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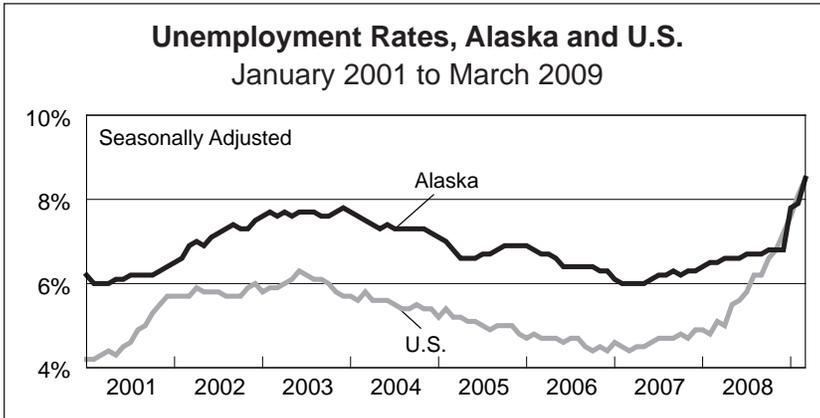
Press Release

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Unemployment rate at 8.5 percent in March



Alaska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose six-tenths of a percentage point in March to 8.5 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. February's rate was revised down one-tenth of a percentage point to 7.9 percent.

The rate has been on an upward trend since bottoming out at 6.0 percent in 2007.

Regular claims for unemployment insurance climbed to 98,788 in March, up significantly from the year-ago level of 75,982. Initial claims for unemployment insurance were also up substantially in March.

Despite the higher unemployment numbers, Alaska continues to be one of very few states that hasn't yet seen significant job losses during the current national recession.

March employment estimates showed over-the-year growth of 2,100 jobs, or 0.7 percent. The national numbers showed a decline of 4.9 million jobs over that same period, a drop of 3.6 percent.

Through February, the most recent month for which data from all states are available, the only other states besides Alaska showing over-the-year employment growth were Louisiana, North Dakota and Wyoming (employment was also up in the District of Columbia).

Those states are like Alaska in that their economies rely heavily on the oil and gas industry, which continued to grow both nationally and in Alaska through much of 2008 even as losses started piling up in other industries.

But the total number of Alaska oil and gas jobs hasn't changed much since last summer and overall job growth for the state is shrinking.

According to Dan Robinson, an economist with the Department, both the unemployment numbers and the job numbers signal a weakening economy. "Whether through the stock market, housing prices or a slow-down in business, many Alaskans have already been affected by the national recession. Taken together, the latest economic numbers reveal that the state as a whole is also feeling the pinch."

Alaska Nonfarm Payroll Employment¹

	Preliminary 3/09	Revised 2/09	Revised 3/08	Changes from	
				2/09	3/08
Total Nonfarm Employment	310,600	309,000	308,500	1,600	2,100
Natural Resources and Mining	15,700	15,500	14,700	200	1,000
Oil and Gas	13,100	13,000	12,400	100	700
Construction	14,200	14,000	14,500	200	-300
Manufacturing	11,700	11,600	12,000	100	-300
Seafood Processing	8,200	8,300	8,300	-100	-100
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	61,600	60,500	61,300	1,100	300
Retail Trade	34,800	34,100	34,600	700	200
Information	7,100	7,100	6,900	0	200
Financial Activities	14,500	14,400	14,600	100	-100
Professional and Business Services	24,600	24,700	24,700	-100	-100
Educational ² and Health Services	38,100	38,300	37,500	-200	600
Health Care	27,400	27,600	27,000	-200	400
Leisure and Hospitality	28,000	27,600	27,800	400	200
Accommodations	6,600	6,300	6,400	300	200
Food Svcs. and Drinking Places	17,400	17,300	17,700	100	-300
Other Services	11,200	11,100	11,200	100	0
Government ³	83,900	84,200	83,300	-300	600

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

	3/09	2/09	3/08
Alaska	8.5%	7.9%	6.5%
U.S.	8.5%	8.1%	5.1%

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		
	3/09 ^P	2/09	3/08	3/09 ^P	2/09	3/08	3/09 ^P	2/09	3/08	3/09 ^P	2/09	3/08
Alaska Statewide	355,233	355,953	351,771	33,022	32,685	24,754	9.3	9.2	7.0	322,211	323,268	327,017
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	196,618	197,757	193,937	15,879	15,445	11,691	8.1	7.8	6.0	180,739	182,312	182,246
Municipality of Anchorage	154,885	155,798	153,128	11,176	10,839	8,221	7.2	7.0	5.4	143,709	144,959	144,907
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	41,733	41,959	40,809	4,703	4,606	3,470	11.3	11.0	8.5	37,030	37,353	37,339
Gulf Coast Region	36,243	36,351	36,047	4,306	4,321	3,268	11.9	11.9	9.1	31,937	32,030	32,779
Kenai Peninsula Borough	25,507	25,363	25,076	3,234	3,240	2,394	12.7	12.8	9.5	22,273	22,123	22,682
Kodiak Island Borough	6,060	6,284	6,221	459	436	354	7.6	6.9	5.7	5,601	5,848	5,867
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	4,676	4,704	4,750	613	645	520	13.1	13.7	10.9	4,063	4,059	4,230
Interior Region	52,854	52,375	52,375	4,944	5,004	3,706	9.4	9.6	7.1	47,910	47,371	48,669
Denali Borough	1,020	1,003	903	175	185	121	17.2	18.4	13.4	845	818	782
Fairbanks North Star Borough	45,417	44,828	45,319	3,792	3,827	2,784	8.3	8.5	6.1	41,625	41,001	42,535
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,484	3,569	3,426	456	470	372	13.1	13.2	10.9	3,028	3,099	3,054
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,933	2,975	2,727	521	522	429	17.8	17.5	15.7	2,412	2,453	2,298
Northern Region	12,498	12,590	12,134	1,227	1,192	1,006	9.8	9.5	8.3	11,271	11,398	11,128
Nome Census Area	4,235	4,215	4,082	550	535	406	13.0	12.7	9.9	3,685	3,680	3,676
North Slope Borough	5,263	5,323	5,054	266	256	218	5.1	4.8	4.3	4,997	5,067	4,836
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,000	3,052	2,998	411	401	382	13.7	13.1	12.7	2,589	2,651	2,616
Southeast Region	38,478	38,191	38,591	4,101	4,136	2,968	10.7	10.8	7.7	34,377	34,055	35,623
Haines Borough	1,050	1,056	1,110	192	196	150	18.3	18.6	13.5	858	860	960
Juneau Borough	18,534	18,488	18,530	1,355	1,319	903	7.3	7.1	4.9	17,179	17,169	17,627
Ketchikan Gateway Borough ²	7,671	7,591	7,648	795	785	537	10.4	10.7	7.0	6,876	6,776	7,111
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area ²	2,333	2,311	2,269	518	540	378	22.2	23.4	16.7	1,815	1,771	1,891
Sitka Borough	4,498	4,313	4,576	367	349	283	8.2	8.1	6.2	4,131	3,964	4,293
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon Census Area ²	1,530	1,526	1,506	418	447	317	27.3	29.3	21.0	1,112	1,079	1,189
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area ²	2,600	2,636	2,681	407	423	371	15.7	16.0	13.8	2,193	2,213	2,310
Yakutat Borough	262	270	271	49	47	29	18.7	17.4	10.7	213	223	242
Southwest Region	18,543	18,686	18,687	2,566	2,586	2,115	13.8	13.8	11.3	15,977	16,100	16,572
Aleutians East Borough	1,302	1,246	1,271	105	100	88	8.1	8.0	6.9	1,197	1,146	1,183
Aleutians West Census Area	4,050	4,347	4,166	168	193	120	4.1	4.4	2.9	3,882	4,154	4,046
Bethel Census Area	6,990	6,937	7,033	1,156	1,157	983	16.5	16.7	14.0	5,834	5,780	6,050
Bristol Bay Borough	427	419	466	69	70	62	16.2	16.7	13.3	358	349	404
Dillingham Census Area	2,070	2,010	2,041	269	270	200	13.0	13.4	9.8	1,801	1,740	1,841
Lake and Peninsula Borough	983	1,010	1,006	130	129	96	13.2	12.8	9.5	853	881	910
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,721	2,717	2,704	669	667	566	24.6	24.5	20.9	2,052	2,050	2,138

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 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.