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Unemployment rate at 8.0 percent in February



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose two-tenths of a percentage point in February to 8.0 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. January's rate was revised down one-tenth of a percentage point to 7.8 percent.

Claims for unemployment insurance – one of the major inputs used to calculate unemployment – were up 12 percent over the year in February. The other input is a survey of households that helps estimate the number of people who are unemployed but not claiming unemployment insurance benefits, either because they aren't eligible or for some other reason.

Payroll jobs increased by 4,000 in February (not seasonally adjusted), but over-the-year growth slowed to 0.8 percent after averaging 1.4 percent in 2008.

At the industry level, oil and gas jobs were up 700 over the year. Nearly all of that growth came during the early part of 2008, however. The industry's estimated 13,000 February jobs are still near historical highs, but the number has fallen by 300 since September.

Health care jobs were also up 700 over the year and government jobs were up 800. Although federal government jobs were down 100, state government jobs rose by 400 and local government by 500.

Industries with over-the-year losses included construction (-300), seafood processing (-100), food services and drinking places (-300) and accommodations (-100).

According to Dan Robinson, an economist with the Department of Labor, the job numbers indicate that the national recession and global economic slowdown are starting to have a more noticeable effect on the state.

"The unemployment rate has been rising for months, but the payroll job numbers are now beginning to show weakness," Robinson said. "The oil and gas industry has seen its job counts level off after several years of strong growth. Without that growth, Alaska will have a hard time avoiding the job losses afflicting most of the rest of the country."

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

	Preliminary 2/09	Revised 1/09	Revised 2/08	Changes from	
				1/09	2/08
Total Nonfarm Employment	308,800	304,800	306,200	4,000	2,600
Natural Resources and Mining	15,500	15,600	14,500	-100	1,000
Oil and Gas	13,000	13,100	12,300	-100	700
Construction	13,800	13,600	14,100	200	-300
Manufacturing	12,000	10,700	12,100	1,300	-100
Seafood Processing	8,400	6,900	8,500	1,500	-100
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	61,000	61,300	60,600	-300	400
Retail Trade	34,400	34,900	34,300	-500	100
Information	7,100	7,000	6,900	100	200
Financial Activities	14,400	14,300	14,500	100	-100
Professional and Business Services	24,600	24,300	24,600	300	0
Educational ² and Health Services	38,100	37,700	37,300	400	800
Health Care	27,600	27,300	26,900	300	700
Leisure and Hospitality	27,300	27,000	27,500	300	-200
Accommodations	6,200	6,200	6,300	0	-100
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	17,100	17,100	17,400	0	-300
Other Services	11,200	11,100	11,100	100	100
Government ³	83,800	82,200	83,000	1,600	800

¹ Not seasonally adjusted

² Private education only

³ Government includes public schools, the University of Alaska and federally recognized tribal entities.

Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted

	2/09	1/09	2/08
Alaska	8.0%	7.8%	6.5%
U.S.	8.1%	7.6%	4.8%

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

Contact: Dan Robinson, Economist (907) 465-6036
Research and Analysis' Web site: laborstats.alaska.gov

Labor Force by Borough and Census Area, Not Seasonally Adjusted¹

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	2/09	1/09	2/08	2/09	1/09	2/08	2/09	1/09	2/08	2/09	1/09	2/08
Alaska Statewide	356,539	351,517	351,348	33,202	25,339	25,735	9.3	7.2	7.3	323,337	326,178	325,613
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	197,799	195,398	194,396	15,707	11,648	11,935	7.9	6.0	6.1	182,092	183,750	182,461
Municipality of Anchorage	155,802	154,406	153,482	11,018	8,303	8,404	7.1	5.4	5.5	144,784	146,103	145,078
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	41,997	40,992	40,914	4,689	3,345	3,531	11.2	8.2	8.6	37,308	37,647	37,383
Gulf Coast Region	36,666	35,622	35,835	4,392	3,437	3,474	12.0	9.6	9.7	32,274	32,185	32,361
Kenai Peninsula Borough	25,519	24,908	24,863	3,292	2,455	2,540	12.9	9.9	10.2	22,227	22,453	22,323
Kodiak Island Borough	6,389	6,172	6,315	444	456	387	6.9	7.4	6.1	5,945	5,716	5,928
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,758	4,542	4,657	656	526	547	13.8	11.6	11.7	4,102	4,016	4,110
Interior Region	52,426	52,024	51,982	5,072	3,859	3,903	9.7	7.4	7.5	47,354	48,165	48,079
Denali Borough	986	871	860	180	137	133	18.3	15.7	15.5	806	734	727
Fairbanks North Star Borough	44,778	44,897	44,939	3,889	2,900	2,932	8.7	6.5	6.5	40,889	41,997	42,007
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,667	3,510	3,450	478	372	383	13.0	10.6	11.1	3,189	3,138	3,067
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,995	2,746	2,733	525	450	455	17.5	16.4	16.6	2,470	2,296	2,278
Northern Region	12,654	12,140	12,119	1,216	982	1,034	9.6	8.1	8.5	11,438	11,158	11,085
Nome Census Area	4,233	4,108	4,060	546	431	433	12.9	10.5	10.7	3,687	3,677	3,627
North Slope Borough	5,365	5,002	5,038	258	210	228	4.8	4.2	4.5	5,107	4,792	4,810
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,056	3,030	3,021	412	341	373	13.5	11.3	12.3	2,644	2,689	2,648
Southeast Region	38,375	37,987	38,183	4,184	3,188	3,231	10.9	8.4	8.5	34,191	34,799	34,952
Haines Borough	1,090	1,091	1,084	197	160	158	18.1	14.7	14.6	893	931	926
Juneau Borough	18,516	18,446	18,457	1,339	947	948	7.2	5.1	5.1	17,177	17,499	17,509
Ketchikan Gateway Borough ²	7,597	7,519	7,542	831	562	600	10.9	7.5	8.0	6,766	6,957	6,942
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area ²	2,343	2,273	2,261	547	425	443	23.3	18.7	19.6	1,796	1,848	1,818
Sitka Borough	4,336	4,328	4,396	351	314	318	8.1	7.3	7.2	3,985	4,014	4,078
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area ²	1,556	1,471	1,495	444	353	334	28.5	24.0	22.3	1,112	1,118	1,161
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ²	2,652	2,577	2,675	428	402	397	16.1	15.6	14.8	2,224	2,175	2,278
Yakutat Borough	285	282	273	47	25	33	16.5	8.9	12.1	238	257	240
Southwest Region	18,615	18,345	18,836	2,629	2,223	2,160	14.1	12.1	11.5	15,986	16,122	16,676
Aleutians East Borough	1,283	1,339	1,285	100	114	88	7.8	8.5	6.8	1,183	1,225	1,197
Aleutians West Census Area	4,341	3,924	4,453	199	217	124	4.6	5.5	2.8	4,142	3,707	4,329
Bethel Census Area	6,885	7,083	6,984	1,177	977	999	17.1	13.8	14.3	5,708	6,106	5,985
Bristol Bay Borough	421	451	443	74	55	62	17.6	12.2	14.0	347	396	381
Dillingham Census Area	2,008	1,948	1,995	273	204	216	13.6	10.5	10.8	1,735	1,744	1,779
Lake and Peninsula Borough	902	925	969	130	101	99	14.4	10.9	10.2	772	824	870
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,775	2,675	2,707	676	555	572	24.4	20.7	21.1	2,099	2,120	2,135

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 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.

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 new borough and census areas will be available in 2010. Until then, data will continue to be published for the old areas.

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