97
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	41,500	42,000	40,850	-500	650
Goods-producing	4,800	4,750	4,950	50	-150
Service-producing	36,700	37,250	35,900	-550	800
Mining	1,600	1,550	1,650	50	-50
Construction	2,500	2,500	2,600	0	-100
Manufacturing	700	700	700	0	0
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	4,300	4,300	3,700	0	600
Trade	8,850	9,000	8,800	-150	50
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	1,200	1,200	1,200	0	0
Services & Misc.	10,500	10,550	10,250	-50	250
Hotels & Lodging Places	1,950	2,000	1,850	-50	100
Government	11,850	12,200	11,950	-350	-100
Federal	4,300	4,350	4,200	-50	100
State	3,750	4,200	3,750	-450	0
Local	3,800	3,650	4,000	150	-200

Anchorage/Mat-Su Region

Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	144,500	143,350	139,800	1,150	4,700
Goods-producing	15,150	14,650	14,200	500	950
Service-producing	129,350	128,700	125,600	650	3,750
Mining	2,750	2,700	2,550	50	200
Construction	10,000	9,550	9,300	450	700
Manufacturing	2,400	2,400	2,350	0	50
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	14,450	14,250	13,700	200	750
Trade	35,100	35,200	34,500	-100	600
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	7,950	8,050	7,900	-100	50
Services & Misc.	41,200	40,800	39,450	400	1,750
Government	30,650	30,400	30,050	250	600
Federal	10,150	10,200	10,150	-50	0
State	8,700	8,800	8,800	-100	-100
Local	11,800	11,400	11,100	400	700

Southwest Region

Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	17,100	19,850	17,300	-2,750	-200
Goods-producing	4,300	7,500	4,800	-3,200	-500
Service-producing	12,800	12,350	12,500	450	300
Seafood Processing	4,000	7,200	4,500	-3,200	-500
Government	5,150	4,800	5,150	350	0
Federal	450	450	450	0	0
State	500	550	550	-50	-50
Local	4,200	3,800	4,150	400	50

Gulf Coast Region

Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	33,050	33,250	32,350	-200	700
Goods-producing	10,500	11,000	10,200	-500	300
Service-producing	22,550	22,250	22,150	300	400
Mining	1,400	1,350	1,250	50	150
Oil & Gas Extraction	1,400	1,300	1,250	100	150
Construction	1,650	1,650	1,650	0	0
Manufacturing	7,450	8,000	7,300	-550	150
Seafood Processing	6,450	7,000	6,050	-550	400
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	2,700	2,700	2,550	0	150
Trade	6,100	6,100	6,000	0	100
Wholesale Trade	800	750	800	50	0
Retail Trade	5,300	5,350	5,200	-50	100
Eating & Drinking Places	1,900	1,950	1,850	-50	50
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	750	750	750	0	0
Services & Misc.	6,400	6,400	6,250	0	150
Health Services	1,150	1,200	1,150	-50	0
Government	6,600	6,300	6,600	300	0
Federal	800	800	800	0	0
State	1,800	1,700	1,850	100	-50
Local	4,000	3,800	3,950	200	50

6 Unemployment Rates by Region and Census Area

	Percent Unemployed		
	preliminary	revised	
Not Seasonally Adjusted	8/98	7/98	8/97
United States	4.5	4.7	4.8
Alaska Statewide	4.5	5.2	6.0
Anch/Mat-Su Region	3.8	4.5	5.4
Municipality of Anchorage	3.5	4.1	4.9
Mat-Su Borough	5.1	6.6	8.0
Gulf Coast Region	5.5	6.1	7.7
Kenai Peninsula Borough	6.0	7.3	8.1
Kodiak Island Borough	5.1	3.6	7.3
Valdez-Cordova	4.3	5.0	6.4
Interior Region	4.6	5.2	5.8
Denali Borough	3.0	3.1	5.4
Fairbanks North Star Borough	4.3	4.9	5.5
Southeast Fairbanks	6.2	6.3	8.2
Yukon-Koyukuk	9.9	12.3	10.1
Northern Region	8.3	9.5	10.0
Nome	9.5	11.1	11.2
North Slope Borough	5.3	6.2	5.2
Northwest Arctic Borough	11.2	12.2	15.2
Southeast Region	4.5	5.5	5.3
Haines Borough	4.4	6.1	4.6
Juneau Borough	4.2	4.6	4.6
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4.2	5.3	6.6
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	8.4	11.8	9.9
Sitka Borough	3.8	4.3	4.3
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon	3.7	5.0	3.3
Wrangell-Petersburg	3.6	4.7	4.3
Yakutat Borough	10.3	13.2	5.4
Southwest Region	7.6	7.7	8.2
Aleutians East Borough	3.2	2.0	5.2
Aleutians West	5.6	6.0	7.1
Bethel	7.7	8.4	9.0
Bristol Bay Borough	3.3	2.2	4.3
Dillingham	7.9	6.6	7.5
Lake & Peninsula Borough	6.9	6.4	6.9
Wade Hampton	14.3	14.8	12.0
Seasonally Adjusted			
United States	4.5	4.5	4.9
Alaska Statewide	5.9	6.2	7.9

1997 Benchmark

Comparisons between different time periods are not as meaningful as other time series produced by Research and Analysis. The official definition of unemployment currently in place 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. Due to the scarcity of employment opportunities in rural Alaska, many individuals do not meet the official definition of unemployed because they have not conducted an active job search. They are considered not in the labor force.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section

month of wages into the economy. Using 1997 as a point of comparison, the amount distributed in the 1998 dividend would be about 10 percent of all of the wages paid to individuals during the year. If only resident wages are considered, or wages paid to individuals who received the dividend, the percentage of the total grows to more than 11 percent. Using a broader measurement, the U.S. Department of Commerce's estimate for total personal income, the dividend distribution amounts to between five and six percent of all personal income in the state.

The increasing amount of the dividend, combined with more prevalent use of electronic funds transfer, has likely concentrated more of the economic effect of the dividend into the fourth quarter of the year, particularly October and November. One piece of evidence supporting this is the changed seasonal pattern of employment among general merchandisers that has emerged during the 1990s. From 1975 through 1990, there was a significant employment lull in October at general merchandisers between peak summer employment and the gear-up for the holiday shopping season. Gradually, though, that has changed to an increase for general merchandisers' employment between September and October. It appears that the dividend distribution has helped move the holiday shopping peak employment forward at least a month, turning what has traditionally been a slower month for retailers into a bonanza. (See Exhibit 2.)

Summary

Led by record-setting low urban unemployment, the statewide (not seasonally adjusted) unemployment rate set an all-time low in August of 4.5%, below the previous low of 5.0% set in August 1989. At its current pace of decline, the annual unemployment rate will easily surpass the previous annual low of 6.7% set in 1989. A record-setting payout to Alaskans for the Permanent Fund Dividend will bring a cash surge in the fourth quarter of 1998 that should help Alaska's economy sustain its current momentum through at least the beginning of 1999.

Employer Resource Page

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/employer/employer.htm>. The page title is "Employer". The sidebar on the left contains the Alaska Department of Labor logo. The main content area lists various resources:

- [Alaska Employer Handbook](#)
- [Alaska Employment Service Offices](#)
- [Alien Labor Certifications](#)
- [America's Talent Bank](#) (Search and view resumes online)
- [Economic, Occupational & Population Information](#)
- [Employment Security Tax](#)
- [Fishermen's Fund](#)
- [Government Labor Relations](#)
- [Job Order Entry Form](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health](#)
- [Seafood Jobs](#)
- [Second Injury Fund](#)
- [Unemployment Insurance](#)
- [Wage and Hour](#)
- [Workers' Compensation](#)
- [Work Opportunity and Welfare to Work Tax Credit Program](#)

An inset image shows the "Alaska Employment Service Job Order Entry Form" with the Alaska Department of Labor logo and a map of Alaska. The form includes a title, a description, and a list of requirements.

At the bottom of the page, there is a navigation bar with links: [Labor Home](#) || [Job Seeker](#) || [Employer](#) || [Worker](#). The footer of the browser window shows the address <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/jobform/jobform4.htm>.

To access the Department of Labor's Employer site on the Internet, type the following in the location box or address area of your browser:

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/employer/employer.htm>

Or go to the State of Alaska home page by typing in **<http://www.state.ak.us>** Press enter, then click on "employer" in the blue banner at left. Now you can click on a link to various employer websites that interest you.

Employers can submit a request to recruit employees on-line by using the Employment Service Job Order Entry Form (inset above). A job order will then be processed and posted on Alaska's Job Bank to recruit applicants with the qualifications specified on the form.

The email contact for the Employer website is **Woody_Walker@labor.state.ak.us**