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Prince of Wales Island

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Tony Knowles
Governor of Alaska

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Prince of Wales Island

by Neal Gilbertsen
and Dan Robinson
Labor Economists

Timber has fallen and fish prices are slippery, leaving fewer jobs and economic uncertainty

Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska's Alexander Archipelago is the third largest island in the United States. With an area of 2,231 square miles and a coastline 900 miles long, it is larger than the state of Delaware. Its southern tip lies within sight of the Canadian border, and its northern extremity lies west of Wrangell.

The Tlingit people were the first inhabitants of Prince of Wales Island. Their main settlement appears to have been Klawock, though archaeological finds dating to thousands of years ago have recently been excavated in the vicinity of Coffman Cove.

Haidas from the Queen Charlotte Islands established themselves on the island around the time Europeans arrived in the area. Both Kasaan and Hydaburg began as Haida communities. Hydaburg was established after the earlier community of Kaigani was ravaged by smallpox.

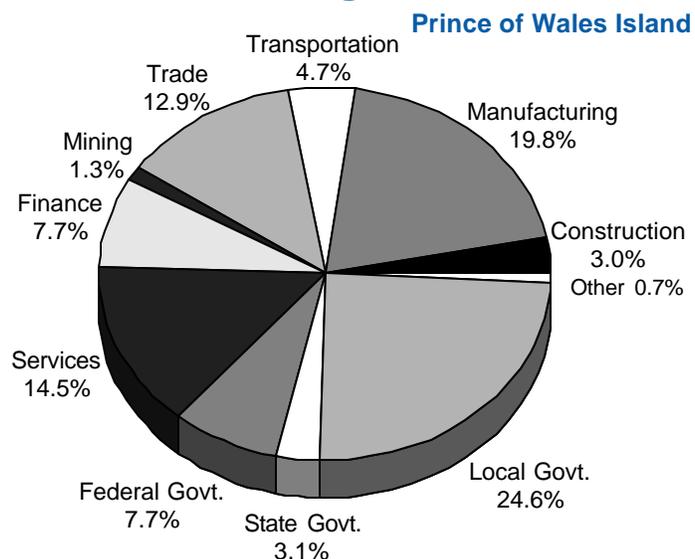
Three rival European nations explored the Northwest Coast, and Prince of Wales is where their efforts collided. George Vancouver renamed the island for the heir to the British throne, while earlier Spanish names remain to dot the outer coast: Cordova Bay, Noyes Island, Heceta Island, the Gulf of Esquibel, and Bucareli Bay. The Russians contributed Kosciusko Island and Kashevaroff Pass, named after a half Tlingit officer in the Russian Navy. Late-coming American fur traders added Meares Pass and Dixon Entrance to the polyglot nomenclature.

Prince of Wales was an early center of economic activity in Alaska. Alaska's first gold rush took place in 1854 at Gold Harbor located on nearby Dahl Island, and its first salmon cannery opened at Klawock in 1878. Copper, lead, zinc, uranium, limestone and marble have all been mined at various times in the island's history, mostly early in the twentieth century.

Timber's economic role has declined

The Tongass National Forest, a lush rainforest of western hemlock and Sitka spruce, covers much

Nearly a Quarter of Wages Came from local government in 2000



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

of Prince of Wales. Ketchikan Pulp Company turned this rich natural resource into a major industry when it opened in the 1950s. Timber harvesting quickly became the centerpiece of the island's economy. Extensive logging activity continued until the mid-1990s when the Ketchikan pulp mill closed. A legacy of this era is the network of U.S. Forest Service logging roads, more miles of them than in all the rest of southeast Alaska.

Timber harvests, at a greatly reduced level, continue to play an important role in the island's economy. Manufacturing, almost all of which is related to the timber industry, accounted for 19.8% of all Prince of Wales wages in 2000. (See Exhibit 1.) As recently as 1994 timber wages made up 32.8% of all wages.

The volume of timber harvested from the Tongass National Forest has declined 75 percent since 1990. Timber industry employment is at its lowest point in 30 years. The loss of 1,700 timber-related jobs throughout Southeast has had a staggering

effect on local economies throughout the region, including those on Prince of Wales.

Two broad trends lie behind the decline in logging. One is that the large timber corporations have shifted their attention from domestic sources to the more profitable forests in the third world. The other is a reassessment of the propriety of commercial clearcutting in the publicly-owned national forests. These trends contribute to lowered prospects for logging in the Tongass.

Commercial fishing a cornerstone of the island's economy

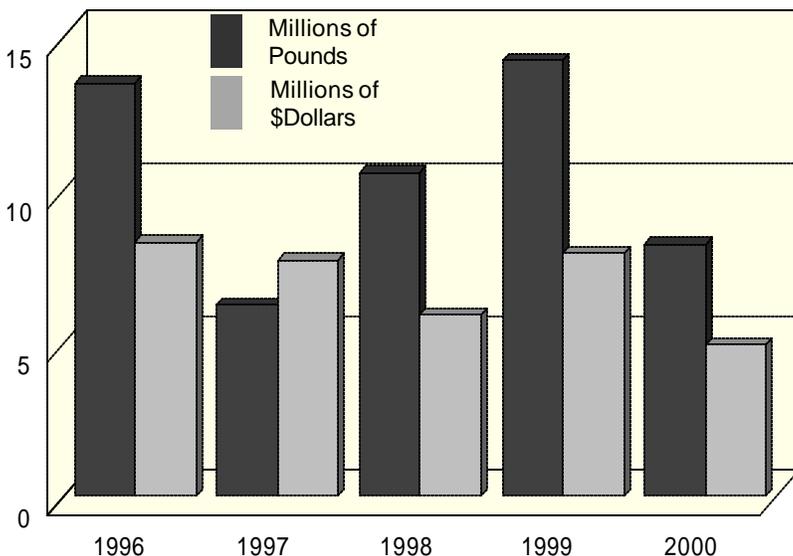
Prince of Wales has strong economic ties to the fishing industry. Salmon, halibut, herring, shellfish and other seafood delicacies are all harvested or grown in waters surrounding the island.

In 2000, 416 individuals held 835 limited entry permits in the Prince of Wales/Outer Ketchikan Census Area. Of those permits, 374 were actually fished, resulting in landings of 8,198,601 pounds of seafood valued at \$4,935,270. (See Exhibit 2.) On-island production (excluding Metlakatla) saw 337 permits fished for a harvest of 6,625,384 pounds, valued at \$4,515,501.

The salmon purse seine fishery provided the largest single harvest in terms of poundage with 2,968,690 pounds landed in 2000. In terms of value, the salmon power troll fishery continued to lead all industry segments with a catch valued at \$1,073,533. This was followed closely by earnings of \$951,105 in the shrimp pot fishery and \$522,565 in the geoduck clam fishery.

Depressed ex-vessel prices for salmon and herring have been somewhat offset by increased shrimp harvests and development in the dive fisheries for geoduck clams, sea urchins and sea cucumbers. The 2000 salmon season saw a nearly 40 percent decline in value from the 1999 season, with the purse seine and power troll fisheries especially hard hit.

2 Catch by Resident Fishers On Prince of Wales Island



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

Preliminary reports on the 2001 salmon season indicate a dramatic improvement over 2000. Purse seine harvests in Districts 2, 3, and especially 4 seem strong, while gillnet catches in District 6 have been very good. Strong early showings of coho would indicate a good season for trollers as well. While ex-vessel prices remain low, increased volume should lead to higher earnings.

Most of the harvest originating in Prince of Wales waters is taken by off-island fishers and transported for processing to Ketchikan, Wrangell and Petersburg. These fishers contribute to the local economy when they purchase fuel and supplies and seek recreation, especially in the city of Craig. Craig also has three processing facilities that provide year-round employment for local workers.

Craig is the island's largest community and home to the largest number of fishers. In 2000, 117 Craig residents fished 211 limited entry permits and landed over three million pounds of seafood valued at \$2,652,409, amounting to 58% of the on-island total. Fisheries are also important to Point Baker, Hydaburg, Edna Bay, Klawock, and other communities on the island.

In terms of harvesting sector employment, the combined fisheries provided a total of 564 jobs for local residents. Troll fisheries were the largest employment source with 90 power troll permits and 42 hand troll permits fished in 2000.

Fishing lodges anchor the visitor industry

The richness of Prince of Wales fishing grounds makes the island a dream destination for sport fishers. Guided saltwater sport fishing has developed into a thriving industry. The island's many fishing lodges and burgeoning charter boat fleet suggest that the industry has the potential for even further growth.

The rehabilitated Waterfall Cannery remains the largest lodge on the island and the island's fifth

largest employer. (See Exhibit 3.) During peak summer months the lodge has more than 100 employees on the payroll. Recreational fishers are also attracted to the several lodges in and around Coffman Cove and Whale Pass where they can fish for salmon, halibut, and other saltwater species, or steelhead in the island's freshwater streams.

The leading employer on the island is A&M, Inc. a grocery chain with stores in Craig, Klawock and Thorne Bay. The top 21 employers include seven from the public sector, 11 from the private sector, and two Native entities.

Average Annual Employment Prince of Wales Largest Employers—2000 3

Rank	Firm	Employment
1	A&M, Inc.	93
2	Craig City School District	79
3	City of Craig	55
4	U.S.D.A. Forest Service	50
5	Klawock City School District	40
5	Waterfall Group, Ltd.	40
7	Shaan Sheet, Inc.	33
8	Viking Lumber Company, Inc.	31
9	Klawock Heenya Corp.	30
10	Ruth Ann's Restaurant	27
10	Hydaburg City School District	27
12	City of Klawock	26
13	Ketchikan Pulp Mill	25
14	Southeast Island School District	23
15	Alaska Kiku Fisheries, LLC	19
16	SE Alaska Regional Health Corp.	18
17	Craig Bar & Liquor Store, Inc.	16
18	Southeast Stevedoring Corp.	15
19	Burger King	14
19	JES Corporation	14

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

Karst, caves and spelunkers

Of growing interest to visitors is the extensive cave system on the northern end of the island. A topography known as karst, characterized by caves, sinkholes, and underground streams, covers approximately 700 square miles. Exploration of the cave system on Prince of Wales is just beginning, but it may be one of the largest networks of caves in the country. So far, the Thorne Bay Ranger District has developed a 1,300-foot access trail into the El Capitan Cave, and a 250-foot trail and viewing deck near Cavern Lake Cave for the benefit of spelunkers.

Prince of Wales has no shortage of roads

Unlike many Southeast Alaska communities, which rely on air and water transportation for links with each other and the outside world, Prince of Wales has an extensive network of roads that connect most of the island's towns and villages. The logging roads built by the Forest Service and maintained by grants from the Federal Highway

Administration make it easy for residents and visitors to move around the island for recreational opportunities and to exchange goods and services. In terms of possible economic development, this unique island-wide road system could prove to be a major asset.

The extensive road system on Prince of Wales is also being considered by SEATrails (Southeast Alaska trail system) for inclusion in an innovative project to create a network of hiking, biking, kayaking, and canoeing routes connected by the Alaska Marine Highway ferry system. The idea is to provide a connecting route for independent travelers who want to see all that Southeast Alaska has to offer.

Improved ferry access coming soon

While roads connect most communities on Prince of Wales, the Alaska Marine Highway System is an important link to other Southeast communities. The system provides daily ferry service to Prince of Wales in the summer and limited service in the winter. The state has considered several plans to improve ferry service, but has yet to make a

4 Employment by Industry 1990–2000

Prince of Wales Island

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Total Industries	1,588	1,580	1,499	1,436	1,480	1,622	1,593	1,625	1,516	1,644	1,359
Construction	68	50	48	50	61	89	71	78	53	76	39
Manufacturing	609	551	476	340	344	444	296	331	263	243	202
Trans/Comm/Util	131	134	141	148	149	147	155	147	152	125	61
Trade	199	208	214	228	252	250	320	329	305	301	286
Finance/Insur/RE	60	47	58	62	51	45	42	57	93	180	71
Services & Misc.	157	185	133	170	179	198	227	231	239	255	274
Government	364	405	429	438	444	449	482	452	411	464	426
Federal	97	104	122	128	121	110	116	103	64	66	69
State	30	32	34	27	28	26	27	28	29	28	28
Local	237	269	273	283	295	314	339	321	318	371	324

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

definite commitment to a particular approach. Meanwhile, the Inter-Island Ferry Authority (IFA), a group of six Southeast communities (Coffman Cove, Craig, Klawock, Petersburg, Thorne Bay, and Wrangell) that is supplementing marine highway service, is prepared to begin twice-daily, year-round shuttle service between Ketchikan and Hollis starting in December of this year. The IFA also has plans to start ferry service between Coffman Cove, Petersburg and Wrangell.

Construction projects

Though construction employment was down significantly in 2000 (see Exhibit 4), a significant number of projects are under way, thanks in part to a variety of federal grants. Examples are the U.S. Department of Agriculture grant awarded to the Craig Community Association to complete its new building, and the Federal Housing Health and Safety grant being used by the Klawock Cooperative Association to repair and upgrade a number of tribal homes. Also, the village of Kasaan is building a six-plex and a new tribal lodge.

With an eye to the future of the construction industry on Prince of Wales, a non-profit training program is being implemented to develop a skilled local workforce. The program, called the Alaska Works Partnership, is funded by a federal grant through the Denali Commission. It works with the island's Native associations to create apprenticeship opportunities on the tribes' construction projects. The benefits of having more skilled local construction workers will include higher earnings for island residents and the retention of more dollars in the Prince of Wales economy.

Population up and down again

Remarkably, Prince of Wales' 2000 population is just one person more than it was in 1990. (See Exhibit 5.) A look at the mid-point of the last decade reveals that the population has not been static, but has fluctuated substantially and returned to its 1990 level.

Total population on the island rose to 5,154 in 1995. From 1990 to 1995, Craig's population grew 54.4%, making it the state's fastest growing city during that period. Since 1995, the city's population decreased from 1,946 to its 2000 level of 1,397, more than a 28 percent decline. However, a change in the census boundaries for Craig exaggerates the city's 1995 to 2000 population loss. This same technical change accounts for the large growth in the Balance of POW category shown in Exhibit 5. Almost all of the Balance of POW growth is in areas within Craig and in areas commonly regarded as part of the city of Craig. Many of the island's logging communities have completely disappeared, and the majority of Prince of Wales communities show a population decline since 1995.

Population Same as in 1990 5 Prince of Wales Island

	April 1990	April 2000	Percent Change
Prince of Wales	4,652	4,653	0
Craig	1,260	1,397	10.8
Klawock	722	854	18.3
Thorne Bay	581	557	-4.1
Balance of POW	430	746	73.49
Hydaburg	384	382	-1.0
Coffman Cove	186	199	7.0
Naukati Bay	93	135	45.2
Hollis	111	139	25.2
Whale Pass	75	58	-22.7
Edna Bay	86	49	-43.1
Polk Inlet	135	0	-100
Port Protection	62	63	1.6
Point Baker	39	35	-10.3
Kasaan	54	39	-27.8
Port Alice	30	0	-100
Labouchere Bay	149	0	-100
Dora Bay	57	0	-100
Long Island	198	0	-100

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

6 Statistics from the 2000 Census

Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan C.A.

The census area for Prince of Wales Island also includes Metlakatla and Hyder, which have a combined population of 1,393. (See Exhibit 6.) The Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area has some interesting differences from the state of Alaska as a whole. At 54.5%, the percentage of males is notably higher than the state's at 51.7%. The percentage of Alaska Natives and American Indians is also significantly higher, although many of the Alaska Natives are concentrated in the predominately Native village of Metlakatla.

A higher percentage of people own their homes in this area than in the state as a whole, and there is a substantially lower rate of vacant housing units. The age distribution of area residents and average household and family size are remarkably close to statewide numbers.

Prince of Wales' future uncertain

With a declining manufacturing sector and fewer jobs in recent years (see Exhibit 4), Prince of Wales is in a transitional period. The services sector of the economy, of which the visitor industry is a significant part, has grown consistently since the early 1990s, and opportunities for continued growth appear to exist in this area. Major changes that have taken place in the economic climate and the political climate surrounding the timber industry in the national forest make its role in the Prince of Wales economy a smaller one than in the past.

The island's economy faces challenges in the coming years. Nevertheless, it possesses assets. The Native association apprentice program should augment the island's skilled workforce. The introduction of twice-daily ferry service between Hollis and Ketchikan will facilitate interaction between the communities while lowering transportation and freight costs. Finally, the addition of a northern route shuttle ferry should further stimulate this exchange and contribute to Prince of Wales' already impressive transportation network.

	Prince of Wales Outer Ketchikan CA ¹	Alaska
Total Population	6,146	626,932
A higher percentage was male . . .		
Percent Male	54.5	51.7
Similar age distribution . . .		
Percent under 5 years old	7.4	7.6
Percent school age population (5 to 17)	23.6	22.8
Percent adult workforce population (18 to 64)	63.3	63.9
Percent seniors (65 and over)	5.7	5.7
A more bi-racial population . . .		
Percent White ²	59.6	74.0
Percent Alaska Native and American Indian	45.3	19.0
Percent Hispanic (of all races)	1.7	4.1
Percent Asian	1.2	5.2
Percent Black	0.4	4.3
A higher percentage owned than rented . . .		
Owner-occupied housing units	69.8	62.5
Renter-occupied housing units	30.2	37.5
Fewer vacant housing units . . .		
Occupied housing units, percent	74.0	62.5
Vacant housing units, percent	26.0	37.5
Slightly smaller household and family size . . .		
Average household size	2.68	2.74
Average family size	3.25	3.28

¹Includes Metlakatla and other small communities not on Prince of Wales Island

²Numbers add to more than 100% because individuals may report more than one race

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

21st Century Workplace Skills

by Brynn Keith
and Jack Cannon
Labor Economists

The best jobs in the future will require a broad range of workplace skills

Between 1998 and 2008, employment in Alaska is projected to rise from 292,431 to 341,090,¹ an increase of more than 48,000 jobs. Alaska's labor market of the future will offer a wide variety of employment opportunities at all levels of education and training attainment and earnings potential. Yet, not all jobs are created equal. Alaskans with the most education, training, and workplace skills and abilities will enjoy the best opportunities.

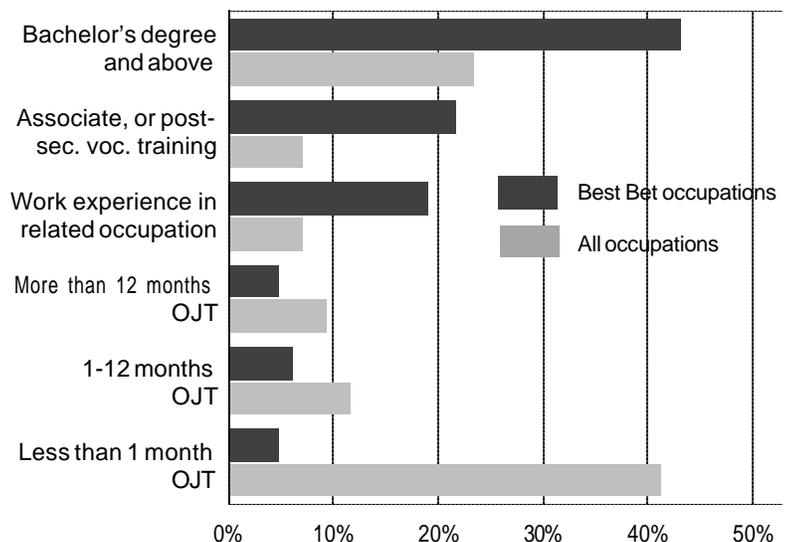
For years, Alaska's resource-based economy was able to provide high-paying jobs to workers with only a high school education. But traditional sources of high-wage/lower-skilled work have limited or no growth potential. Ensuring that Alaskans have access to the high-wage jobs of the future requires a closer look at the complex combination of job-specific and cross-occupational, or "basic," skills that Alaska's economy will demand of its workers in the future.

The need for job-specific skills, such as proficiency in computer-aided design for engineers or soldering for plumbers and mechanics, is well understood. Specific occupational skills are generally well documented in career information materials and through occupational licensing/certification requirements. Carpenters must be able to hammer, saw, and measure. They need skills necessary to drill holes, install doors and windows, and use tools to check for square.

Cross-occupational skills, however, are often overlooked when describing workforce prepar-

edness. Those same carpenters need math skills for measuring and estimating needed materials. They must be able to visualize and communicate in order to look at a drawing or a blueprint, imagine what the finished product will look like, and communicate that idea to fellow workers. These cross-occupational skills, which may not always be obvious, are the core competencies of a quality workforce. A workforce possessing strong basic skills will strengthen Alaska's economic competitiveness. For the individual worker, basic skills are one of the keys to greater opportunity and a better quality of life.

Training Needed for Best Bet Jobs ¹ 2008 projection



Best Bet occupations are those projected to have good employment opportunity and good wages.

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

2 Skills and Abilities for Best Bet Occupations

Projected 2008

	Projected Employment	Earnings Quartile	Communicate	Manage oneself, people, time, things	Perceive and visualize	Reason and problem solve	Use math and science	Work with people	Work with things
Bachelor's Degree or Higher									
General Managers & Top Executives	7,978	\$\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Aircraft Pilots	2,342	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Social Workers, ex Medical & Psychiatric	2,277	\$\$\$	x	x		x		x	
Biologists	1,829	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	
Financial Managers	1,801	\$\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Administrative Services Managers	1,455	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Systems Analysts, EDP	1,448	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Teachers: Special Education	1,290	\$\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Social Workers: Medical & Psychiatric	1,029	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	
Construction Managers	1,029	\$\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Marketing, Advertising & Pub Rel Mgrs	985	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Engineering/Math/Natural Science Mgrs	920	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Comm/Transportation/Utility Managers	888	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Physicians & Surgeons	829	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Instructional Coordinators	637	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Medicine & Health Services Managers	565	\$\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Physician Assistants	263	\$\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Associate Degree									
Registered Nurses	5,455	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Computer Support Specialists	1,340	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Dental Hygienists	641	\$\$\$\$	x			x	x	x	x
Paralegals	621	\$\$\$	x	x		x		x	x
Medical Laboratory Technicians	616	\$\$\$	x		x	x	x		x
Radiologic Technologists	316	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Respiratory Therapists	227	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Postsecondary Vocational Training									
Auto Mechanics	2,062	\$\$\$	x		x	x			x
Aircraft Mechanics	1,766	\$\$\$	x		x	x	x		x
Licensed Practical Nurses	786	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
Work Experience/Related Occupation									
Sales Supervisors	5,304	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	
Administrative Support Supervisors	4,409	\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Mechanics/Installers/Repairers Supv	1,408	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Instructors: Nonvocational Education	559	\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	
Transportation & Moving Machine Supv	511	\$\$\$\$	x	x		x	x	x	x
More than 12 Months On-the-Job Training									
Correction Officers & Jailers	1,063	\$\$\$	x		x	x		x	
Air Traffic Controllers	998	\$\$\$\$	x	x	x	x		x	x
Tel/Cable TV Line Installers/Repairers	616	\$\$\$	x			x	x		x
Automotive Body Repairers	481	\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x		x
One to 12 Months On-the-Job Training									
Sales Reps, ex Scientific Prod & Retail	1,670	\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Painters & Paperhangers	1,010	\$\$\$	x		x				x
Salespeople: Business Services	845	\$\$\$	x			x	x	x	
Salespeople: Advertising	439	\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Less than One Month On-the-Job Training									
Truck Drivers: Heavy or Tractor Trailer	3,102	\$\$\$	x	x	x	x	x		x

x At least one skill/ability from this category is associated with this occupation.
Pay ranges are represented by \$ for the lowest and \$\$\$\$ for the highest quartile.

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

Best-Bet future job opportunities

One way of examining the skills that will be necessary for Alaska's future workforce is to look at the skills required of current occupations with high projected employment growth and high wages. Research and Analysis (R&A) has developed projections for more than 500 detailed occupations. (See the November 2000 issue of *Alaska Economic Trends* for details.) From that list, 41 occupations with both good employment opportunities and good wages have been identified as "best-bet" occupations.

Alaska's best-bet occupations will comprise nearly 19 percent of the employment opportunities in 2008. These occupations are highly concentrated in the higher education and training categories. (See Exhibit 1.) More than 60 percent of the best-bet jobs require either an academic degree or significant vocational training. By contrast, about 40 percent of the projected jobs in 2008 will require less than one month of on-the-job-training (OJT). To successfully compete for the good jobs of the future, Alaskans will need to be armed with a broad range of skills.

Basic skills and job-specific skills

Not only do workers need the occupation-specific education and training, but they also need a foundation of basic skills. Exhibit 2 lists Alaska's 41 best-bet occupations organized by education or training level and includes a matrix of seven broad workplace skills required for each of the best-bet occupations.

For the purpose of this analysis, 67 skills and abilities (46 skills and 21 cognitive abilities) listed in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) have been grouped into seven broad "skills" categories. For a skill to be attributed to an occupation, at least one of the detailed O*NET skills and abilities from a category must be associated with the occupation.

Nearly all of the occupations in the labor market require some command of each of these seven broad skills, but both the importance of the skill and its detailed application may vary among occupations. Although the best-bet occupations are heavily concentrated in the higher education and training categories, and fall into a broad range of academic disciplines and training programs, they share a common need for a strong foundation of basic workplace skills.

Communication: reading, comprehension, writing, or listening skills

Communication skills are required in all of the 41 best-bet occupations. Workers spend most of their day in some form of communication. They communicate with each other about procedures and problems and they exchange information with customers. Today's workplace is one that increasingly involves interaction with sophisticated, computerized machinery that requires good reading skills for efficient use. Writing is often the first step in communicating with customers, documenting competitive transactions, successfully moving new ideas into the workplace, or even interacting with machines.

Management skills: ability to manage time, finances, people, or materials for oneself or others

Broad management skills, involving the ability to motivate others as well as manage one's own time, are key in 33 best-bet occupations. As new work practices remove traditional systems of management control, decision making is pushed further down the organization. With increased autonomy and more responsibility at lower levels of the hierarchy, the demand for traditional management type skills (for example, work organization, decision making, etc.) at lower levels has increased. One of the best-bet occupations, air

traffic controller, coordinates the movement of air traffic. Systems analysts use managing skills to plan and develop new computer systems.

Perceive and visualize: ability to identify, compare, or imagine objects or situations both in and out of customary contexts

Nineteen of the occupations on the best-bet list rely on the ability to perceive and visualize objects or situations. Primarily technical or craft occupations, jobs in this group involve spatial orientation and visualization. Registered nurses need to be able to recognize when something is wrong or likely to go wrong with the health of a patient. Auto mechanics need the ability to imagine how to reassemble an engine after removing or replacing engine parts.

Problem solving and reasoning: thinking, organizing information, or using logic to solve problems

The increased emphasis on problem solving in the workplace reflects an expansion in demand for better, larger, and more sophisticated products and services. Problem solving and reasoning skills are increasingly required in trades and craft occupations. They are also needed among administrative staff juggling the priorities of a wider range of managers.

Although problem-solving and reasoning skills are required for each of the nine health care occupations included on the best-bet list, the type of problem solving varies. Licensed practical nurses, for example, use their problem-solving skills to identify problems and review information. In addition to identifying problems, physicians combine several pieces of information and draw conclusions. The broad skill of problem solving is required in both occupations, whereas the way in which problems are solved differs.

Math and science: using math or science to solve problems

Thirty-eight of the best-bet occupations require math and science skills, ranging from basic addition to choosing a mathematical formula to solve a problem. The way in which the skill is used varies by occupation. For example, auto body repairers mix paint to specification. Biologists use math and science skills to conduct experiments and record results.

People skills: working with people to achieve work goals

The workplace of the future will be more team oriented, requiring effective people skills. The shift towards greater emphasis on customer service places a premium on interpersonal skills. Thirty-four of the occupations on the best-bet list call for people skills. Not surprisingly, instructional coordinators use people skills in consulting with educators and instructors. People skills have gained importance in information technology (IT) occupations (e.g., computer support specialists) as technology has become increasingly central to businesses and organizations. IT professionals often work closely with both end users and management to solve problems and improve organizational efficiency.

Working with things: ability to operate equipment, machines, or systems

The ability to work with things is needed in 30 of the best-bet occupations. Aircraft pilots ensure that aircraft engines, controls, and instruments are functioning properly. Painters and paperhangers use tools such as paint sprayers and rollers to accomplish their work.

Methodology

Employer Surveys

The foundation of the occupational forecast is the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program, operated jointly by AKDOL/R&A and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The OES program surveys occupational employment through representative and random samples of employers who do business in Alaska. The OES employer surveys produce profiles of the occupational makeup of employment for surveyed industries, and occupational wage rate estimates.

Earnings Quartiles

Sorting the total number of Alaska employees by their wage from lowest to highest determined the earnings quartiles. Rankings are based on quartiles using one-fourth of total employment to define each quartile. A single \$ represents occupations with employee earnings of less than \$12.89 per hour, \$\$ from \$12.89 to \$15.24 per hour, \$\$\$ from \$15.25 to \$22.28 per hour and \$\$\$\$ for those greater than \$22.28 per hour. Wage information is from the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey (OES).

O*NET Skills and Abilities

Analysis for this article is based on the 46 skill and 21 cognitive ability factors identified in the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Information

Network. Released originally in 1998, O*NET is a technology based database system that replaces the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) as the primary source of occupational information. A more complete methodology, including a list of categories and the O*NET skills and abilities assigned to each, is available upon request.

Skills and abilities descriptors are separate components of the O*NET system which are ranked by importance and level. For the purposes of this article, selected skills and abilities were combined and only the importance scale was considered. The 67 skills/abilities traits were combined into seven categories from the skills/abilities grouping used in the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) and developed by the AKCIS partner organization, intoCareers, for the Career Information System (CIS).

AKCIS is available at Alaska Job Centers, many high schools in the state, and other locations. Additional information is available at <http://www.akcis.org/>

CIS is a product of intoCareers. For more information about CIS or intoCareers visit <http://cis.uoregon.edu/>

¹ Includes estimate of self-employed workers.

Economy Still Unaffected by National Slowdown

Modest growth prevails in Alaska

Alaska Employment Scene

by
Dan Robinson
Labor Economist

Despite a dramatic cooling of the national economy and well-publicized layoffs throughout the rest of the country, Alaska's economy is bumping along at a modest rate of growth. Wage and salary employment this August was 5,600 higher than August 2000, a growth rate of 1.8%. (See Exhibit 2.)

Alaska's unemployment rate has also bucked the national trend so far, holding steady over the month at 5.0% even as the national rate climbed to 4.9% and caused a stir among the financial markets, wary of a possible recession. As recently as the beginning of 2000, Alaska's unemployment rate was almost five percentage points higher than the U.S. rate. (See Exhibit 1.) The gap has gradually narrowed until in August only one tenth of a percentage point separated the two.

While Alaska's economy in recent years offers little room for complaint, the long and robust economic expansion that lasted most of the last decade had more of an effect in the Lower 48 than it did in Alaska. As a result, the state has experienced a net loss to migration that has contributed to a tight local labor market and record-low unemployment rates. In response to layoffs and a new uncertainty about the economy, however, Alaska may see a combination of fewer of its workers leaving the

state and more workers from the lower 48 seeking opportunities here. The natural result, absent the creation of a significant number of new jobs, would be higher state unemployment rates.

Alaska's Northern Region (Nome Census Area and North Slope and Northwest Arctic boroughs) had the state's highest unemployment rate at 10.9%. (See Exhibit 5.) The state's three biggest cities, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, all recorded unemployment well below the statewide average: Anchorage 4.1%, Fairbanks 4.4%, and Juneau 3.8%.

Oil and construction maintain solid growth

The oil industry has provided a substantial portion of the new jobs. Between oil extraction and oil field services, employment is up almost 1,300 jobs from year-ago levels, a 14.1% rate of growth. Construction has been another bright spot in recent months. The industry has added 700 jobs over the last twelve months and now employs more than six percent of all wage and salary workers in the state. Job growth in the oil and construction industries is especially welcome to the state's economy since wages in these areas are considerably higher than average for the state.

Of some concern is a precipitous drop in oil and gas prices, attributed by economists to fears that a worldwide recession would reduce energy demand. Lower oil prices would affect both employment and state revenues, and could also have a major impact on the proposed construction of a natural gas pipeline.

Seafood processing up over last year, but the industry may be in transition

Strong salmon harvests in Southeast and Prince William Sound provided some good news to the seafood processing industry, although the big western Alaska salmon fisheries had another rough year. Over the year, seafood processing employment is up by 450 jobs, more than half of them in Southeast. (See Exhibits 2 and 4.)

Still, in light of yet another bad season for the Bristol Bay area, and very low per-pound prices throughout the state's salmon fisheries, questions are being raised about the long-term future of the industry. Despite the concerns there are reasons for optimism. Industry watchers agree that sound management by government agencies has kept the biological stock of most species in good shape. What's more, demand for Alaska salmon will most likely grow with the world population and with an increasing need for the high-quality protein it provides.

The most obvious challenge to the status of Alaska fisheries comes from salmon farmers in Chile and Norway who compete with wild Alaska salmon in several key markets, most notably Japan. Farmed salmon has the competitive advantage of availability year-round at consistent quality and size. By contrast, the supply of fish from wild fisheries is uncertain and unpredictable, presenting occasional quality problems as well as surpluses and shortages that affect the profitability of both the fishing fleets and the processors.

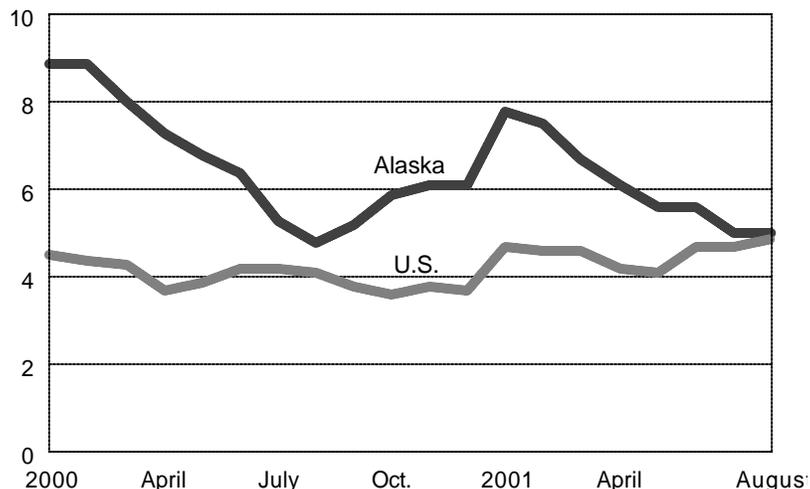
Some believe that to be sustainable, the Alaska fishing industry—both the fleet and processor segments—must become smaller and more consolidated. One likely effect of a continuing move in that direction would be fewer jobs and at least short-term economic difficulties for the communities that have historically relied on commercial fishing for tax revenue and local employment.

A slower tourist season for much of the state

As Alaska's 2001 summer tourist season began, concerns were expressed that a cooling economy and a strong dollar would combine to put a damper on what has been healthy growth in this segment of the economy. The early numbers suggest that the concerns may have been valid, at least for everywhere in the state outside Anchorage

(continued on page 18)

Nation's and Alaska's Unemployment rates converge



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

2 Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment

By place of work

Alaska	preliminary	revised	Changes from:			Municipality of Anchorage	preliminary	revised	Changes from:		
	8/01	7/01	8/00	7/01	8/00		8/01	7/01	8/00	7/01	8/00
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	309,800	308,500	304,200	1,300	5,600	Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	141,600	141,000	139,000	600	2,600
Goods-producing	50,000	49,500	48,200	500	1,800	Goods-producing	15,300	14,500	14,500	800	800
Service-producing	259,800	259,000	256,000	800	3,800	Service-producing	126,300	126,500	124,500	-200	1,800
Mining	12,000	11,800	10,800	200	1,200	Mining	3,200	3,100	2,800	100	400
Oil & Gas Extraction	10,400	10,200	9,100	200	1,300	Oil & Gas Extraction	3,000	2,900	2,600	100	400
Construction	18,900	18,100	18,200	800	700	Construction	9,700	9,000	9,300	700	400
Manufacturing	19,100	19,600	19,200	-500	-100	Manufacturing	2,400	2,400	2,400	0	0
Durable Goods	2,500	2,500	3,100	0	-600	Transportation/Comm/Utilities	15,400	15,500	15,700	-100	-300
Lumber & Wood Products	1,300	1,200	1,800	100	-500	Air Transportation	6,100	6,100	6,500	0	-400
Nondurable Goods	16,600	17,100	16,100	-500	500	Communications	3,700	3,800	3,600	-100	100
Seafood Processing	13,800	14,300	13,300	-500	500	Trade	33,100	33,000	32,700	100	400
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	29,900	29,700	30,200	200	-300	Wholesale Trade	6,400	6,500	6,400	-100	0
Trucking & Warehousing	3,400	3,400	3,100	0	300	Retail Trade	26,700	26,500	26,300	200	400
Water Transportation	2,600	2,600	2,600	0	0	Gen. Merchandise & Apparel	5,200	5,100	5,000	100	200
Air Transportation	10,000	10,100	10,500	-100	-500	Food Stores	2,500	2,500	2,800	0	-300
Communications	5,500	5,600	5,500	-100	0	Eating & Drinking Places	10,300	10,100	9,900	200	400
Electric, Gas & Sanitary Svcs.	2,900	2,900	2,900	0	0	Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	7,700	7,700	7,700	0	0
Trade	62,700	62,600	62,000	100	700	Services & Misc.	42,500	42,500	40,600	0	1,900
Wholesale Trade	9,200	9,300	9,200	-100	0	Hotels & Lodging Places	3,500	3,400	3,400	100	100
Retail Trade	53,500	53,300	52,800	200	700	Business Services	7,800	7,800	7,300	0	500
Gen. Merchandise & Apparel	9,900	9,900	10,000	0	-100	Health Services	10,100	10,100	9,300	0	800
Food Stores	6,800	6,800	6,900	0	-100	Legal Services	1,200	1,200	1,200	0	0
Eating & Drinking Places	19,700	19,500	19,200	200	500	Social Services	4,100	4,100	4,000	0	100
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	13,300	13,100	13,200	200	100	Engineering & Mgmt. Svcs.	5,400	5,400	5,300	0	100
Services & Misc.	82,200	82,000	79,100	200	3,100	Government	27,600	27,800	27,800	-200	-200
Hotels & Lodging Places	10,200	10,200	10,100	0	100	Federal	9,900	9,800	10,100	100	-200
Business Services	10,200	10,200	9,800	0	400	State	8,500	8,700	8,400	-200	100
Health Services	18,300	18,300	17,200	0	1,100	Local	9,200	9,300	9,300	-100	-100
Legal Services	1,600	1,600	1,600	0	0						
Social Services	8,200	8,200	8,000	0	200						
Engineering & Mgmt. Svcs.	7,900	7,700	7,900	200	0						
Government	71,700	71,600	71,500	100	200						
Federal	17,200	17,300	17,800	-100	-600						
State	21,700	22,100	21,200	-400	500						
Local	32,800	32,200	32,500	600	300						

Notes to Exhibits 2, 3, & 4—Nonagricultural excludes self-employed workers, fishers, domestics, and unpaid family workers as well as agricultural workers. Government category includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska.

Exhibits 2 & 3—Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Exhibit 4—Prepared in part with funding from the Employment Security Division.

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

3 Hours and Earnings

For selected industries

	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	preliminary 8/01	revised 7/01	revised 8/00	preliminary 8/01	revised 7/01	revised 8/00	preliminary 8/01	revised 7/01	revised 8/00
Mining	1469.66	1401.70	1353.29	49.5	47.1	51.3	29.69	29.76	26.38
Construction	1371.10	1315.77	1420.34	48.5	45.2	50.1	28.27	29.11	28.35
Manufacturing	679.82	492.94	604.10	61.3	45.6	50.3	11.09	10.81	12.01
Seafood Processing	658.25	429.66	554.72	67.1	46.5	53.7	9.81	9.24	10.33
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	750.47	762.16	732.89	34.6	35.9	34.8	21.69	21.23	21.06
Trade	510.85	506.91	473.09	35.5	35.9	35.2	14.39	14.12	13.44
Wholesale Trade	775.06	744.17	691.08	40.9	40.4	39.4	18.95	18.42	17.54
Retail Trade	465.06	466.13	436.77	34.5	35.1	34.5	13.48	13.28	12.66
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	628.78	643.28	627.42	36.9	37.4	36.1	17.04	17.20	17.38

Average hours and earnings estimates are based on data for full-time and part-time production workers (manufacturing) and nonsupervisory workers (nonmanufacturing). Averages are for gross earnings and hours paid, including overtime pay and hours.

Benchmark: March 2000

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

4 Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment

By place of work

	Fairbanks North Star Borough		Interior Region			Anchorage/Mat-Su Region		Southwest Region			Gulf Coast Region		Northern Region		
	preliminary 8/01	revised 7/01	8/00	7/01	8/00	preliminary 8/01	revised 7/01	8/00	7/01	8/00	preliminary 8/01	revised 7/01	8/00	7/01	8/00
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	36,200	36,400	35,550	-200	650	42,900	43,100	42,250	-200	650	157,100	155,900	153,800	1,200	3,300
Goods-producing	4,500	4,300	4,150	200	350	4,850	4,650	4,400	200	450	17,150	16,450	16,350	700	800
Service-producing	31,700	32,100	31,400	-400	300	38,050	38,450	37,850	-400	200	139,950	139,450	137,450	500	2,500
Mining	1,250	1,200	1,050	50	200	1,400	1,350	1,250	50	150	3,200	3,150	2,900	50	300
Construction	2,550	2,400	2,400	150	150	2,700	2,550	2,450	150	250	11,400	10,750	10,850	650	550
Manufacturing	700	700	700	0	0	750	750	700	0	50	2,550	2,550	2,600	0	-50
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	3,450	3,450	3,450	0	0	4,650	4,650	4,650	0	0	16,550	16,450	16,850	100	-300
Trucking & Warehousing	700	700	650	0	50										
Air Transportation	1,000	1,000	1,000	0	0										
Communications	350	350	400	0	-50										
Trade	7,050	7,100	7,100	-50	-50										
Wholesale Trade	750	750	750	0	0										
Retail Trade	6,300	6,350	6,350	-50	-50										
Gen. Merchandise & Apparel	1,050	1,100	1,200	-50	-150										
Food Stores	600	650	600	-50	0										
Eating & Drinking Places	2,650	2,650	2,500	0	150										
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	1,250	1,250	1,300	0	-50										
Services & Misc.	9,650	9,700	9,300	-50	350										
Hotels & Lodging Places	1,550	1,600	1,450	-50	100										
Health Services	2,100	2,100	2,000	0	100										
Government	10,300	10,600	10,250	-300	50										
Federal	3,450	3,500	3,500	-50	-50										
State	4,250	4,550	4,150	-300	100										
Local	2,600	2,550	2,600	50	0										
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	41,650	41,050	41,300	600	350	19,400	20,000	19,000	-600	400	32,200	32,450	32,000	-250	200
Goods-producing	7,350	7,000	7,500	350	-150	5,800	6,450	5,550	-650	250	8,500	8,650	8,650	-150	-150
Service-producing	34,300	34,050	33,800	250	500	13,600	13,550	13,450	50	150	23,700	23,800	23,350	-100	350
Mining	300	300	300	0	0	1,350	1,300	1,400	50	-50	1,300	1,250	1,350	50	-50
Construction	2,150	2,200	2,100	-50	50	1,750	1,750	1,700	0	50	1,750	1,750	1,700	0	50
Manufacturing	4,900	4,500	5,100	400	-200	5,400	5,600	5,550	-200	-150	5,400	5,600	5,550	-200	-150
Durable Goods	1,100	1,100	1,550	0	-450	4,600	4,800	4,600	-200	0	4,600	4,800	4,600	-200	0
Lumber & Wood Products	800	800	1,250	0	-450										
Nondurable Goods	3,800	3,400	3,550	400	250										
Seafood Processing	3,500	3,100	3,250	400	250										
Transportation/Comm/Utilities	3,600	3,600	3,650	0	-50										
Trade	7,400	7,400	7,250	0	150										
Wholesale Trade	750	700	700	50	50										
Retail Trade	6,650	6,700	6,550	-50	100										
Food Stores	1,350	1,400	1,350	-50	0										
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	1,400	1,350	1,350	50	50										
Services & Misc.	9,450	9,500	9,450	-50	0										
Health Services	1,750	1,750	1,700	0	50										
Government	12,450	12,200	12,100	250	350										
Federal	1,950	1,950	1,950	0	0										
State	5,450	5,250	5,200	200	250										
Local	5,050	5,000	4,950	50	100										
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	16,350	16,350	15,700	0	650	6,600	6,450	6,550	150	50	6,600	6,450	6,550	150	50
Goods-producing	6,450	6,450	5,800	0	650	850	850	900	0	-50	850	850	900	0	-50
Service-producing	9,900	9,900	9,900	0	0	1,200	1,200	1,150	0	50	1,200	1,200	1,150	0	50
Mining	5,750	5,750	4,900	0	850	6,600	6,450	6,550	150	50	6,600	6,450	6,550	150	50
Oil & Gas Extraction	5,300	5,300	4,400	0	900	850	850	900	0	-50	850	850	900	0	-50
Government	4,100	4,150	4,150	-50	-50	850	850	900	0	-50	850	850	900	0	-50
Federal	200	200	150	0	50										
State	350	350	300	0	50										
Local	3,550	3,600	3,700	-50	-150										

5 Unemployment Rates By region and census area

Not Seasonally Adjusted	preliminary	revised	08/00
	08/01	07/01	
United States	4.9	4.7	4.1
Alaska Statewide	5.0	5.0	4.8
Anch/Mat-Su Region	4.1	4.1	4.1
Municipality of Anchorage	3.7	3.7	3.8
Mat-Su Borough	5.7	6.1	5.7
Gulf Coast Region	6.4	6.1	5.5
Kenai Peninsula Borough	6.4	6.7	6.2
Kodiak Island Borough	8.1	4.5	3.9
Valdez-Cordova	4.5	5.5	4.6
Interior Region	4.8	5.0	4.9
Denali Borough	4.2	4.1	3.3
Fairbanks North Star Borough	4.4	4.6	4.4
Southeast Fairbanks	8.0	7.7	8.5
Yukon-Koyukuk	9.9	12.3	10.5
Northern Region	10.9	11.2	10.7
Nome	11.2	12.0	10.8
North Slope Borough	8.3	8.5	10.1
Northwest Arctic Borough	14.6	14.3	11.6
Southeast Region	4.6	4.8	4.4
Haines Borough	4.7	4.8	2.5
Juneau Borough	3.8	3.9	3.8
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	5.4	5.1	4.6
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	7.4	8.7	9.3
Sitka Borough	3.3	3.9	3.5
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon	5.7	6.5	4.3
Wrangell-Petersburg	4.2	5.4	4.2
Yakutat Borough	10.2	9.9	6.4
Southwest Region	9.7	9.6	8.6
Aleutians East Borough	2.7	3.1	1.9
Aleutians West	5.6	7.0	5.1
Bethel	10.6	10.5	9.2
Bristol Bay Borough	7.0	4.9	6.2
Dillingham	7.8	6.8	5.1
Lake & Peninsula Borough	8.2	7.2	8.8
Wade Hampton	17.7	17.4	17.4
Seasonally Adjusted			
United States	4.9	4.5	4.1
Alaska Statewide	6.7	6.2	6.5

2000 Benchmark

Comparisons between different time periods are not as meaningful as other time series produced by Research and Analysis. The official definition of unemployment currently in place excludes anyone who has not made an active attempt to find work in the four-week period up to and including the week that includes the 12th of the reference month. Due to the scarcity of employment opportunities in rural Alaska, many individuals do not meet the official definition of unemployed because they have not conducted an active job search. They are considered not in the labor force.

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

(continued from page 15)

and Fairbanks. Eating and drinking establishments added 500 jobs statewide, though Anchorage and Fairbanks accounted for 550 jobs, meaning there was a net estimated loss of 50 jobs in the rest of the state. (See Exhibits 2 and 4.) Similarly, Anchorage and Fairbanks added 100 hotel/motel jobs while the balance of the state lost 100.

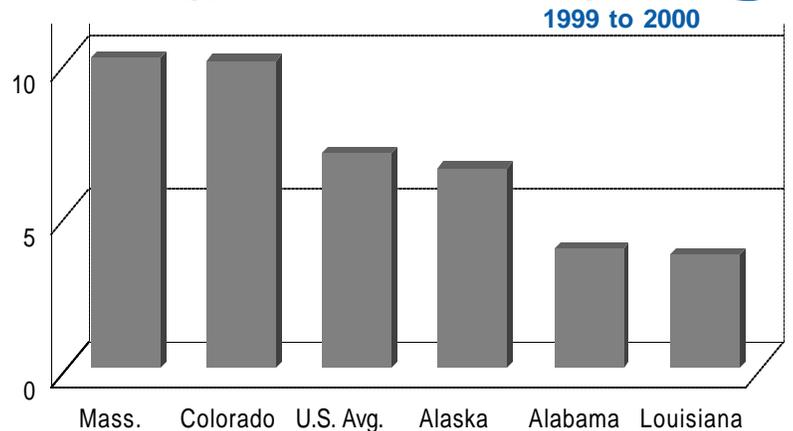
Hard times ahead for the airline industry?

Already down almost five percent over the year (see Exhibit 2), Alaska's airline industry faces more challenges as a consequence of heightened security requirements and a reduction in flights due to the tragic terrorist hijacking of four airplanes on September 11. Though alternatives to air travel may be harder to come by in Alaska than in other parts of the country, the industry can expect to see at least a slight reduction in demand during the next several months.

Alaska personal income growth rate close to national average

From 1999 to 2000, Alaska's personal income grew by 6.5%, slightly below the national average of 7.0%. (See Exhibit 6.) The four states with the fastest growing personal income—Massachusetts at 10.1%, Colorado at 10.0%, California at 9.8%, and New Hampshire at 9.2%—accounted for about 18 percent of U.S. personal income in 2000, and contributed about 25 percent of total U.S. growth. The five states with the slowest rate of personal income growth were Louisiana at 3.7%, Alabama at 3.9%, Hawaii at 4.1%, Mississippi at 4.3%, and Nebraska at 4.3%.

Alaska Personal Income Growing just below U.S. average rate



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

Employer Resources

Are you looking for some interesting statistics regarding occupations you currently have in your business or possibly will have in the future? Click on:

<http://www.jobs.state.ak.us>

then click on Job Market Information, Research and Analysis.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Alaska Job Center Network. At the top, the URL www.jobs.state.ak.us is displayed. Below the URL, there is a navigation menu with several dropdown menus: "Employer Connection", "Job Seeker Resources", "Training and Assistance", and "Job Market Information". The "Job Market Information" dropdown is open, showing options like "Job Market Information", "AKCIS", "Research and Analysis", "Community Profiles", "Wage & Hour FAQs", "America's Career InfoNet", and "America's LMI System". A large black arrow points from the "Research and Analysis" option in the dropdown to the corresponding section on the page below.

Below the navigation menu, there is a search bar with "select a region" and "select a job type" dropdowns, and a "search" button. The main content area features a banner for "Research & Analysis" with a background image of Alaska's mountains. To the left of the banner is a vertical menu with buttons for "Employment & Unemployment", "Occupational Information", "Industry Information", "Wages & Cost of Living", "Regional Information", "Census & Geographic Information", "Population Information", "Publications & News Releases", "Relocating to Alaska", and "Alaska Economic Trends". To the right of the banner, there is a section titled "Now Available On-Line" for the "1999 Employment and Earnings Summary Report". Below this, there is a featured article from "TRENDS" magazine, September 2001, titled "The Denali Borough" with the subtext "At the age of 10, its economy rests on mine, missiles and park". Underneath the article, there is a "HOT topics" section with links to "2000 Census Data Summary File 1- Data on age, sex, household relationships and family and household characteristics for the state, borough/census areas, places (cities & towns), census tracts, and Alaska Native village statistical areas", "For more data click here", "Statewide Wage Rates", and "Most recent employment & unemployment".

