



MEDIA RELEASE

Jobs are Alaska's Future



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

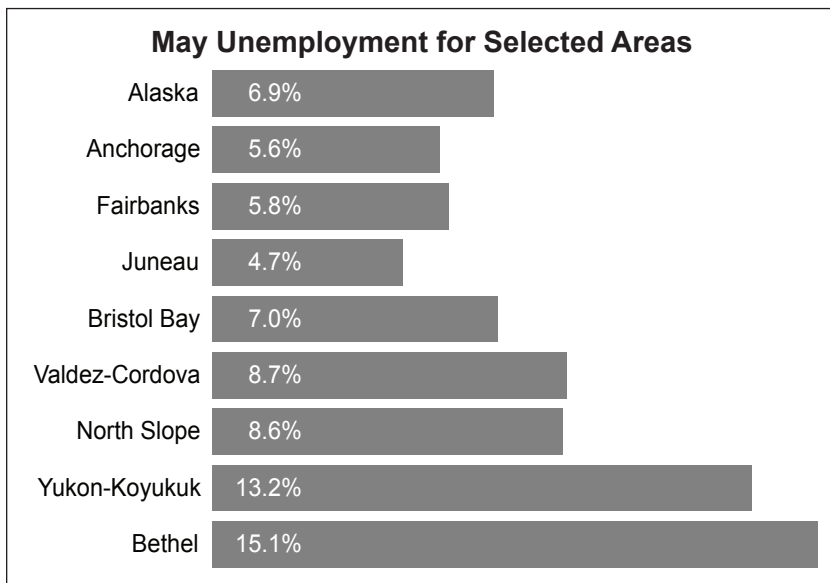
Greg O'Claray, Commissioner

June 16, 2006

No. 06-50

Unemployment rate falls to 6.9 percent in May

May Unemployment for Selected Areas



Alaska's unemployment rate fell six-tenths of a percentage point in May to 6.9 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development. The decline was typical for May, a month when a significant number of unemployed workers find jobs in the state's seasonal industries.

Despite the expected seasonal decline, the unemployment rate has begun to creep higher compared to year-ago rates. After consistent, gradual declines for more than two years, the rate rose above its year-ago level in March by two-tenths of a percentage point. The gap widened to four-tenths of a percentage point in April and May's 6.9 percent rate is five-tenths of a percentage point higher than May 2005's 6.4 percent rate.

The unemployment rate remains relatively low by historical standards, however, and the over-the-year increases are small enough to be of questionable significance until several more months of data become available.

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment

	Preliminary 05/06	Revised 04/06	Revised 05/05	Changes from	
				04/06	05/05
Total Nonfarm Employment	318,400	305,600	313,300	12,800	5,100
Natural Resources and Mining	11,700	11,700	10,500	0	1,200
Oil and Gas	9,400	9,400	8,400	0	1,000
Construction	19,300	17,100	19,000	2,200	300
Manufacturing	10,300	10,100	10,300	200	0
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	65,900	62,000	64,800	3,900	1,100
Retail Trade	37,100	35,700	36,200	1,400	900
Information	7,000	6,900	7,000	100	0
Financial Activities	15,000	14,600	14,700	400	300
Professional and Business Services	24,300	23,000	24,100	1,300	200
Educational ¹ and Health Services	36,400	36,300	35,900	100	500
Health Care	26,300	26,100	25,800	200	500
Leisure and Hospitality	32,800	28,500	32,400	4,300	400
Accommodation	8,600	6,500	8,500	2,100	100
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	19,700	18,000	19,400	1,700	300
Other Services	11,600	11,500	11,300	100	300
Government ²	84,100	83,900	83,300	200	800

¹ Private education only

² Government includes public schools, the University of Alaska and federally recognized tribal entities.

Anchorage's unemployment rate fell three-tenths of a percentage point in May to 5.6 percent, and Fairbanks' rate fell seven-tenths of a percentage point to 5.8 percent. Both cities' May rates were four-tenths of a percentage point higher than in May 2005. Juneau's rate fell six-tenths of a percentage point in May to 4.7 percent, matching May 2005's rate. The Denali Borough had the state's lowest rate in May at 4.3 percent and the Wade Hampton Census Area had the highest at 22.6 percent.

Estimates based on the Department of Labor's monthly survey of employers shows an over-the-month increase of 12,800 jobs, about a third of them coming from the leisure and hospitality sector. The construction and retail trade industries also made large seasonal hires as both the building and summer visitor seasons began in earnest.

Over-the-year comparisons show that the oil and gas industry has added 1,000 jobs since May 2005, growing at a robust 12 percent rate over the period. All the state's major employment sectors at least matched May 2005's job count and most are up moderately.

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates¹

May 2006:	Alaska	7.1%	U.S.	4.6%
April 2006:	Alaska	7.0%	U.S.	4.7%
May 2005:	Alaska	6.6%	U.S.	5.1%

¹ All other unemployment rates in this press release are not seasonally adjusted.

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	05/06	04/06	05/05	05/06	04/06	05/05	05/06	04/06	05/05	05/06	04/06	05/05
	Alaska Statewide	345,499	337,962	337,988	23,796	25,222	21,653	6.9	7.5	6.4	321,703	312,740
Anchorage/Mat-Su (MSA*)	185,452	184,647	180,530	11,031	11,715	9,828	5.9	6.3	5.4	174,421	172,932	170,702
Municipality of Anchorage	150,158	149,227	146,259	8,474	8,753	7,596	5.6	5.9	5.2	141,684	140,474	138,663
Mat-Su Borough	35,294	35,420	34,271	2,557	2,962	2,232	7.2	8.4	6.5	32,737	32,458	32,039
Gulf Coast Region	35,942	34,199	36,335	3,035	3,248	2,901	8.4	9.5	8.0	32,907	30,951	33,434
Kenai Peninsula Borough	25,215	23,790	25,254	2,013	2,310	1,942	8.0	9.7	7.7	23,202	21,480	23,312
Kodiak Island Borough	5,599	5,690	5,795	574	435	511	10.3	7.6	8.8	5,025	5,255	5,284
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	5,128	4,719	5,286	448	503	448	8.7	10.7	8.5	4,680	4,216	4,838
Interior Region	55,040	52,275	53,560	3,559	3,801	3,172	6.5	7.3	5.9	51,481	48,474	50,388
Denali Borough	1,807	978	1,894	78	104	79	4.3	10.6	4.2	1,729	874	1,815
Fairbanks North Star Borough (MSA*)	46,245	44,585	45,364	2,705	2,884	2,440	5.8	6.5	5.4	43,540	41,701	42,924
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,861	3,623	3,123	362	392	296	9.4	10.8	9.5	3,499	3,231	2,827
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	3,127	3,089	3,179	414	421	357	13.2	13.6	11.2	2,713	2,668	2,822
Northern Region	10,718	10,760	10,447	1,201	1,191	1,187	11.2	11.1	11.4	9,517	9,569	9,260
Nome Census Area	3,892	3,937	3,884	512	536	466	13.2	13.6	12.0	3,380	3,401	3,418
North Slope Borough	3,782	3,776	3,584	324	301	348	8.6	8.0	9.7	3,458	3,475	3,236
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,047	3,047	2,979	365	354	373	12.0	11.6	12.5	2,679	2,693	2,606
Southeast Region	41,373	39,039	40,448	2,589	2,935	2,435	6.3	7.5	6.0	38,784	36,104	38,013
Haines Borough	1,533	1,227	1,469	113	142	120	7.4	11.6	8.2	1,420	1,085	1,349
Juneau Borough	18,975	18,266	18,542	898	960	874	4.7	5.3	4.7	18,077	17,306	17,668
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	8,094	7,511	7,936	474	556	481	5.9	7.4	6.1	7,620	6,955	7,455
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area	2,614	2,608	2,538	337	388	273	12.9	14.9	10.8	2,277	2,220	2,265
Sitka Borough	4,920	4,686	4,759	269	265	225	5.5	5.7	4.7	4,651	4,421	4,534
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	2,123	1,607	2,088	210	291	178	9.9	18.1	8.5	1,913	1,316	1,910
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	2,760	2,786	2,765	261	292	257	9.5	10.5	9.3	2,499	2,494	2,508
Yakutat Borough	354	348	351	27	41	27	7.6	11.8	7.7	327	307	324
Southwest Region	16,971	17,041	16,666	2,379	2,331	2,129	14.0	13.7	12.8	14,592	14,710	14,537
Aleutians East Borough	774	1,191	794	95	95	113	12.3	8.0	14.2	679	1,096	681
Aleutians West Census Area	2,305	2,492	2,301	246	184	218	10.7	7.4	9.5	2,059	2,308	2,083
Bathel Census Area	6,895	7,216	6,781	1,041	1,057	905	15.1	14.6	13.3	5,854	6,159	5,876
Bristol Bay Borough	905	438	1,084	63	73	53	7.0	16.7	4.9	842	365	1,031
Dillingham Census Area	1,966	1,880	1,973	230	225	227	11.8	12.0	11.5	1,726	1,655	1,746
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,360	1,243	1,011	78	84	73	5.7	6.8	7.2	1,282	1,159	938
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,776	2,581	2,722	626	613	540	22.6	23.8	19.8	2,150	1,968	2,182

* Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
 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 individuals in rural Alaska do not meet the definition because they have not conducted an active job search due to the scarcity of employment opportunities.