



ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

MAY 2015

CARING FOR ALASKA'S ANIMALS

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DEVELOPMENT**

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ON THE COVER:

Capt. Brooke Henderson, left, a veterinarian with the U.S. Army Reserves, gives a Maltese mix puppy named Wilson an eye exam in Nome while he's held by Sgt. Andrew King. Photo by Maj. Guy Hayes

INSIDE: In the banner on page 4, this photo of a husky named Meeko is courtesy of Flickr user Hopeless_Wonderer. Flickr Creative Commons license: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/legalcode

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Rural traditions and values helped shape today's Alaska



By Heidi Drygas
Commissioner



Follow the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development on Facebook (facebook.com/alaskalabor) and Twitter (twitter.com/alaskalabor) for the latest news about jobs, workplace safety, and workforce development.

Alaska has always been different, and that's why many of us live here. We have the most intact indigenous cultures, the highest median wages, spectacular wild places, and the most valuable fisheries in America. Many of us who have traveled Outside would likely describe Alaskans as neighborly, compassionate people who understand that in this frontier state, we're all in it together.

Many of our elders and pioneers have both lived through and helped bring about significant changes. Consider Willie Hensley's remarkable life, from growing up in a subsistence community around Kotzebue to helping pass ANILCA and then working to establish one of Alaska's largest corporations. He made significant contributions in shaping our young state's identity, and yet Alaska continues to grow and change.

One of the ways Alaska is changing is in our diverse urban population. As this month's *Trends* documents, thousands of Alaskans continue to move from rural to urban communities. This rural to urban migration need not and should not mean the loss of our cultural traditions.

In Willie Hensley's autobiography, he writes about the emptiness he confronted after successful passage of ANILCA and establishment of the NANA Regional Corporation. Make no mistake: passage of ANILCA—which was a key enabler to development of both the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and our successful Alaska Native Corporations—helped trans-

form our economy and bring about our highest-in-the-nation wages. But Alaskans can't live by bread alone. (Besides, most of us prefer salmon!) It is our cultural traditions, and our relationships with family and community, that make us Alaskans. As much as Alaska changes, we must honor our heritage and preserve our core Alaska values. As we become an increasingly urban community, we cannot forget the traditions that developed in our smaller communities.

Most of us are used to seeing clouds on the horizon, and those from coastal communities may be used to seeing them practically in their living rooms. One economic "cloud" that concerns me is the growing rate of nonresident hire. Declining rates of Alaska Hire are not acceptable. Reversing that trend is a top priority for me and for the Department of Labor. Gov. Walker is fully committed to Alaska Hire. As Alaskans, we have always been committed to our community and our neighbors. That means hiring Alaskans first and continuing to build a model of shared economic prosperity.

We are blessed with an abundance of resources and a longstanding spirit of community. This is the rock upon which our elders and pioneers built the Alaska we know today. As migration and technology reshape our physical communities, we can and should retain those Alaska values that have provided us with unequaled economic prosperity and cultural wealth.



Caring for Alaska's Animals

Long distances and an often unusual animal population

By **ALYSSA RODRIGUES**

At first glance, animal care employment in Alaska looks a lot like it does in the rest of the country. With a similar mix of veterinarians, groomers, and pet store workers, it's a comparably small slice of Alaska's total job count. But Alaska often differs in what its animals need and what it takes to reach them.

Alaska's domestic animals include the typical dogs and cats but also — most notably — the sled dogs for which we're famous. We also have yaks, reindeer, and other exotic livestock you'd be much less likely to find in the Lower 48.

With such a diverse animal population, Alaska's animal care professionals develop a broad range of skills and experience — they may be faced with a sick pet mouse one day and a pregnant bison or sled dog the next. They also cope with the demands of an extreme climate, and many workers travel around the state to provide care in remote areas with no local providers.

Just 14 of Alaska's 29 boroughs and census areas have paid animal care employment (see Exhibit 2). But volunteers provide a significant amount of care throughout the state and many animal owners learn to do for

1 Jobs on Upward Trajectory

ALASKA ANIMAL CARE, 2000 TO 2014



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

themselves what people in other parts of the country would pay a vet or groomer to do.

Although relatively small in number, animal care employment has steadily grown since 2000 (see Exhibit 1) and is expected to continue growing.



Above, sled dogs sleep in — and sometimes on — their hutches. Photo by Flickr user Skylar Primm



At left, a cat naps on a railing outside the Herring Bay Lumber Co. in Ketchikan. Photo by Flickr user Jeff Tabaco

A rugged life for sled dogs

Like their owners, many of Alaska’s animals lead a rougher life. With the ice and sometimes extreme cold, they’re more prone to injury and frostbite. Sharp salt crystals during ice melt can also be painful for dogs’ and cats’ sensitive paw pads.

Some dogs wear outdoor gear, just like humans do, including coats and booties to protect their feet. This is particularly necessary for sled dogs due to the long distances they run.

These high-performance dogs require more professional care than most, and each year during the Iditarod and Yukon Quest, veterinarians from inside and outside Alaska travel to the starting line and checkpoints to en-

sure dogs are healthy enough to race. Race vets check for injuries or pregnancy at the start of a race, and at checkpoints they look for signs of exhaustion or injured feet and shoulders. They also assess the dogs’ hydration, appetite, and mood.

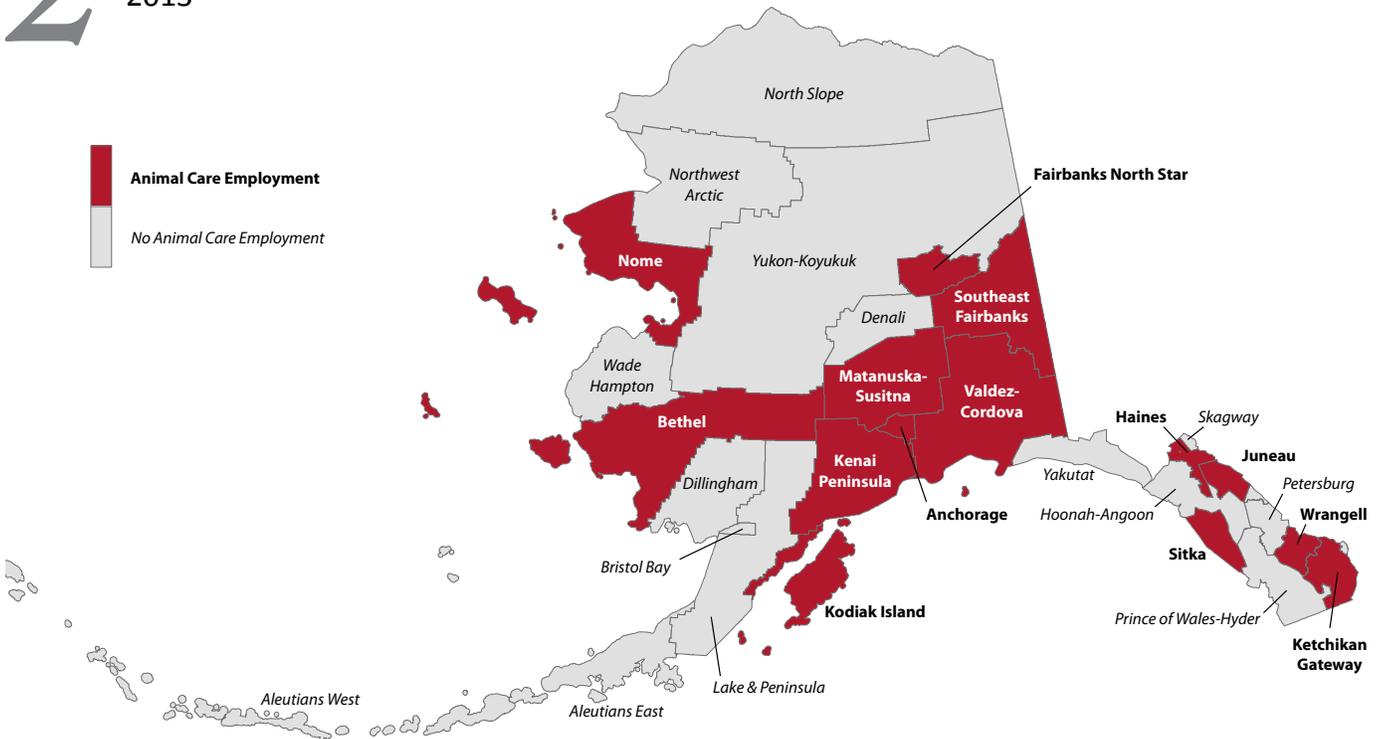
When the dogs aren’t racing, mushers are often the main care providers. Many mushers have the skills necessary to maintain the health of their teams, and they sometimes work with their veterinarians to develop a health plan. In some cases, several kennels will form a partnership with a veterinarian.

Rural animals sometimes travel

Like rural Alaskans, it’s typical for animals in rural areas

2 About Half of Alaska's Areas Have Animal Care Jobs

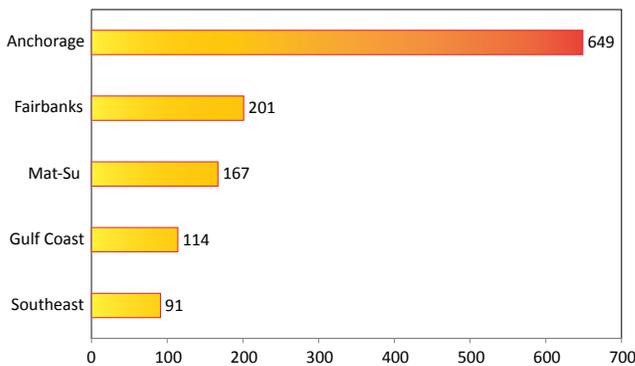
2013



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

3 Most Jobs Are In Anchorage

ANIMAL CARE INDUSTRY, 2013



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

to travel to a hub community for care. Workers also fly in periodically to areas with no established care providers. Between visits, owners and volunteer agencies provide care.

When animals are severely injured or sick, they can be transported to Fairbanks or Anchorage for treatment. The state's two largest cities have the highest concentrations of animal care providers as well as the vast majority of the industry's total jobs. Anchorage has the most by far at 649 and Fairbanks has 201. (See Exhibit 3.)

Most jobs are in veterinary services

Veterinary services make up 57 percent of all animal care jobs. (See Exhibit 4.) In 2013, Alaska had 379 licensed veterinarians and 210 licensed veterinarian technicians. This category has grown steadily since 2000.

Veterinary practices also employ assistants

and laboratory animal caretakers. They can fill and administer prescriptions, examine animals for illness or injury, collect laboratory specimens, and monitor animals recovering from surgery. Like other types of animal caretakers, they also feed the animals and clean and disinfect kennels and work areas.

Of the job categories Exhibit 4 shows, veterinary services paid the most on average at \$34,415 in 2013. Veterinarians, who made the highest wages in the industry at \$94,440, were a big part of that higher average. (See Exhibit 5.)

Jobs in pet and pet supply stores made up about 25 percent of the industry. This category had also been growing since 2000, but its job level has held steady since 2012. These jobs paid an average of \$24,851.

Pet care services, which includes independent groomers and boarders and their support staff, is the smallest slice of the industry at 18 percent, but it grew the most in recent years. These jobs paid the least on average, at \$18,187 in 2013. This is largely because retail workers overall tend to make less per hour and are more likely to work part-time.

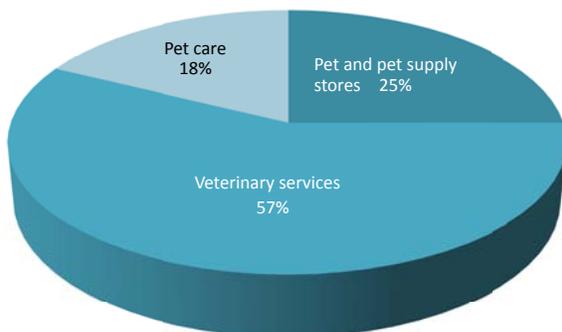
Notable but not included

Just as volunteers and the self-employed don't show up in these job numbers but play a major role in Alaska's animal care, several other types of animal care jobs are excluded from exhibits 1 through 4 because they're counted as part of government.

Animal control officers are best known for picking up strays but they also care for animals in their custody, arrange veterinary treatment, investigate reports of animal attacks and cruelty, prepare for court cases,

4 Mainly Veterinary Services

ANIMAL CARE INDUSTRY, 2013



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



These dogs, shown in the 2011 Iditarod, wear booties to protect their paws. Photo by Flickr user Mike Juvrud

and do public outreach on laws and regulations. Exhibits 5 and 6 give their average wages and projected occupational outlook. Alaska had about 50 animal control workers in 2012.

Other government animal care workers include the state veterinarian, those who work for government-run wildlife preserves such as the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center in Girdwood, and workers at the musk oxen farm at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Farm workers' employment is also counted elsewhere. Alaska isn't known for farming, but we do have small

Bringing animals to Alaska

There are some pets Alaskans just can't have. For example, it's illegal to domesticate wild animals or create wild-domestic hybrids. Some animals from out of state are also barred from entry. These restrictions protect Alaska's wildlife and human populations.

If domestic or domesticated hybrid animals got loose, they could out-compete the local wildlife for food or habitat. Some animals, such as sugar gliders (a small marsupial), are barred from entering Alaska because the risk of harm to the wildlife population is too high.

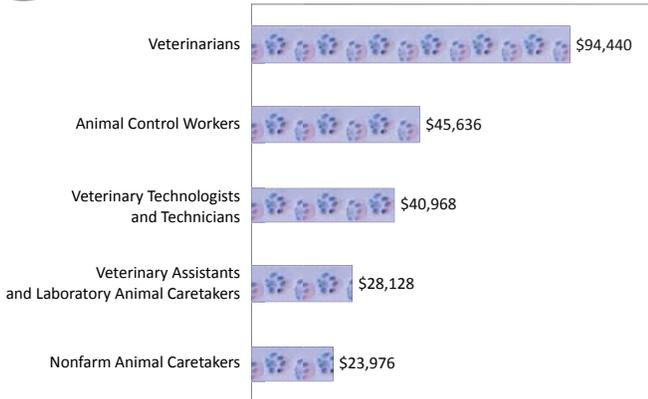
The accidental importation of ticks into Alaska is another major concern because of the diseases ticks carry.

Any animal coming to Alaska must have a health certificate that certifies the animal doesn't have any infectious or contagious diseases that could harm Alaska's wildlife or human populations.

Transporting animals to Alaska doesn't pose any additional health risks for the animals, but does pose additional complications due to distance and isolation.

5 Highest Wages for Vets

SELECT ANIMAL CARE JOBS, 2013



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

numbers of the cows, chickens, and pigs you'd find in the Lower 48 as well as farms that raise grouse, hares, elk, and other less common animals.

The industry will keep growing

Animal care employment in Alaska is projected to grow faster than average between 2012 and 2022. About 125 new jobs are projected and another 163 openings will be created as workers retire or leave the profession. (See Exhibit 6.)

Veterinary services is expected to grow the most. Although Alaska doesn't have a vet school, veterinary technicians can take vocational training in Juneau or earn a certificate in veterinary science through the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

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6 Projected Growth for Animal Care Jobs

SELECT ALASKA OCCUPATIONS, 2012 TO 2022

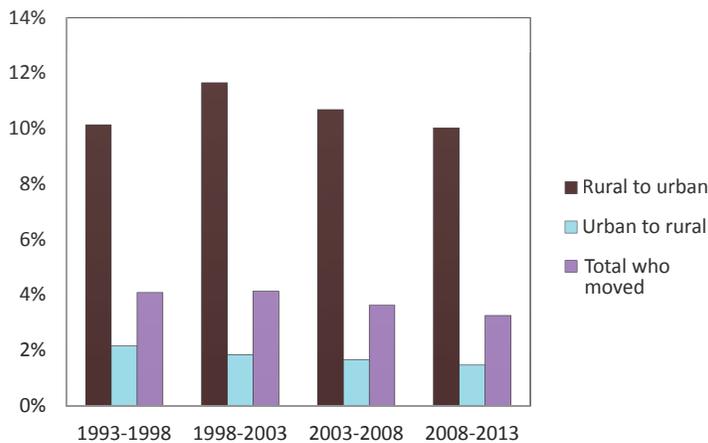
Occupation	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	Percent Growth	Job Growth
Animal Control Workers	52	53	2%	1
Veterinarians	125	146	17%	21
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	162	192	19%	30
Veterinary Assistants and Lab Animal Caretakers	224	261	17%	37
Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	232	268	16%	36
Total Projected Growth	795	920	16%	125

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

RURAL AND URBAN MIGRATION

Where people move and how it affects their employment

1 Percent Who Migrated ALASKA, 5-YEAR INCREMENTS, 1993-2013



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

By **DAVID HOWELL**

The tendency for people to move from rural to urban areas can be seen all over the world, as people move to population hubs seeking jobs, higher wages, or education. This phenomenon is not new, and in Alaska, rural areas generally recoup these population losses through higher birth rates.

Alaska's rates of migration from rural to urban areas have remained fairly stable over the past 20 years. (See Exhibit 1.)

Over five-year periods, an average of 7,700 adults move from a rural to an urban area in the state, or about 11 percent of the rural population.

'Rural' encompasses more areas than usual for this article

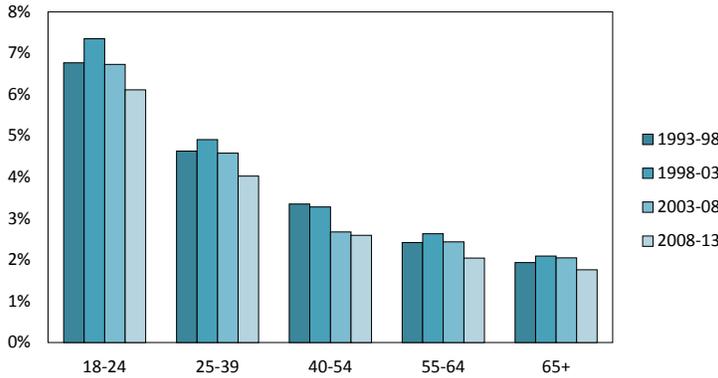
For this article, Alaska's urban areas are the five largest population centers: Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Juneau, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Together, these five areas are home to around 80 percent of the state's population. Though these areas encompass many small communities as well,

most of them are well-connected to the nearby cities.

"Rural" as used here refers to any place in Alaska outside these five areas. That means communities such as Ketchikan and Sitka, which are often considered urban in other contexts, are designated as rural for this article.

2 Younger People Migrate More

PERCENT WHO MIGRATED, BY AGE GROUP



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

But migration doesn't just happen in one direction. During the same five-year periods, an average of 4,400 urban residents relocated to a rural place, or about 2 percent of Alaska's urban population. That rate has also remained stable over the past 20 years.

It's important to note this article covers only those who moved between rural and urban areas within the state. Far more people move both in and out of Alaska each year or move from an urban to urban or rural to rural location.

Age patterns similar around the United States

Like the overall migration rates within the state, migration between rural and urban areas by age has been stable over the past 20 years. Movement between urban and rural areas follows the same age pattern here as it does nationwide, with young people moving at higher rates that taper as they age. (See Exhibit 2.)

Over the four periods, the two youngest age groups averaged 60 percent of all migrants but just 44 percent of the sample. The youngest age group was by far the most likely to move. Nearly 7 percent of all 18-to-24-year-olds moved between urban and rural Alaska during each of the five-year intervals.

Those in the two oldest age groups combined made up just under 12 percent of all migrants, but represented 20 percent of the sample.

How migrating affects finding employment

Though jobs factor in to many decisions to move, there wasn't a big difference in initial employment status for the movers between urban and rural Alaska, in either direction. On average, 4 percent of people *with* jobs and 3 percent of people *without* jobs moved over each of the four observed periods.

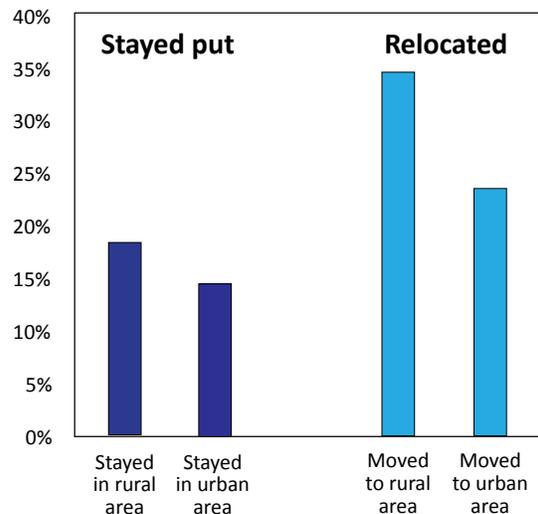
Among rural residents, 11 percent with jobs moved to an urban area while 9 percent of those without jobs moved. In urban areas, there was no difference in the percentage who moved based on employment status, at 2 percent for both.

Even though the migration of those with and without jobs is similar, migration affected the chances of finding a job for those without one, and this held true whether the move was rural-to-urban or urban-to-

3 Migrants More Likely to Find Jobs

NOT WORKING IN 2008 BUT EMPLOYED IN 2013

Percent working five years later



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

4

Wages for Migrants and Those Who Didn't Move

ALASKA, 1993 TO 2013

		Stayed Urban	Stayed Rural	Urban to Rural	Rural to Urban
1993-1998	Population	109,036	32,783	2,328	3,732
	1993 Wage	\$48,501	\$36,615	\$35,464	\$38,802
	1998 Wage	\$51,204	\$37,947	\$45,093	\$39,142
1998-2003	Population	118,265	34,488	2,212	4,624
	1998 Wage	\$45,560	\$33,855	\$34,198	\$36,921
	2003 Wage	\$51,922	\$37,714	\$44,924	\$40,962
2003-2008	Population	134,912	36,232	2,265	4,567
	2003 Wage	\$47,262	\$35,191	\$32,300	\$36,928
	2008 Wage	\$52,885	\$37,235	\$40,630	\$42,039
2008-2013	Population	145,708	35,978	2,352	3,777
	2008 Wage	\$49,360	\$35,572	\$34,067	\$37,343
	2013 Wage	\$52,284	\$36,920	\$39,127	\$40,716

Note: Population and wages are only for those working in both of the years of each period examined. All wages are in 2013 dollars.

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

rural. (See Exhibit 3.)

Among those who weren't working in the initial year of each period, 35 percent who migrated were employed in the final year; for those who stayed put, it was 19 percent.

Workers who migrated were also slightly more likely to be employed in both the beginning and end of each period, at 54 percent versus 52 percent for those who didn't move. Overall, over half of the people in each age group who were younger than 55 at the start of the periods were working at both the beginning and the end.

In general, the percentage of people working in both years of each period increased with time, but particularly the two oldest.

Moving for higher wages

Just as moving can increase a person's chances of finding a job, people often move in search of better jobs and higher wages. Average wages in urban areas are higher than in rural areas and the gap is increasing — urban wages were 27 percent higher in 1993 and 38

About these numbers

For this article, we looked at wage record data and Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend applications to examine how moves relate to jobs and wages.

This article only includes people who were 18 or older and applied for a PFD in the beginning and ending years of each of four intervals (1993 to 1998, 1998 to 2003, 2003 to 2008, and 2008 to 2013). To become eligible for a PFD, a person must have lived in Alaska for the previous calendar year. Because of this requirement, many military service members and short-term workers were excluded.

For the wage analysis portion of the study, we matched all adult PFD applicants to records of workers covered by Alaska unemployment insurance. We calculated average earnings by dividing total earnings by the number of workers. This does not account for seasonality or whether a worker was full-time or part-time.

Finally, to get a better sense of real value, we inflation-adjusted all wages to 2013 dollars, based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index for Anchorage (CPI-U).

percent higher in 2013.

Wages for the people who were identified for this article as either moving or staying put grew across the board. Somewhat surprisingly, though, the largest wage gains were for the group who left an urban area to move to a rural area. Despite that group's average wage increase of 24 percent, they continued to make less than the group who stayed in urban areas. The smallest increases were for people who stayed in rural areas.

Wages and the likelihood of moving

People's relative earnings have a mixed effect on how likely they are to migrate. Rural residents earning higher-than-average wages were slightly more likely than others to move to an urban area. The reverse is true in urban areas, where residents making lower-than-average wages are slightly more likely to move to a rural area.

Overall, workers who didn't move earned more than workers who did, but the wage difference shrunk over time. The nonmovers earned 24 percent more at the start of the five-year periods and 18 percent more by the end.

The tendency for young people to move more gets some of the credit for the bump in movers' wages, as people get their biggest wage increases while young.

David Howell is a demographer in Juneau. Reach him at (907) 465-5970 or david.howell@alaska.gov.

GOVERNMENT JOBS BY STATE

How population, geography affect state and local employment levels

By **CONOR BELL**

The four smallest states by population are also the four states with the most state and local government jobs per capita. At 8.2 state and local government jobs for every 100 people, Alaska is second on the list behind Wyoming's 8.9 and just ahead of North Dakota's 8.1. (See Exhibit 1.)

Because state and local governments provide a range of basic services, states tend to have a certain minimum level of government regardless of population.

But Alaska's small population isn't the only reason its concentration of public jobs is relatively high. Alaska is an outlier in terms of its size, geographic location, and climate, all of which create extra cost in providing government services.

A younger, larger state

Alaska is a young state that is still building its infrastructure, which often has a shorter life span due to the extreme climate. Not every project sinks into the ground each spring like the North Slope's Hicel Highway did, but the weather takes its toll.

Sheer acreage also plays a role in the demand for government. Jobs in agencies such as the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Fish and Game manage economic and recreational use of Alaska's vast area.

The state's 665,400 square miles lead not only to more natural resource jobs, but also to higher levels of social services employment. Providing services becomes more labor-intensive when increased time and resources are necessary to reach remote populations. Though

1 Small States Have More STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, 2013

State	Gov jobs per 100 people	Population
1 Wyoming	8.9	582,658
2 Alaska	8.2	735,132
3 North Dakota	8.1	723,393
4 Vermont	7.3	626,630
5 Nebraska	7.3	1,868,516
6 Kansas	7.1	2,893,957
7 South Dakota	7.0	844,877
8 New Mexico	6.9	2,085,287
9 Montana	6.8	1,015,165
10 Oklahoma	6.8	3,850,568
U.S. Average	5.5	314,112,078
41 Georgia	5.2	9,992,167
42 Tennessee	5.1	6,495,978
43 Indiana	5.0	6,570,902
44 Arizona	5.0	6,626,624
45 California	5.0	38,332,521
46 Michigan	4.9	9,895,622
47 Pennsylvania	4.6	12,773,801
48 Rhode Island	4.6	1,051,511
49 Nevada	4.4	2,790,136
50 Florida	4.3	19,552,860

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

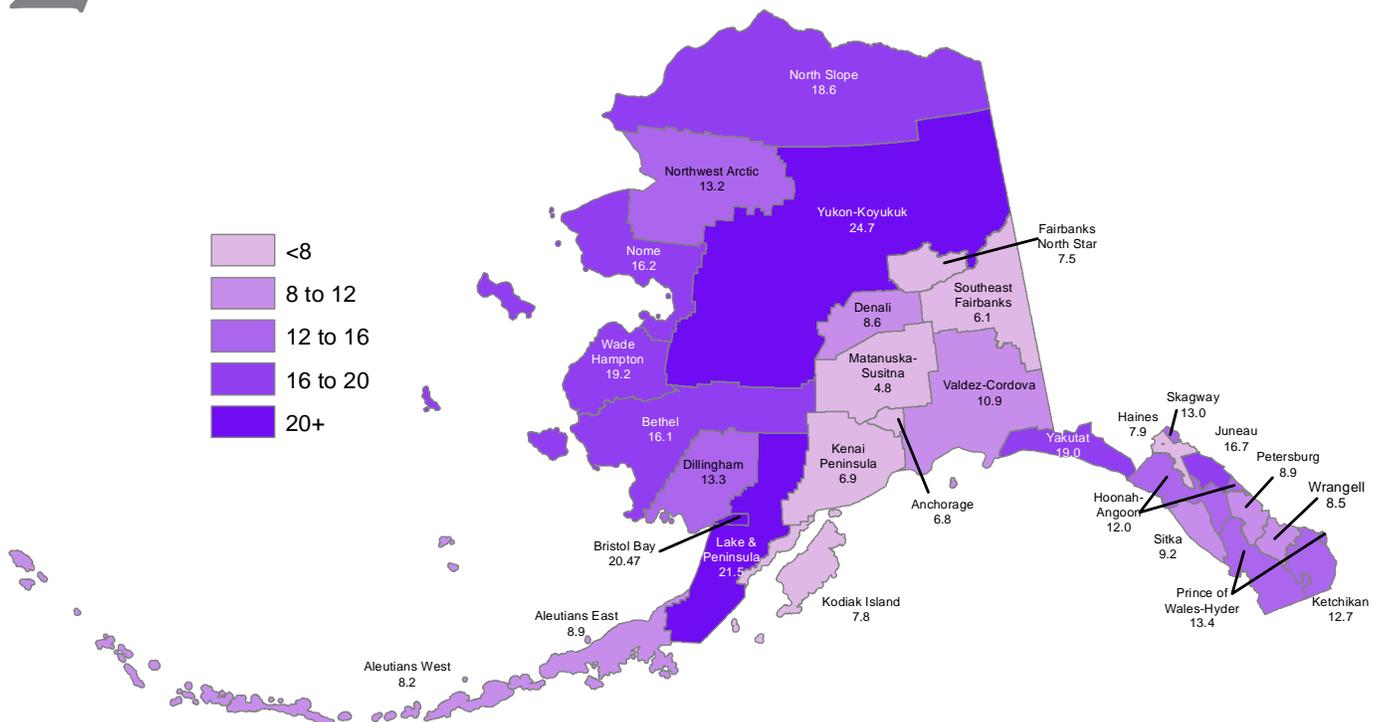
rural areas exist throughout the United States, the difficulty of access to remote Alaska is unmatched.

Educational services make up 45 percent of state and local government employment in Alaska — significantly less than the U.S. average of 55 percent. But because

2

Rural Areas Have Higher Share to Provide Basic Services

ALASKA, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT JOBS PER 100 PEOPLE, 2013



Note: Excludes federal government

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

schools are spread across small villages, they require more staff per student than in urban areas. This pushes Alaska's level of per capita school employment above most states, though not to the top of the stack. Alaska was seventh in the nation in 2013, with 3.7 school jobs per 100 residents. The national average was 3.0.

Though most states with small populations rank high for per capita government employment, Rhode Island is an outlier. Rhode Island has the smallest land area of all states, which makes delivery of its government services easier and more cost-efficient.

Different types of oversight here

The following services state and local government provide in Alaska differ from national norms:

- The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities operates an extensive ferry system between communities not generally connected by roads.
- The Alaska Railroad Corporation, which is owned by the state, is the only government-run, full-service railroad in the country. It provided 667 jobs in 2013.

- Tribal government, a component of local government, is more prominent in Alaska than in most states. Tribes provide various benefits to members including employment training, counseling, and other family services. Tribal governments employed 3,643 in 2013, making those jobs 14 times more common here than in the nation as a whole.
- The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services runs the Alaska Pioneer Homes, senior assisted living facilities with more than 500 beds.

Alaska also receives more money per capita from the federal government; 24 percent of Alaska's fiscal year 2014 operating budget was from federal funds. Although the money is federal, it supports a large number of state and local government jobs.

State assumes several traditionally local roles

Alaska had 3.3 state government jobs and 5.0 local government positions for every 100 residents in 2013. While there are more local than state jobs, state government's concentration ranks higher here than in

most of the nation.

Alaska doesn't have counties, and county governments in the contiguous U.S. tend to hold more responsibility than Alaska's boroughs. Much of Alaska isn't even organized into boroughs.

Alaska is second only to Hawaii for per capita state employment, but ranks seventh for local government because the state provides services in Alaska that are typically left to local governments elsewhere. For example:

- Alaska State Troopers and Village Public Safety Officers do work that would otherwise fall to local police departments. Rural areas in Alaska often don't have the population necessary to demand a police force, or they lack the revenue to fund one.
- Alaska's court system is less locally run than in most states, where much of the legal caseload is carried by county courts.
- The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities operates the major airports in Anchorage and Fairbanks, as well as 247 rural airports. The Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport has the second-highest landed cargo weight of any airport in the nation.

Wages lower than private sector

State and local government wages in Alaska ranked 12th in the nation during 2013. (See Exhibit 3.) At \$50,039, these wages were 8 percent above the national average. New Jersey had the highest average state and local government wage at \$60,755.

Higher wages here are partially undercut by Alaska's high living costs. According to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, Alaska had the fourth-highest cost of living in 2014.

State and local government jobs in Alaska pay less on average than federal and private sector jobs. The average annual wage for state and local government was \$1,528 lower than the average of all jobs, though a significant portion of government compensation takes the form of benefit packages that wage data don't capture.

The effect of the recession

Alaska had the sixth-fastest growing population from 2007 to 2013. The top five fastest-growing states during that period were also all oil-producing.

Alaska weathered the last decade's recession remarkably well, sustaining one year of minor job losses in

3 How Wages Rank

STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, 2013

	State	Avg Wage
1	New Jersey	\$60,755
2	California	\$58,009
3	Rhode Island	\$57,768
4	Massachusetts	\$56,393
5	Connecticut	\$55,676
6	New York	\$55,207
7	Delaware	\$51,512
8	Maryland	\$51,457
9	Washington	\$50,470
10	Nevada	\$50,143
12	Alaska	\$50,039
	U.S. Average	\$46,498
41	West Virginia	\$37,956
42	Arkansas	\$37,910
43	Indiana	\$37,746
44	Maine	\$37,560
45	Missouri	\$37,430
46	Oklahoma	\$37,307
47	Kansas	\$35,222
48	South Dakota	\$34,126
49	Mississippi	\$33,915
50	Idaho	\$33,722

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

About these numbers

This article only includes workers covered by unemployment insurance, which represents the vast majority of state and local government employment. Government jobs not covered are typically appointed or elected positions or temporary university jobs. In Alaska, this was an additional 3,574 jobs in 2013.

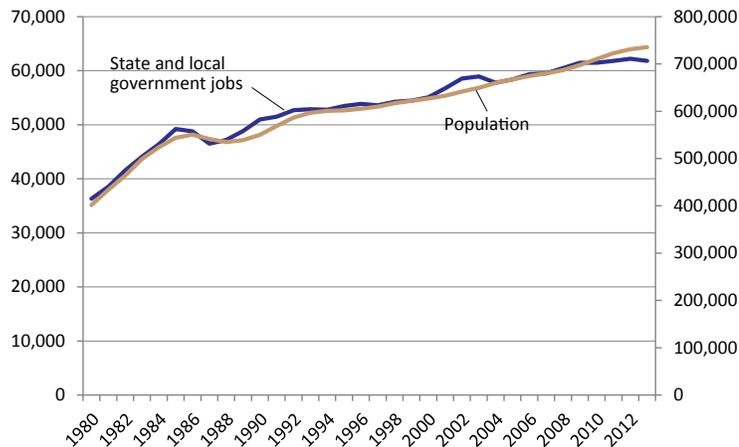
We also excluded 1,261 government hospital jobs, which tend to provide services similar to the private sector and whose employment levels vary widely from state to state. Alaska has relatively few of those jobs, and if they were included, Alaska would still rank second after Wyoming for per capita government employment.

2009 and reaching a new record job count in 2010.

Because state and local government jobs grew slower than the population in Alaska during that period, per capita government employment declined. State government added about 2,200 jobs during those six years (see Exhibit 4), but per capita government employment

4 Population Outpaces Public Job Growth

ALASKA, 1980 TO 2013



Note: Excludes tribal government

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

decreased by about half a job per 100 residents. Only Wyoming, West Virginia, and Massachusetts increased their per capita government employment over that period.

Government employment tends to react slower to recessions and recoveries than the private sector. The U.S. didn't begin losing per capita government jobs until 2009, but the decline continued through 2013. Private employers reacted faster, shedding 3.5 jobs per 100 residents by 2010. The nation's private sector has been recovering since 2011, both in absolute and per capita terms, though it hasn't yet returned to pre-recession levels.

Levels highest in rural areas

State and local government aren't evenly distributed

across the state. The Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna area had 54 percent of the state's population in 2013 but only 41 percent of state and local government jobs. (See Exhibit 2.)

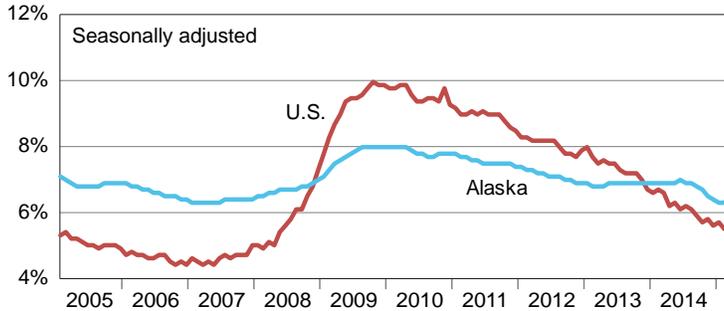
The highest per capita government employment was in rural boroughs and census areas, where Alaska's geographic and population challenges are exacerbated. Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area took the top spot, with 24.6 jobs per 100 residents. It has the largest land area of any county-equivalent in the U.S. as well as the lowest population density.

In Southeast Alaska, only Haines was below the state-wide average. Juneau, home to most state agency headquarters, had per capita government employment of 16.7.

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Employment Scene

1 Unemployment Rates JANUARY 2005 TO MARCH 2015



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

2 Unemployment Rates BOROUGHES AND CENSUS AREAS

	Prelim. 3/15	Revised 1/15	3/14
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
United States	5.5	5.5	6.6
Alaska Statewide	6.5	6.3	6.9
NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
United States	5.6	5.8	6.8
Alaska Statewide	7.5	7.6	7.6
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	6.4	6.4	6.3
Municipality of Anchorage	5.6	5.6	5.5
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	9.3	9.2	9.1
Gulf Coast Region	9.1	9.2	9.0
Kenai Peninsula Borough	9.5	9.7	9.2
Kodiak Island Borough	5.1	5.2	5.4
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	12.4	12.9	12.8
Interior Region	7.4	7.8	7.7
Denali Borough	19.5	22.2	22.0
Fairbanks North Star Borough	6.1	6.5	6.2
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	14.1	14.6	15.8
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	20.9	21.9	22.2
Northern Region	11.4	11.7	11.9
Nome Census Area	13.3	13.4	13.2
North Slope Borough	5.6	5.9	5.7
Northwest Arctic Borough	17.6	17.8	19.3
Southeast Region	8.3	8.9	8.7
Haines Borough	14.8	16.8	14.5
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	23.0	23.9	22.9
Juneau, City and Borough	5.5	5.6	5.7
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	9.0	9.4	9.5
Petersburg Census Area	12.4	13.0	12.6
Prince of Wales-Hyder CA	16.1	17.0	16.5
Sitka, City and Borough	5.2	6.2	5.8
Skagway, Municipality	21.2	25.3	23.5
Wrangell, City and Borough	9.6	11.1	9.6
Yakutat, City and Borough	10.9	11.7	13.0
Southwest Region	11.9	11.9	12.5
Aleutians East Borough	3.2	3.4	4.2
Aleutians West Census Area	2.6	2.6	3.4
Bethel Census Area	16.4	17.0	17.2
Bristol Bay Borough	20.8	20.1	18.0
Dillingham Census Area	10.1	10.1	10.7
Lake and Peninsula Borough	18.0	18.1	20.9
Wade Hampton Census Area	26.6	25.8	26.2

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



This month in Trends history

The current recession's breadth is one of several things that make it different from the last few. During the recessions of 2001 and 1990-91, and even the severe recession of 1980-82, parts of the country continued to grow despite the national downturn. That looks increasingly unlikely this time.

MAY 2009

In 2002, the nation lost nearly 1.5 million jobs, but 12 states including Alaska still registered job growth that year. By that yardstick, the recession of 1990-91 was even milder. Nearly half the states, again including Alaska, didn't suffer net job losses in 1991 or 1992. Contrast that with the more severe recession of 1980-82 when only eight states, Alaska among them, avoided a year with net job losses.

In the current recession, 30 states already lost annual jobs in 2008 and all but three — Alaska, Louisiana, and North Dakota — were below year-ago levels in March.

Editor's note: Alaska did lose jobs in 2009, but only for one year. Growth resumed in 2010 and job levels reached a new record.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development has published *Alaska Economic Trends* as far back as 1961 and other labor market summaries since the late 1940s. Historical *Trends* articles are available at labor.alaska.gov/trends as far back as 1978, and complete issues are available from 1994.

Safety Minute

How to protect yourself when working with animals

Workers in the animal care industry face unusual hazards. Through education and training, employees can reduce the risk of bites and scratches while ensuring humane animal treatment. Follow these safety tips whenever working with animals:

- Approach animals from the front to avoid their blind spots, and use slow and deliberate movements. Cornering, teasing, poking, or hurting animals can cause them to react violently. Be extra cautious when handling animals that are sick, hurt, or are new mothers; these animals and their pens should be labeled to ensure everyone understands the additional risk.
- Stay alert when handling animals and watch for warning signs of aggression and fear such as raised fur, flattened ears, twitching tails, or bared teeth. It's critical to know the behavior of the breed you're working with.
- Be aware of zoonotic diseases, symptoms of an infected animal, and how transmission can occur. Examples of transmissible diseases include ringworm, salmonella, herpes B, rabies, hepatitis, and tuberculosis.
- Perform job hazard assessments to determine whether protective equipment is necessary. This may include safety glasses, coveralls, latex

gloves, leather gloves, ear plugs/muffs, or steel-toed footwear.

- Inspect animal handling areas for potential hazards such as sharp edges, slippery floors, and other structural hazards.
- Always have a clear exit path. Don't allow yourself to get cornered.
- Properly restrain animals to avoid sprains, strains, and slip-and-fall accidents. When appropriate, use restraints such as halters, hobbles, or muzzles.
- Use extreme caution when giving injections and handling sharps around animals. Sudden animal movements could cause a stick injury. Dispose of medical equipment appropriately, such as in sharps containers.

The Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Training program provides free and confidential workplace evaluations and can help you develop safety and health programs for your business. Call (800) 656-4972 for assistance.

Safety Minute is written by the Labor Standards and Safety Division, Alaska Occupational Health and Safety Consultation and Training Program of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Employer Resources

Rapid Response available when employers face layoffs

Rapid Response is a federally funded program that serves communities, businesses, and workers facing economic impacts, industry changes, and natural disasters that may lead to layoffs. Layoffs affect more than just the employee and the employer — they can have a domino effect on entire communities.

Rapid Response services are flexible and designed to bridge economic and workforce development. The program brokers partnerships and tailors solutions for businesses and workers during any stage of the business cycle to help employers and individuals in transition succeed.

If layoffs occur, Rapid Response services for workers can include:

- Career counseling and job search assistance.
- Resume preparation and interviewing skills workshops.
- Information on the local labor market.
- Information on unemployment insurance benefits.
- Referral to education and training opportunities

- Information on health benefits and pensions.

Services for workers benefit employers through:

- Higher productivity and worker morale and lower absenteeism during layoffs due to reduced stress.
- Lower unemployment insurance costs as workers are re-employed more quickly when services are begun prior to layoffs.
- Decreased likelihood of work disruptions if workers feel there are other employment options.

Rapid Response teams understand the often confidential nature of layoffs, and will work with the company to ensure confidentiality.

Rapid Response can also help employers who need additional training or connect them with small business loan agencies or other resources.

For more information on Rapid Response services, please contact Lisa Mielke, statewide Rapid Response coordinator, at (907) 465-6275 or lisa.mielke@alaska.gov.

Program helps workers who are affected by foreign trade

Trade Adjustment Assistance is a federally funded program that assists American workers who have lost or may lose their jobs as a result of foreign trade. This program seeks to provide adversely affected workers with reemployment, training, job search, and relocation opportunities to get them back into the workforce as soon as possible.

Employees of a business affected by foreign trade, either directly or indirectly, may file a petition to the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. A labor organization representative,

the employer, or a Job Center representative may also file.

If the petition is approved, workers laid off by the certified employer may apply for individual benefits to meet their reemployment needs.

To learn more about TAA and for assistance with the TAA petition process, please contact Heidi Carlson at heidi.carlson@alaska.gov or (907) 465-1805.

Employer Resources is written by the Employment Security Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.