

A fisherman in a grey hoodie and blue gloves is pulling a large fish from the water using a long wooden pole. The fish is suspended in the air, and the fisherman is standing on the deck of a boat. The background shows a vast, choppy sea under a cloudy sky. The boat's deck is visible with various pieces of equipment, including a large metal pulley system and a wooden bucket.

# ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

**NOVEMBER 2009**

## Employment in Alaska's Seafood Industry

### **WHAT'S INSIDE**

#### **The Bethel Census Area**

Home to the largest rural community in Alaska

#### **Employment Scene**

Unemployment rate at 8.4 percent in September



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Sean Parnell, Governor  
Commissioner Click Bishop**

# ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Sean Parnell, Governor of Alaska  
Commissioner Click Bishop

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Cover: Jason Andersen brings a king salmon aboard the powertroller F/V Sea Haven in Sitka Sound in June 2008. Photo courtesy of [Sitkaphotos.com](http://Sitkaphotos.com).

## Correction

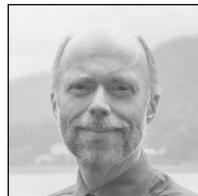
In the October *Trends*, the pie chart on Page 5 should have read 92.8 percent for the employed portion instead of 93.8 percent.

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## Value of Alaska's Fish Harvest at All-Time High

By Commissioner Click Bishop

For five seasons the Discovery Channel's "Deadliest Catch," seen in more than 150 countries, has been a window on the Bering Sea fishing fleet during the Alaska king crab and opilio crab seasons.

But Alaska's fishing industry includes much more than the hazardous work documented in the "real life adventure on the high seas."

Almost 40 percent of all fish harvested in the U.S. comes from Alaska. The value of Alaska's 2008 fish harvest was a record \$1.7 billion, higher than the previous record from 1992. The industry provides an average of 16,000 jobs each month and employs more than 52,000 workers at some time during the year in harvesting or processing.

The seafood industry needs employees when the fish show up, so the need for workers is instant. Because the seasons are short and the demand for workers high, 46 percent of licensed crew members and 74 percent of seafood processing workers are nonresidents. We are working to increase Alaska hire in this industry through the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Seafood Employment Office.

Each year thousands of applicants go through seafood orientation, which is held Monday through Thursday at 10 a.m. in the Anchorage Midtown Job Center. Applicants receive information about job requirements and working conditions, and assistance with one-on-one job interviews with seafood employers. Applicants also register with ALEXsys, the department's online job bank.

Seafood workers can find employment 10 to 11 months of the year in Alaska, but that means moving around the state based on the season. Our job centers are gearing up for pollock "A" season, which starts in January and runs through March or April with most of the jobs in Dutch Harbor, King Cove, Kodiak and the Bering Sea. The short two-week herring season in Bristol Bay usually begins the last week of April. The summer salmon processing season usually runs June through August. In October and November workers process king crab, Pollock and cod out of Dutch Harbor.

Many of the processing jobs available in the seafood industry are in remote locations – such as Dutch Harbor and Naknek, or on at-sea processors in the Bering Sea. The work is challenging, but the money can be good, considering the overtime, which is common, and the fact that many plants and all at-sea processors pay room and board (some furnish it, but charge workers a fee). We're seeing second- and third-generation workers in the industry.

*For more information about ALEXsys, on the Web go to [jobs.alaska.gov](http://jobs.alaska.gov). To find out more about the Department of Labor's Seafood Employment Office, go to [jobs.alaska.gov](http://jobs.alaska.gov) and click on "Seafood Jobs" on the right, or call (800) 473-0688. For your local job center, call (877) 724-2539 (ALEX).*

## A look at harvesting and processing jobs

**A**laska is once again the nation's No. 1 fishing state, a position it's held since 1975. The state's 2008 harvest, worth a record \$1.7 billion, topped the state's previous record – \$1.66 billion in 1992 – and was 4.3 times the value of the nation's No. 2 fishing state, Massachusetts. (See Exhibit 1.)

The latest National Marine Fisheries Service release reported that 55 percent of the total U.S. fisheries harvest by volume was taken in Alaska waters. That production translated into 39 percent of the total U.S. harvest by value. (See Exhibit 2.) Dutch Harbor/Unalaska ranked first among U.S. ports in terms of volume, and five other Alaska cities are in the top 20. The numbers are impressive for a state whose population amounts to only two-tenths of 1 percent of the nation's total.

The importance of the seafood industry to Alaska is undeniable. When Alaska's seafood har-

vesters<sup>1</sup> – crew members and permit holders – are combined with seafood processing workers, 52,000 people<sup>2</sup> were directly employed at some time in the seafood industry in Alaska in 2008.

This article will look at Alaska's seafood industry employment, the demographics of the industry's workers and where they live, how the industry's employment breaks down by fishery, and what the harvest workers do when the fishing season is over.

### Where the numbers come from

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development can accurately count seafood processing jobs, because, like all other wage and salary jobs, employers are required to report the number of employees and their earnings on their payrolls each month as part of their mandatory unemployment insurance coverage.

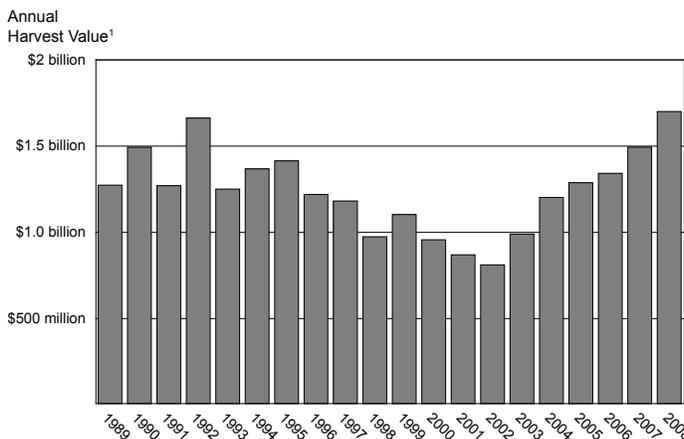
But fish harvesting jobs are generally exempted from state unemployment insurance laws and they don't generate the payroll records used to calculate employment in other industries. (The methodology section at the end of this article provides more detail.)

Most of what we know about the state's fish harvests comes from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, which provides detailed fisheries data on, among other things, gross estimated earnings, pounds caught, permit holders and permit holders who fished.

<sup>1</sup> The term "fish harvesting" jobs is used in this article rather than more generic references to "fishing" jobs to clarify that only the jobs created for permit holders and their crew who are directly involved in harvesting the fish are being included and not the many jobs in processing, tendering and other related activities. Processing jobs, also covered in this article, are referred to separately.

<sup>2</sup> Fifty-eight percent of the 52,000 were nonresidents, largely in seafood processing.

## 1 Alaska's Fish Harvest Values All fisheries, 1989 to 2008



<sup>1</sup> This is the ex-vessel value, the price paid to fishermen at the dock. It's not adjusted for inflation.

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service

The Department of Labor since 2000 has produced harvest employment estimates each year using Fish and Game's weekly landing or daily delivery records and data collected by the two other regulatory agencies that monitor the state's commercial fishing.<sup>3</sup>

Fish and Game is developing a plan to collect counts of each crew member working on a vessel when fish are landed, by assigning an identifying number to each crew member and recording how much time the crew member worked to harvest the fish. That would provide harvest employment numbers without having to estimate the crew members needed to make fish landings.

The plan needs to be approved by the Alaska Legislature and it will likely be several years before it's fully implemented. But when it is, it will provide a more accurate count of fish harvesting workers and their earnings, shedding more light on the relative economic importance to the worker of the fishing industry, each harvest and each species.

### Fish harvesting employment

Alaska's seafood industry had 7,270<sup>4</sup> harvesting jobs in 2008, and in July 2008 – July is the peak for both harvesting and processing – it had 20,447 harvesting jobs. (See Exhibits 3, 4 and 9.)

Harvesting employment barely inched up in 2008, adding 10 jobs, a 0.14 percent gain. The state's wage and salary employment grew 1.4 percent in 2008.

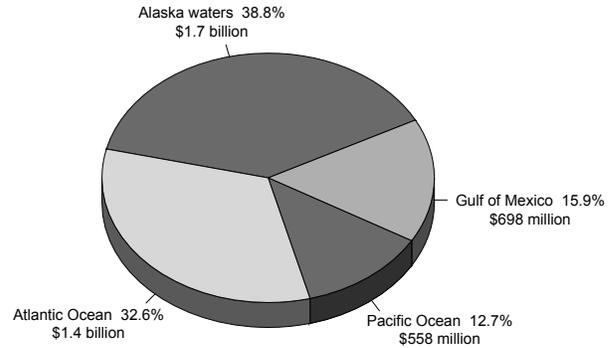
Over the nine years measured by this data set, total fish harvesting employment has shown two distinct trend lines: from 2000 to 2002, employment numbers fell at a dramatic rate;<sup>5</sup> then from

<sup>3</sup> Fish and Game primarily manages the inshore fishery within three miles from shore, the Western Alaska crab fisheries and some groundfish fisheries. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service supervises the fisheries between three miles offshore and 200 miles offshore (the international border line). The International Pacific Halibut Commission oversees the halibut harvests.

<sup>4</sup> Job counts published in this article are annualized, unless otherwise noted. An annualized job count is simply the average number of monthly jobs over the full calendar year.

<sup>5</sup> The declines undoubtedly extended well back into the 1990s, judging from other fisheries-related data such as permits fished and catch values, but harvesting employment data aren't available for years before 2000.

## Shares of the U.S. Fish Harvest Percentages and values, 2008 **2**



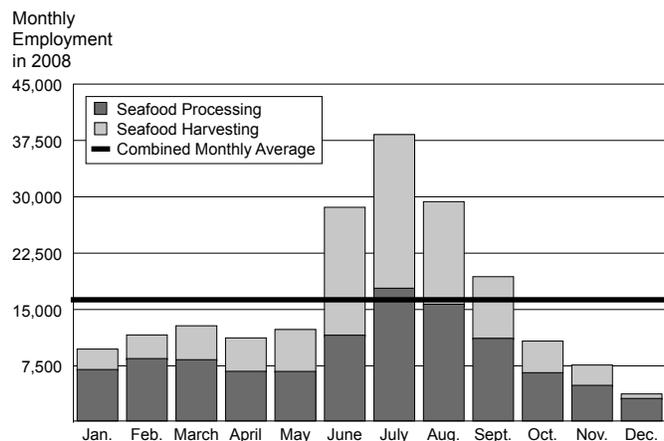
Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service

## Harvesting and Processing Jobs Alaska, 2000 to 2008 **3**

	Average Monthly Employment		
	Harvesting	Processing	Total
2000	8,706	8,433	17,139
2001	7,959	7,904	15,863
2002	7,168	7,406	14,574
2003	7,404	7,873	15,277
2004	7,330	8,535	15,865
2005	7,486	8,727	16,213
2006	7,314	9,374	16,688
2007	7,260	9,143	16,403
2008	7,270	9,027	16,297

Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

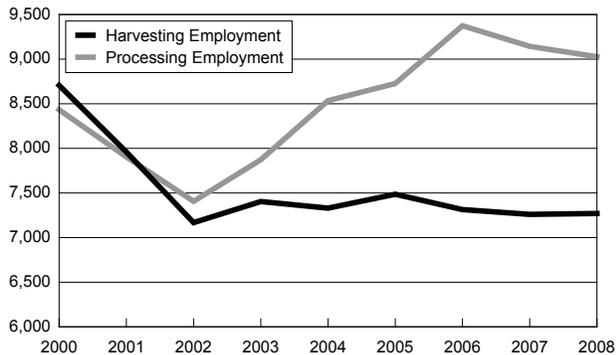
## Activity Peaks in Summer Alaska, 2008 **4**



Sources: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

## 5 Seafood Industry Employment Alaska 2000 to 2008

Harvesting and Processing Employment



Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

at 17,841. Seafood processing lost 116 jobs in 2008, a 1.3 percent decline.

Seafood processing employment, like harvesting employment, shows jobs falling dramatically from 2000 to 2002. (See Exhibit 5.) Yet, unlike harvesting, processing employment has rebounded since 2002 for reasons that aren't entirely clear.

As far as the number of people, 23,047 were employed in processing jobs at some time in 2008.

### Half of crew members are under 30, permit holders and processing workers are older

The Department of Labor had access to more information about Alaska's crew license holders in 2008 than in previous years, providing a more complete picture of those who work on commercial fishing boats.

A breakdown into age groups shows that 47 percent of crew license holders in 2008 were 29 or younger. (See Exhibits 6 and 8.) In comparison, only about 33 percent of all workers in wage and salary employment in 2008 were 29 or younger.

Permit holders, the other segment of harvesting workers, were much older than their crew, with an average age of 46 in 2008.

Seafood processing workers also tend to be older than crew. Processing workers<sup>6</sup> had an average age of 39 in 2008 compared with a total wage and salary worker average age of 38.

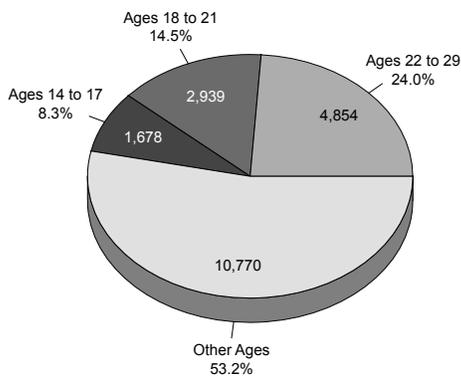
### Where Alaska's seafood industry workers live

Forty-six percent of Alaska's crew members in 2008 lived outside the state. (See Exhibit 7.) Of the 54 percent who lived in Alaska, 82 percent lived in a coastal region<sup>7</sup> and 18 percent lived in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

<sup>6</sup> Based on processing workers with age information in Alaska Permanent Fund dividend records for 1993 to 2009

<sup>7</sup> Coastal is defined as all of the state boroughs excluding the Municipality of Anchorage; the Matanuska-Susitna, Fairbanks North Star or Denali boroughs; or the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area.

## 6 The Youth Crew Share Alaska, 2008



Notes:

This exhibit is the only place in the article that includes crew members under the age of 18.

This exhibit shows residents and nonresidents for all age groups.

Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Division

2002 to 2008, total employment stabilized and managed to recover a small amount of the lost ground. (See Exhibit 5.)

Altogether, over the entire 2000 to 2008 period, harvesting employment lost 1,436 jobs, a 16.5 percent decrease.

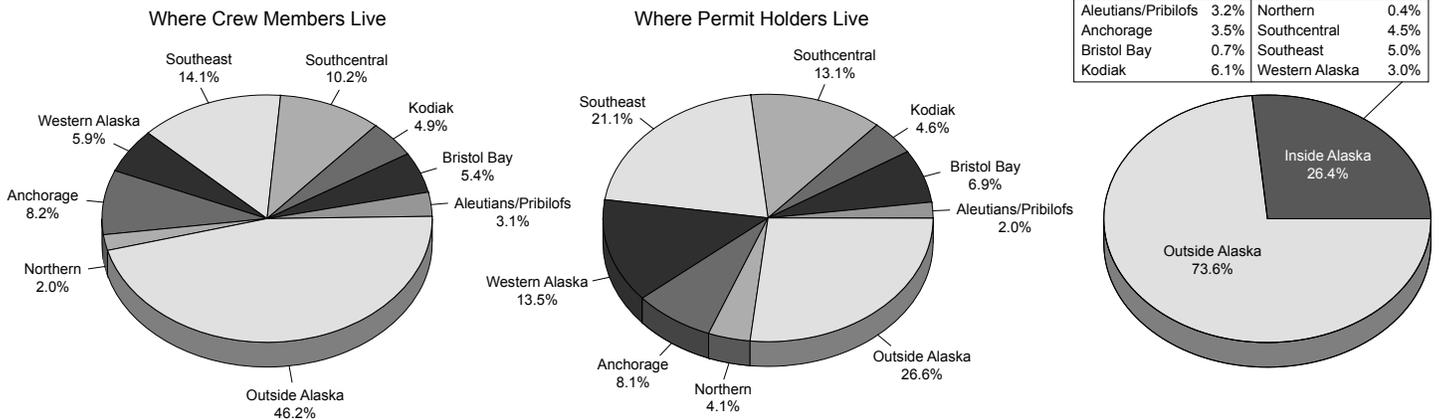
Looking at the number of people, 29,093 people had fishing permits or crew licenses at some time in 2008.

### Seafood processing employment

The seafood industry had 9,027 fish processing jobs in 2008 and in July processing jobs peaked

## Where They Live **7**

Self-declared residence in 2008



Notes: Each pie represents people working in Alaska. For crew members, residency is based on what they put on their crew licenses; for permit holders, it's based on what they put on their permits; and for processing workers, it's based on the fact of whether they filed Alaska Permanent Fund dividend applications. Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Division and Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Occupational Database; Alaska Department of Revenue, Permanent Fund Dividend Division

Twenty-seven percent of permit holders in 2008 were nonresidents, a rate closer to the statewide average of 19.6 percent for all workers. Of the 73 percent of permit holders who lived in Alaska, 52 percent lived in a coastal area.

Seafood processing since at least the mid-1980s<sup>8</sup> has been the sector<sup>9</sup> with the highest percentage of nonresidents, both within the fishing industry and in all wage and salary employment in the state.

Seventy-four percent of Alaska's seafood processing workers were nonresidents in 2008, and they earned \$187 million that year.

Many seafood processing plants are in remote locations and workers often move to another plant when their initial processing job is over. That, coupled with the short seasonal nature of the work, can make it difficult to recruit enough workers within Alaska to meet the peak seasonal demand.

### Harvesting employment by fishery

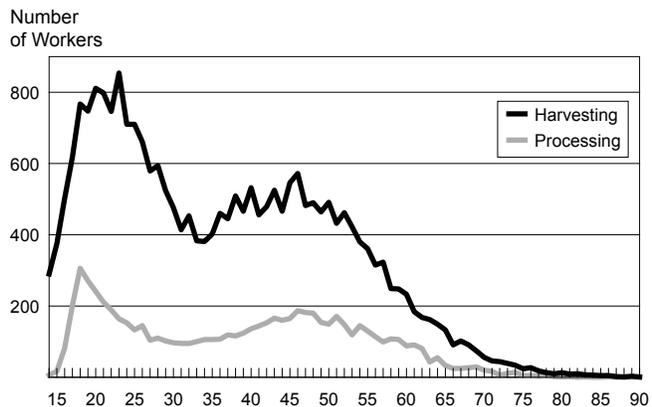
Salmon accounted for 51 percent of all fish harvesting jobs over the year in 2008 and about 80

<sup>8</sup> Research and Analysis has published the number of nonresidents working in Alaska since 1986.

<sup>9</sup> For sectors with more than 1,000 workers

## Workers' Ages **8**

Harvesting and processing, Alaska 2008



Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Division; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Occupational Database

percent of the jobs during July, the fishery's peak month. (See Exhibit 9.)

Alaska's fishing fleet has always been dominated by salmon fishermen, and 2008 was no different. Salmon harvesting employment decreased slightly in 2008; it declined by 20 jobs to 3,739.

Price increases were the big news for salmon in 2008 – everything went up from 2007. (See Exhibit 10.) The price of kings increased 48 percent to \$4.54 a pound, cohos went up 33

# 9

## Fish Harvesting Employment for All Fisheries Alaska, 2006 to 2008

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Monthly Average
<b>All Fisheries</b>													
2006	2,700	3,038	4,573	4,293	5,709	17,748	20,066	13,700	7,719	5,003	2,507	720	7,314
2007	2,584	2,966	3,930	4,348	5,949	17,528	20,137	13,567	7,500	4,738	3,080	791	7,260
2008	2,738	3,138	4,511	4,445	5,572	17,022	20,447	13,634	8,226	4,202	2,708	602	7,270
<b>Total Crab</b>													
2006	523	660	537	210	60	432	429	401	88	788	755	83	413
2007	363	589	450	252	42	451	473	441	93	851	864	142	418
2008	483	777	534	210	108	530	559	499	105	842	823	209	473
<b>Total Groundfish/Other</b>													
2006	1,884	2,006	1,824	1,122	645	840	1,059	1,131	1,403	911	354	365	1,129
2007	1,977	2,064	1,843	1,188	803	912	1,055	1,058	1,395	813	677	401	1,182
2008	2,034	2,135	1,976	1,111	746	1,026	1,142	1,166	1,465	1,053	643	90	1,216
<b>Total Halibut</b>													
2006	0	0	1,179	1,456	2,080	2,438	1,908	2,416	1,181	1,540	713	3	1,293
2007	0	0	819	1,312	2,188	2,448	2,001	2,233	1,713	1,508	732	0	1,246
2008	3	0	1,066	1,260	1,859	2,284	1,866	2,345	1,865	1,004	590	0	1,179
<b>Total Sablefish</b>													
2006	0	0	358	621	787	751	513	691	767	580	208	0	440
2007	0	0	263	574	839	697	480	649	698	555	245	0	417
2008	0	0	372	603	768	710	505	651	717	441	162	0	411
<b>Total Herring</b>													
2006	6	11	275	430	469	190	15	0	5	0	0	10	117
2007	6	11	275	516	578	25	20	0	0	5	0	6	120
2008	6	11	259	748	422	35	13	0	5	5	0	17	126
<b>Total Miscellaneous Shellfish</b>													
2006	69	90	44	20	101	60	58	48	12	666	323	126	135
2007	78	68	19	15	40	36	36	43	15	559	370	146	119
2008	87	70	18	14	67	55	55	49	25	528	323	161	121
<b>Total Salmon</b>													
2006	218	271	357	435	1,568	13,037	16,084	9,013	3,664	518	154	134	3,788
2007	161	235	261	491	1,459	12,959	16,073	9,143	3,586	448	193	97	3,759
2008	126	145	286	500	1,603	12,383	16,308	8,924	4,014	306	148	126	3,739

Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

percent, chums by 74 percent and pinks by 84 percent.

Looking at the dominant species by region, sockeye made up the majority of the 2008 harvest in Bristol Bay, Cook Inlet, Chignik, the Copper River and Alaska Peninsula. Pinks were the largest share of the catch in Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound and Kodiak, chum for the Kuskokwim and Yukon River regions, and king salmon in the Northern region on the Yukon.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For fish harvesting employment by region and other information about Alaska's seafood industry employment, go to Research and Analysis' Web site at laborstats.alaska.gov, click on "Industry Information" in the column on the left, then "Seafood Industry." (You can also get to the Web site by going to the Department of Labor's Web site at labor.alaska.gov and clicking on "Researchers" in the gold ribbon at the top.)

Employment for groundfish – mostly pollock, Pacific cod and lingcod – is slowly regaining the jobs the fishery had in the early 2000s. It had 1,361 jobs in 2001 and added 33 jobs in 2008, making its employment 1,216. Some of that increase is due to permit holders fishing for a longer duration than they did in 2007, an average of 48 days instead of 36.

The trend for sablefish and halibut employment continued its modest but steady decline. From 2007 to 2008, employment in the two fisheries lost a combined 73 jobs, a decline of 4.5 percent.

Herring jobs stabilized in 2008, but failed to recover from several years of job losses. From 2005 to 2006, the fishery lost 103 jobs, a 47

percent drop, and it gained only nine jobs from 2006 to 2008.

Jobs for miscellaneous shellfish – predominantly scallops, clams and sea cucumbers – stayed flat for 2008, only adding two jobs to the fishery’s employment of 121.

Alaska’s crab fisheries generated an additional 55 jobs in 2008, a 13 percent increase to 473 jobs. That topped 2007’s meager increase – five jobs.

## What does a fish harvesting worker do during the off-season?

After combining different data sources from the departments of Fish and Game, Revenue and Labor, it’s possible to look at some of the other jobs that harvesters hold within the state. Aside from their seafood harvesting work in 2008, nearly 37 percent of permit holders and crew had an Alaska wage and salary job at some point during the remainder of the year. (See Exhibit 11.)

The permit holders and crew earned roughly \$173 million in 2008 from their wage and salary employment in the state, an average of about \$21,000 for the 8,247 wage and salary workers employed as fish harvesters.

Looking at just permit holders, 2,744 of the 6,334 permit holders in 2008 worked in both wage and salary jobs and fish harvesting jobs. They earned \$473.6 million in their wage and salary jobs while they earned \$91.6 million in gross earnings from fish harvesting.

Permit holders with wage and salary jobs made up 43.3 percent of the harvesters in 2008 and earned 17.7 percent of fish harvesting’s gross earnings.

## Looking toward 2009

Since there’s a time lag after the end of the fishing season to collect and analyze data, hard numbers for 2009’s harvesting employment won’t be complete until early summer 2010.

# Salmon Prices Alaska, 2000 to 2008 **10**

	Statewide Salmon Prices <sup>1</sup>				
	King	Sockeye	Coho	Chum	Pink
2000	\$1.95	\$0.79	\$0.56	\$0.27	\$0.15
2001	\$1.68	\$0.57	\$0.49	\$0.34	\$0.13
2002	\$1.30	\$0.60	\$0.36	\$0.18	\$0.10
2003	\$1.43	\$0.63	\$0.48	\$0.18	\$0.09
2004	\$1.85	\$0.60	\$0.68	\$0.21	\$0.10
2005	\$2.23	\$0.74	\$0.75	\$0.26	\$0.12
2006	\$3.03	\$0.76	\$1.04	\$0.32	\$0.16
2007	\$3.07	\$0.80	\$0.96	\$0.34	\$0.19
2008	\$4.54	\$0.84	\$1.28	\$0.59	\$0.35

2000 to 2008:

Species Price Change	132.8%	6.3%	128.6%	118.5%	133.3%
CPI-U Anchorage <sup>2</sup>	25.6%	25.6%	25.6%	25.6%	25.6%

<sup>1</sup> Not adjusted for inflation

<sup>2</sup> CPI-U is the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers, which is Anchorage’s (and Alaska’s) most commonly used measure for inflation. It’s produced by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries

# Harvesters and their Nonfishing Jobs Alaska, 2008 **11**

	Permit Holders	Crew Members <sup>1</sup>	Total
Total	7,017 <sup>2</sup>	16,140	23,157
Total permit holders and crew members with Social Security numbers	6,334	16,140	22,474
Percentage of total with Social Security numbers	90.3%	100%	97.1%
Total also employed in wage and salary jobs <sup>3</sup>	2,744	5,503	8,247
Percentage also employed in wage and salary jobs <sup>4</sup>	43.3%	34.1%	36.7%
Total earnings from wage and salary jobs <sup>4</sup>	\$73.7 million	\$99.3 million	\$173.0 million
Average wage and salary earnings	\$26,845	\$18,053	\$20,978
Total gross earnings from fishing	\$517.0 million <sup>5</sup>	–	–
Total gross earnings from fishing for those with wage and salary jobs	\$91.6 million	–	–

<sup>1</sup> All references to crew members in this article are to adults, ages 18 and older, with the exception of Exhibit 6.

<sup>2</sup> This number includes residents and nonresidents.

<sup>3</sup> Data for wage and salary jobs in this article come from reports employers are required to file under state unemployment insurance laws. Because they don’t receive a wage or salary, fishermen and other self-employed workers aren’t included in wage and salary data. Federal workers are covered by federal unemployment insurance and aren’t included in Alaska’s wage records; therefore, they also aren’t included in wage and salary data.

<sup>4</sup> For permit holders and crew members who have Social Security number identifiers

<sup>5</sup> This number includes residents and nonresidents.

Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Occupational Database; Alaska Department of Revenue, Permanent Fund Dividend Division

It’s possible, though, to compare each week of 2009’s salmon season to the same week in previous years.

Overall, the weekly salmon harvests statewide are higher than they were in 2008, although they’re still below in the corresponding weeks in the previous five years. Sockeye has had the strongest harvest of any salmon species so far in

## Methodology Notes

In other industries, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development can count jobs because most employers are required to report the number of employees on their payrolls each month as part of their mandatory unemployment insurance coverage.

But fish harvesting jobs are generally exempted from state unemployment insurance laws, and even if they weren't, they don't generate the payroll records used to calculate monthly employment in other industries.<sup>1</sup>

### Landings and crew factors

As a substitute for detailed payroll records, state and federal fish management agencies provide the Department of Labor with information on the specific "landings" made under each commercial fishing permit over the course of a year. A landing is the initial sale of harvested fish to a buyer. To create employment estimates from the landings, the Department of Labor uses

<sup>1</sup> Another reason why no employment data have been available for the fisheries is that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which governs how employment is counted in the federal-state cooperative program called Current Employment Statistics, defines fishing as an agricultural activity and agricultural employment has traditionally been excluded from employment statistics under this program.

"crew factors" developed from surveys and industry research in an attempt to quantify the labor needed to fish specific permits.

For example, the crew factor for a S04Y permit – which is a permit to fish for salmon in the lower Yukon with gillnets – is two, so if a landing is recorded under a S04Y permit, two jobs are attributed to that permit. Each permit number is unique (the S04Y permit used in this example is the type of permit rather than the permit number itself), which allows the Department of Labor to assign only one set of jobs to a specific permit in any given calendar month even if numerous landings are made during the month.<sup>2</sup>

The jobs are assigned by place of work rather than by the residence of the job holders. Most permits have a geographic designation as to where specific species can be harvested. In the above example using a S04Y permit, the "Y" stands for the lower Yukon region, regardless of what species is fished. All landings made under that type of permit create employ-

<sup>2</sup> The same approach to counting the number of monthly jobs is used for other industries in that a person who works 60 hours a week for a single employer is counted the same as a person who works 20 hours a week. Each is said to hold one job in that month.

ment in the ports of Western Alaska. Employment generated under permits that allow fishing anywhere in the state is assigned by a special harvest area code.

### The permit is the employer

The permit itself is considered the employer, which means that a permit holder who makes landings under two different permits in the same month will generate two sets of jobs. Counting the permit as the employer rather than the permit holder is believed to be a slightly better approximation of how jobs are counted in wage and salary employment numbers.

### Prep time not counted

The harvesting employment estimates are conservative in that they don't reflect any time spent by permit holders or their crew preparing to fish or winding up operations at the end of the season. Until a landing is made under a permit, no employment is tallied.

So if the permit holder works for two weeks in May getting the boat ready to fish and then begins making landings in June, the efforts in May are not counted as employment despite their obvious importance to the enterprise.

2009. This year's catch surpassed both 2008's and the five-year average.

With a strong statewide sockeye run in 2009, it means that the other species' harvests were lower than previous years in order to pull the total salmon harvest below the average. Most of the low catches came from the king fisheries. The 2008 catch for the Yukon king fishery, for example, was limited to bycatch, and the commercial fishery was closed in 2009. The average for 2004 to 2008, however, includes a week in the beginning of July where 19,000 Yukon king salmon were caught.

### In conclusion

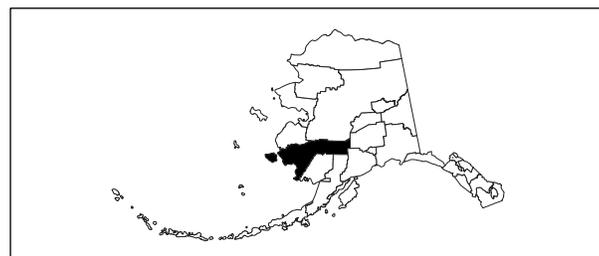
The fishing industry is more than a job for a lot of people – it's a lifestyle. Despite the popular-

ity of reality television shows focused on fish harvesting, people shouldn't have overly romanticized views of Alaska's seafood industry. The work is hard and is often dangerous and done in extreme weather conditions. The financial rewards are unpredictable, but potentially large. Despite experience, skill, trained crew, and good fishing vessels and equipment, earnings are often determined by Mother Nature, fuel prices and the market price of fish.

## Home to the largest rural community in Alaska

**T**he Bethel Census Area,<sup>1</sup> an area about the size of Kentucky, is in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, a large coastal plain with 900 miles of shoreline along the Bering Sea in Southwestern Alaska where the Yup'ik Eskimo have lived for 3,000 years.

The city of Bethel,<sup>2</sup> with nearly a third of the census area's population, is the hub for 56 villages, 36 of which fall in the Bethel Census Area (see Exhibits 1 and 2); the rest are in its neighbors to the north, the Wade Hampton and Yukon-Koyukuk census areas. Bethel sits on the Kuskokwim River, 40 miles from the Bering Sea, and 400 air miles west of Anchorage. It is Alaska's largest rural community off the road



system, and it is the regional center for transportation, retail trade, and medical and government services.

With 16,940 people, the census area has a small seasonal economic base focused on natural resources, particularly salmon and herring roe, and a cultural tradition of subsistence hunting and fishing. Government jobs, including public education and village organizations, account for almost 50 percent of the region's payroll jobs.<sup>3</sup>

The western half of the census area<sup>4</sup> is in the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, the second-largest wildlife refuge in the country. The refuge supports one of the largest aggregations of water birds in the world, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which oversees the refuge.

Historically, caribou were abundant in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta – their numbers peaked in the 1860s – but with the exception of small remnant herds, they had disappeared. Yet in recent years, up to 40,000 caribou from the Mulchatna herd have migrated onto eastern parts of the refuge in the fall and winter, according to Fish & Wildlife.

<sup>1</sup> A census area is the U.S. Census Bureau's name for a county equivalent. The area in Alaska that is outside boroughs and the Anchorage municipality is divided into census areas.

<sup>2</sup> All references in this article to "Bethel" are to the city of Bethel.

<sup>3</sup> Payroll jobs, also called wage and salary jobs, do not include the self-employed, including fishermen.

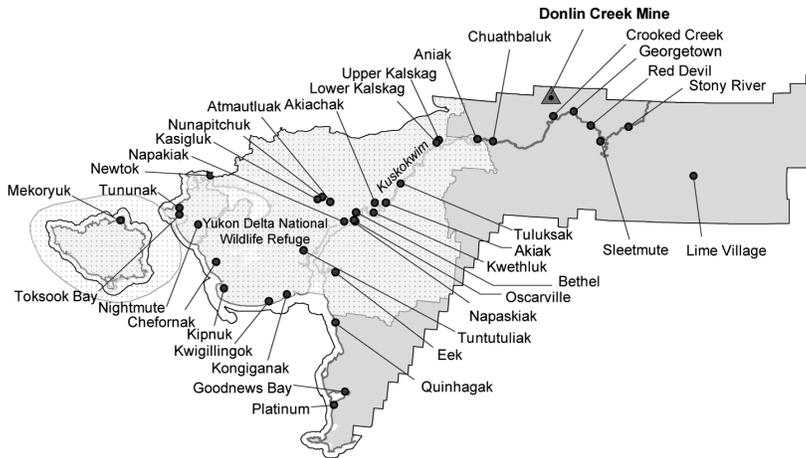
<sup>4</sup> Nearly all the Wade Hampton Census Area is also within the refuge.

### 1 Bethel Census Area Communities Population, 2008

	2008 Population Estimate		2008 Population Estimate
Bethel Census Area Total			16,940
Akiachak	659	Mekoryuk	195
Akiak	341	Napakiak	348
Aniak	494	Napaskiak	435
Atmautluak	306	Newtok	357
Bethel	5,665	Nightmute	249
Chefornak	470	Nunapitchuk	540
Chuathbaluk	88	Oscarville	95
Crooked Creek	132	Platinum	47
Eek	272	Quinhagak	661
Georgetown	3	Red Devil	48
Goodnews Bay	225	Sleetmute	70
Kasigluk	578	Stony River	51
Kipnuk	696	Toksook Bay	605
Kongiganak	445	Tuluksak	500
Kwethluk	741	Tuntutuliak	417
Kwigillingok	352	Tununak	332
Lime Village	15	Upper Kalskag	235
Lower Kalskag	256	Balance of Census Area	17

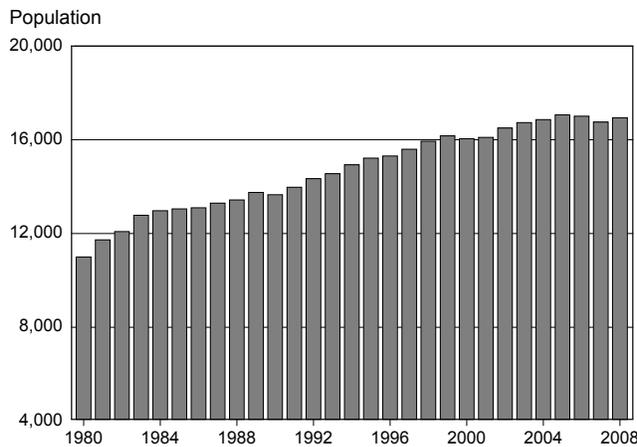
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit

## 2 The Bethel Census Area Alaska, 2009



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

## 3 Decades of Steady Growth Bethel Census Area Population, 1980 to 2008



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit

Bethel was settled by the Yup'ik. They called the village "Mumtrekhlogamute," meaning "Smoke-house People."

Russian explorers encountered the Yup'ik in the 1800s. By 1880, what is now Bethel became an Alaska Commercial Company Trading Post and that year the U.S. Census counted 41 people. The Moravian Church set up a mission in the area in 1884. By 1905, there was a post office, and Bethel began growing into the regional hub it is today.

The city was incorporated in 1957 and its 2008 population was 5,665. The Bethel Census Area's

population has also grown but recently began leveling off. From 1980 to 2008, it grew by an average annual rate of 1.6 percent, reaching 16,940 in 2008. (See Exhibit 3.)

### The largest employer

Local government employment in the area dwarfs all other industries. Forty-one percent of all jobs and 33 percent of all wages in 2008 came from jobs for local governments, which include city and tribal government, and public schools. (See Exhibit 4.)

Jobs in the census area's three K-12 school districts – the Lower Kuskokwim, Yupiit and Kuspuk – made up 48 percent of all local government employment in 2008, and the Lower Kuskokwim School District was the census area's largest employer. (See Exhibit 5.) The census area had 398 teaching assistants in 2008, making that occupation the largest.

### Healing is big business

Health care makes up the largest slice of all private employment and wages in the census area – 16 percent of employment and 25 percent of wages in 2008.

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, a federally recognized Indian Health Service provider, is the largest private employer in the area and was the 16<sup>th</sup> largest in the state in 2008. (See Exhibit 5.) As an Indian Health Service provider, most of the services provided to patients are paid for by the federal government.

YKHC runs the 50-bed Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital in Bethel, a 100,000-square-foot acute care medical facility, and five regional clinics – in Aniak and Toksook Bay in the Bethel Census Area, and in Emmonak, St. Mary's and Hooper Bay in the Wade Hampton Census Area. YKHC also runs the Community Health Aide Program that provides primary health care in 47 village clinics in the Y-K Delta, 30 of which are in the Bethel Census Area.

In 2008, YKHC generated 93 percent of all health care employment in the Bethel Census

Area and 96 percent of all health care wages.

## Not a Wal-Mart in sight

Retail trade is the census area's second-largest private industry, representing 10 percent of all employment and 5 percent of all wages. Thirty-six percent of the census area's retail trade is in Bethel, which has the two largest retail employers, Alaska Commercial Company and Swanson's.<sup>5</sup>

Thirty-nine retail stores do business in the outlying villages. Native village corporations<sup>6</sup> own most of the retail stores in the villages. For instance, Nunapitchuk Limited, a village corporation, owns the store in Nunapitchuk, the largest of the stores in the villages. An AC store in Aniak is the only chain store in the census area outside Bethel.

## Planes, barges and ice-road truckers

Goods often travel by several forms of transportation – barge, air, truck or even four-wheeler – before they get to their final destination. For example, building materials for a village school may be barged to Bethel, trucked from the city dock to the airport, flown by small cargo plane to the village airport, and then transported by a four-wheeler and trailer to the worksite.

Transportation made up 6 percent of the census area's employment in 2008 and 7 percent of its wages. It is the third-largest private industry in the census area.

Eighty-nine percent of the census area's transportation jobs are in Bethel, and air transportation makes up most of it. The Bethel Airport, the hub for flights carrying people and cargo to and from Y-K Delta villages, is Alaska's third-busiest airport.

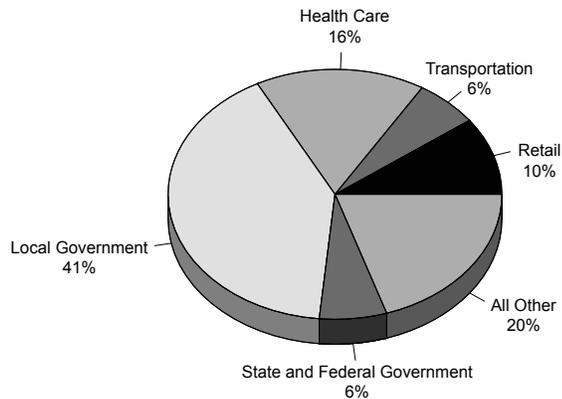
Water and trucking transportation are also important. Before freeze-up, fuel is barged up the

<sup>5</sup> AC, as locals call it, sells groceries and general merchandise; Swanson's and its subsidiaries sell everything from boats, four-wheelers and lumber to groceries.

<sup>6</sup> As far as regional Native corporations, Calista Corp.'s region covers the Bethel and Wade Hampton census areas. Calista is the second largest of the 13 regional corporations established under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Calista's 56 original villages are organized in 46 for-profit village corporations, each with surface estate ownership, according to Calista.

## Local Government is Big 4

Share of employment by industry, 2008



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

## Government is a Major Employer 5

Bethel Census Area's top 10 employers, 2008

Employer	Average Monthly Employment <sup>1</sup>
Lower Kuskokwim School District	1,000 to 1,249
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	1,000 to 1,249
Association of Village Council Presidents	250 to 499
AVCP Regional Housing Authority <sup>2</sup>	100 to 249
Kuspuk School District	"
Coastal Villages Seafoods Inc.	"
City of Bethel	"
Swanson's	50 to 99
Alaska Commercial Company	"
Hageland Aviation Services	"

<sup>1</sup> These are ranges that a company's or organization's specific employment number falls into; the ranking is based on the specific employment number. If two employers had the same number of employees, they were ranked by unrounded employment.

<sup>2</sup> The acronym AVCP stands for Association of Village Council Presidents.  
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Kuskokwim River to communities and stored in large tanks. Goods are often barged to a village once or twice a year. After the Kuskokwim freezes, an ice-road is plowed, and it is used by trucking companies delivering goods to villages along the river and by private citizens moving between communities.

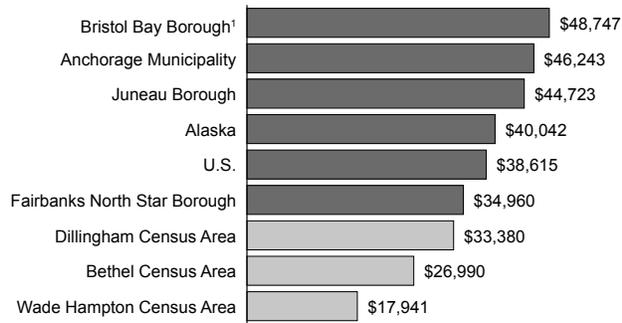
## Fishing fills nets and wallets

Fishing, both commercial and subsistence, is an integral part of life in Bethel and the other communities in the census area, as well as in the rest of the Y-K Delta.

After a precipitous drop in the late 1990s, the number of commercial permits fished

# 6 Incomes Low in Southwest Alaska

## Per capita income, 2007



<sup>1</sup> The Bristol Bay Borough, small in size compared to most of the state's other boroughs, has only three communities: Naknek, King Salmon and South Naknek.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

in the census area has hovered around 700 each year – a 40 percent drop from the peak in 1995. Though declining salmon stocks, combined with low salmon prices and high operating costs, have meant fewer people fish their driftnet permits, many permit holders have held onto their permits in hopes of better times.

The area's Community Development Quota group, the Coastal Villages Region Fund, has had a much more profitable decade. Begun in 1992, the Western Alaska CDQ Program is a federal fisheries program<sup>7</sup> that allocates a percentage of all Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands quotas for pollock, halibut, Pacific cod, crab and bycatch species to eligible communities to generate income to promote fisheries-related economic development in Western Alaska. There are six CDQ groups that include 65 communities within 50 miles of the Bering Sea coastline. The communities are the shareholders, not individuals.

Seventeen of the 20 communities that make up the Coastal Villages Region Fund are in the Bethel Census Area.<sup>8</sup> Looking at the 2009 season, for example, CVRF said 500 permit holders delivered 4 million pounds of salmon to its subsidiary, Coastal Villages Seafoods, earning \$1.8

<sup>7</sup> The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service oversees the program, which was granted perpetuity status during the 1996 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

<sup>8</sup> The remaining three communities are in the Wade Hampton Census Area.

million; 170 permit holders delivered 310,000 pounds of halibut and earned \$750,000.<sup>9</sup>

CVRF opened a regional fish processing plant in Platinum in July; it processed 2.3 million pounds of salmon purchased from 530 permit holders last summer, and the plant employed 154 people, 130 from the CVRF region. The Platinum plant and CVRF's Quinhagak plant processed 4 million pounds total last summer. Coastal Villages Seafoods owns five tenders, two barges and charters others. It also operated halibut plants in six villages last summer.<sup>10</sup>

CVRF will finish building two "fisheries support centers" using local labor in 2009,<sup>11</sup> adding to the 14 that are already operating in villages. At support centers, people can apply for jobs and scholarships, get training, get welding and repairs for their boats, have space for meetings, and even use bunk space if necessary.

## Subsistence

In all the communities, subsistence fishing, hunting, trapping and gathering play a pivotal role.

Communities in the Bethel Census Area consumed 9.48 million pounds of subsistence resources in 2000, according to one study.<sup>12</sup> The average annual subsistence harvest was 598 pounds per person – the fourth-highest for a borough or census area in the state.

For Bethel, it was 260 pounds per person, compared to 400 to 800 pounds for villages in the census area.

King, or chinook, chum, coho and sockeye salmon and herring roe are important subsistence staples, along with moose, bear, caribou, seal meat and seal oil. Reindeer are taken on

<sup>9</sup> CVRF discusses the season in its Coastal Villages Seafoods Preliminary Report 2009 in the *Neqsurtet Nepiit*, the group's Summer 2009 newsletter. Aside from Coastal Villages Seafoods, CVRF has subsidiaries for groundfish, crab, Pacific cod and pollock.

<sup>10</sup> The six are Chefnak, Kipnuk, Mekoryuk, Toksook, Tununak, and in the Wade Hampton Census Area, Hooper Bay.

<sup>11</sup> CVRF says its payroll during peak construction was \$58,000 a month.

<sup>12</sup> Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil and Gas, Holitna Basin exploration license, 2006

Nunivak Island, and musk oxen on Nunivak and Nelson Island.

Other subsistence resources include waterfowl, eggs from nesting birds, whitefish, sheefish, blackfish, pike, clams, snowshoe hares, beavers and berries. Natives use subsistence resources to make baskets, dolls and carved ivory, among other things, to use or sell.

## High poverty, high costs, low income

The Bethel Census Area's poverty rate has been around 21 percent since 2000, about 12 percent higher than the state as a whole.

The census area also generates only about one payroll job for every three people who live there. Statewide, the ratio is close to one payroll job for every two people.

The monthly unemployment rates in 2008 were as high as 16 percent and the average per capita income in 2007 was \$26,990, compared to \$40,042 for the whole state. (See Exhibit 6.)

The high cost of living in the area compounds the difficulties for those with low incomes. A recent McDowell Group study indicates that living in the Bethel/Dillingham area costs 49 percent more than living in Anchorage.<sup>13</sup> (See Exhibit 7.)

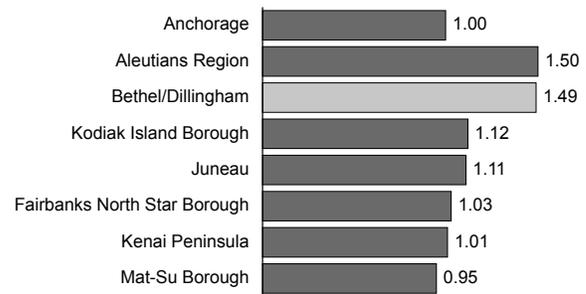
The Bethel Census Area's average annual wages of \$33,190 ranked 21<sup>st</sup> out of the state's 29 boroughs and census areas in 2008. Statewide, they were \$45,350. Private-sector jobs earned \$35,360, and state and federal jobs earned even more – \$59,930 and \$49,860. Jobs with the census area's largest job sector, local government, earned the least, \$26,630.<sup>14</sup>

When looking at poverty rates, it is important to remember that they are strictly income-based, and ignore the subsistence economy. The traditional subsistence lifestyle sidesteps the need to

<sup>13</sup> The study is called the Alaska Geographic Differential Study 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Many of the local government jobs in the census area are public administration jobs with traditional, village and tribal councils. The wages for the census area's public administration jobs were the third-lowest of all boroughs and census areas in the state in 2008, possibly due to more part-time jobs.

## A High-Cost Place to Live Geographic cost differentials, Alaska 2008



Note: Anchorage was used as the base city and assigned a value of 1.00 from which comparisons of the other areas could be made. For example, Mat-Su's index number of 0.95 means that living costs there are 5 percent lower than in Anchorage; the Bethel/Dillingham region's 1.49 index number means costs there are 49 percent higher than in Anchorage.

Source: McDowell Group, Alaska Geographic Differential Study 2008

pay money for all food, which comes at a high cost in rural Alaska. As a result, income-based poverty levels may not represent the same reduced quality of living that they would in an urban setting.

## A young Yup'ik population

The Bethel Census Area has the largest Native population, mostly Yup'ik, in the state outside Anchorage.

Eighty-two percent of the census area's population in 2006<sup>15</sup> was Native and 15 percent was white, while 18 percent of the statewide population was Native and 72 percent was white.

Fifty-nine percent of the census area's population was 18 or younger in 2008, compared to 29 percent statewide. The census area's median age is 23.5, the state's third-lowest after the Wade Hampton Census Area (19.4) and Northwest Arctic Borough (22.6).

The Bethel Census Area had the state's fifth-highest birthrate, with 26.3 births per 1,000 people; the statewide rate was 16.6. Consistently high birthrates – well above 20 percent – have served to offset population losses from other fac-

<sup>15</sup> The most recent year for which data are available. This population section is based on the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's 2006 and 2008 population estimates: 2006 for race and 2008 for ages and birthrates.

tors. More people moved out of the census area than into it during the 2002 to 2008 period.

### **Gold and fish in the future?**

The Donlin Creek Mine project, located roughly 175 miles northeast of Bethel, contains one of the world's largest deposits of gold, according to its owners, NovaGold Resources and Barrick Gold Corp. They have said the mine could be

operational as early as 2015, it would create 400 to 500 jobs and it would run for at least 20 years.

That project, along with the Coastal Villages Region Fund's projects – including the new fish processing plant in Platinum – while not solving all the Bethel Census Area's employment woes, indicate that the possibility for more jobs in the future is real.

## **Commercial Fishing – One of the Most Dangerous Occupations**

Historically, commercial fishing is one of the most dangerous occupations in Alaska and the U.S. as a whole. The fatality rate for commercial fishermen is 30 times greater than the rate of all U.S. workers.

U.S. Coast Guard data show that 75 percent of all commercial fishing deaths are the result of fishermen unexpectedly finding themselves in the water and facing death by drowning or hypothermia.

Of the occurrences that lead to water fatalities, about 75 percent are from flooding, fire and capsizing, and 25 percent are from falls overboard.

Coast Guard data also indicate that when commercial fishermen properly utilize immersion suits, their chance of survival increases by more than 200 percent.

Therefore, it's essential that every crew member has a serviceable and properly fitting immersion suit on board, and that boat masters regularly conduct drills requiring everyone to put on the immersion suits.

Other major factors that affect fatal accident rates include crew training, alcohol use, fatigue, working alone, equipment maintenance, vessel stability and operating in heavy weather.

Safety consultants with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Occupational Safety and Health are available to provide free advice and tools to help reduce workplace injuries. AKOSH is within the Labor Standards and Safety Division. For more information, call (800) 656-4972.

## Unemployment rate at 8.4 percent in September

**A**laska's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose three-tenths of a percentage point in September to 8.4 percent. (See Exhibits 1 and 3.) Since first peaking at 8.4 percent in March, the rate has bounced around without showing a consistent trend either up or down over the last six months.

That's in contrast to the U.S. rate, which climbed from 8.5 percent in March to 9.8 percent in September. Historically, the U.S. rate has usually been well below Alaska's – the last time it was higher before this year was 1983, and the average U.S. rate since 1980 has been 1.7 percentage points lower than the average Alaska rate.

### Job numbers remain below last year

The state's September job numbers are about 2,000 below year-ago levels. (See Exhibit 2.) The losses are wide-spread, though generally mild compared to national losses.

The state's 2,000 fewer jobs represent a decline of about six-tenths of a percent, while the na-

tion's 5.8 million over-the-year job loss equates to a much larger 4.2 percent.

### But health care keeps growing

One of the two categories for Alaska that stands out as a positive is health care, which added an estimated 1,000 jobs over the year. It's also one of very few industries that hasn't suffered losses nationally.

From September 2008 to September 2009, the nation shed 5.8 million jobs, but health care employment grew by nearly 300,000. It's an industry that has been less affected by recessions historically, and that has been true so far in this one.

### Government has also resisted the losses

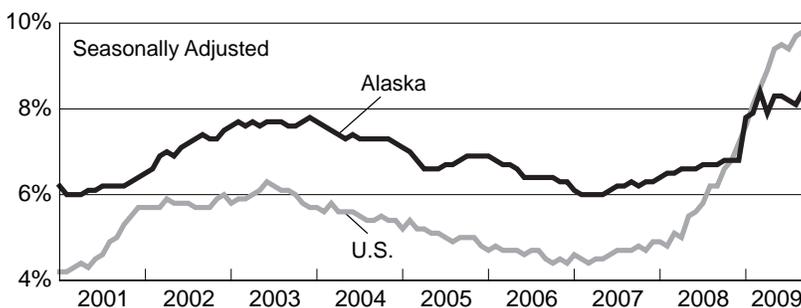
The other source of job gains in Alaska is government. Growth has come from both state and local government, while the federal government's Alaska job count was down by about 100 over the year.

Considering how many states are facing budget shortfalls, it's surprising to see a significant number with over-the-year government job growth. In addition to Alaska, 17 other states added state government jobs, including California, Florida and Oregon, three of the states hit especially hard by the recession.<sup>1</sup>

Local government jobs, which increased by an estimated 300 over the year in Alaska, also increased in 22 other states, but the growth was generally small. Several of the remaining states had sizeable reductions in their local government work force.

<sup>1</sup> Many states, including California, have required employees to take regular unpaid furloughs to cut costs without having to lay people off.

## 1 Unemployment Rates, Alaska and U.S. January 2001 to September 2009



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

## 2 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

	Preliminary 9/09	Revised 8/09	Revised 9/08	Changes from:	
Alaska				8/09	9/08
<b>Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary<sup>1</sup></b>	335,000	343,600	337,000	-8,600	-2,000
Goods-Producing <sup>2</sup>	49,500	55,600	51,400	-6,100	-1,900
Service-Providing <sup>3</sup>	285,500	288,000	285,600	-2,500	-100
<b>Natural Resources and Mining</b>	15,500	15,700	16,100	-200	-600
Logging	200	300	300	-100	-100
Mining	15,300	15,400	15,800	-100	-500
Oil and Gas	13,000	13,200	13,300	-200	-300
<b>Construction</b>	19,100	20,300	20,000	-1,200	-900
<b>Manufacturing</b>	14,900	19,600	15,300	-4,700	-400
Wood Product Manufacturing	300	300	400	0	-100
Seafood Processing	11,000	15,700	11,100	-4,700	-100
<b>Trade, Transportation, Utilities</b>	66,500	68,300	67,100	-1,800	-600
Wholesale Trade	6,800	7,000	6,600	-200	200
Retail Trade	36,300	37,100	36,800	-800	-500
Food and Beverage Stores	6,300	6,500	6,300	-200	0
General Merchandise Stores	9,600	9,800	10,000	-200	-400
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	23,400	24,200	23,700	-800	-300
Air Transportation	6,400	6,500	6,600	-100	-200
Truck Transportation	3,200	3,400	3,300	-200	-100
<b>Information</b>	7,000	7,200	7,100	-200	-100
Telecommunications	4,500	4,700	4,500	-200	0
<b>Financial Activities</b>	14,900	15,100	15,100	-200	-200
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	27,000	27,700	27,000	-700	0
<b>Educational<sup>4</sup> and Health Services</b>	38,600	38,800	37,500	-200	1,100
Health Care	28,000	28,300	27,000	-300	1,000
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	35,500	39,100	36,100	-3,600	-600
Accommodations	10,000	11,400	10,300	-1,400	-300
Food Services and Drinking Places	20,500	21,800	20,800	-1,300	-300
<b>Other Services</b>	11,300	11,500	11,700	-200	-400
<b>Government</b>	84,700	80,300	84,000	4,400	700
Federal Government <sup>5</sup>	17,100	17,600	17,200	-500	-100
State Government	26,100	24,900	25,600	1,200	500
State Government Education <sup>6</sup>	7,600	5,900	7,500	1,700	100
Local Government	41,500	37,800	41,200	3,700	300
Local Government Education <sup>7</sup>	23,000	18,400	22,800	4,600	200
Tribal Government	4,000	4,100	3,700	-100	300

Notes for Exhibits 2 and 4:

<sup>1</sup> Excludes the self-employed, fishermen and other agricultural workers, and private household workers; for estimates of fish harvesting employment, and other fisheries data, go to [labor.alaska.gov/research/seafood/seafood.htm](http://labor.alaska.gov/research/seafood/seafood.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.

<sup>3</sup> Service-providing sectors include all others not listed as goods-producing sectors.

<sup>4</sup> Private education only

<sup>5</sup> Excludes uniformed military

<sup>6</sup> Includes the University of Alaska

<sup>7</sup> Includes public school systems

<sup>8</sup> Fairbanks North Star Borough

Sources for Exhibits 2 and 3: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Sources for Exhibit 4: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; also the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Anchorage/Mat-Su

## 3 Unemployment Rates By borough and census area

	Prelim. 9/09	Revised 8/09	Revised 9/08
<b>SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>			
<b>United States</b>	9.8	9.7	6.2
<b>Alaska Statewide</b>	8.4	8.1	6.7
<b>NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>			
<b>United States</b>	9.5	9.6	6.0
<b>Alaska Statewide</b>	7.7	7.1	6.1
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su Region</b>	7.4	6.8	5.6
Municipality of Anchorage	7.0	6.4	5.3
Mat-Su Borough	8.8	8.4	6.8
<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	8.7	7.7	6.7
Kenai Peninsula Borough	9.7	8.5	7.2
Kodiak Island Borough	6.6	5.8	5.2
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	6.4	5.9	5.9
<b>Interior Region</b>	7.2	6.5	5.9
Denali Borough	3.4	2.5	2.5
Fairbanks North Star Borough	6.9	6.3	5.5
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	8.1	7.8	7.1
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	13.6	12.5	12.6
<b>Northern Region</b>	9.6	9.4	8.1
Nome Census Area	12.1	12.8	10.1
North Slope Borough	5.7	5.2	4.6
Northwest Arctic Borough	13.2	12.2	11.6
<b>Southeast Region</b>	6.7	6.0	5.3
Haines Borough	6.2	5.2	5.2
Juneau Borough	5.7	5.2	4.4
Ketchikan Gateway Borough <sup>1</sup>	6.1	5.4	4.7
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan CA <sup>1</sup>	13.6	13.5	10.6
Sitka Borough	5.9	5.3	4.8
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA <sup>1</sup>	7.3	6.6	6.1
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area <sup>1</sup>	9.8	7.7	8.6
Yakutat Borough	6.3	5.3	5.6
<b>Southwest Region</b>	12.2	11.5	10.6
Aleutians East Borough	10.1	7.6	7.7
Aleutians West Census Area	8.4	5.1	4.6
Bethel Census Area	14.8	16.0	13.5
Bristol Bay Borough	3.6	2.2	3.4
Dillingham Census Area	8.4	8.8	8.2
Lake and Peninsula Borough	5.9	6.0	5.3
Wade Hampton Census Area	20.4	20.9	18.7

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## 4 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment By region

	Preliminary 9/09	Revised 8/09	Revised 9/08	Changes from:		Percent Change:	
				8/09	9/08	8/09	9/08
Anch/Mat-Su	174,700	174,800	175,900	-100	-1,200	-0.1%	-0.7%
Anchorage	154,500	154,600	155,600	-100	-1,100	-0.1%	-0.7%
Gulf Coast	30,900	33,650	31,450	-2,750	-550	-8.2%	-1.7%
Interior	48,300	50,100	48,600	-1,800	-300	-3.6%	-0.6%
Fairbanks <sup>8</sup>	39,800	40,200	39,600	-400	200	-1.0%	0.5%
Northern	20,300	20,500	20,600	-200	-300	-1.0%	-1.5%
Southeast	39,450	42,200	40,100	-2,750	-650	-6.5%	-1.6%
Southwest	20,500	22,250	20,600	-1,750	-100	-7.9%	-0.5%

For more current state and regional employment and unemployment data, visit our Web site:

[laborstats.alaska.gov](http://laborstats.alaska.gov)

# Employer Resources

## Alaska Resident Hire

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development this summer renewed the resident-hire determination applicable to publicly funded construction projects, effective through June 2011.

“We are committed to providing every opportunity for Alaskans to get good, high-paying jobs here in Alaska,” said Click Bishop, commissioner of the Department of Labor. “This determination, along with several key work force development initiatives developed with the help of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, will help ensure that Alaskans are prepared and have the best opportunity to go to work.”

Alaska resident-hire requirements apply to occupational categories with relatively high resident unemployment rates. An Alaska resident hiring preference applies in 21 out of 23 potential occupational categories, based on an analysis of the most recent employment data available.

“We analyze general unemployment factors in Alaska, the percentage of qualified Alaskans who are unemployed in a particular classification and the percentage of nonresidents employed in a classification,” said Grey Mitchell, director of the department’s Labor Standards and Safety Division.

“If more than 10 percent of qualified Alaskans are unemployed and more than 10 percent of workers in a particular classification are nonresidents, then that classification is eligible for the 90 percent Alaska-hire preference,” Mitchell said.

The statewide hiring preference, which covers most public construction contracts in Alaska, applies on a workweek basis to each occupational category on each individual project. The current resident-hire determination is effective from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2011.

The resident-hire requirements allow for hiring nonresident workers only after reasonable efforts to recruit Alaskans have been unsuccessful.

The occupational categories covered by the determination:

boilermakers	foremen and supervisors	piledriving occupations
bricklayers	insulation workers	plumbers and pipefitters
carpenters	ironworkers	roofers
cement masons	laborers	sheetmetal workers
culinary workers	mechanics	truck drivers
electricians	millwrights	tugboat workers
equipment operators	painters	welders

The Division of Labor Standards and Safety’s Wage and Hour Administration enforces the resident-hire requirements.

For more information, go to Labor Safety and Standards’ Web site at [labor.alaska.gov/lss/whhome.htm](http://labor.alaska.gov/lss/whhome.htm). You can also call the nearest Wage and Hour Administration office: for Anchorage, call (907) 269-4900; for Fairbanks, call (907) 451-2886, and for Juneau, call (907) 465-4842. For your local Alaska Job Center, call (877) 724-2539 (ALEX).