

ALASKA ECONOMIC *TRENDS* DECEMBER 2025

The 'real' North Pole

ALSO INSIDE Alaska's seasonal economy

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The gasline and other new year developments take shape

By Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner

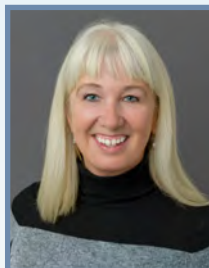
With renewed momentum behind the Alaska gasline project and a surge in oil and gas lease interest on the North Slope, the need for skilled workers has never been greater. A recent auction is signaling increased interest in available state land for oil and gas leases, with the highest number of bids since 1999 on Alaska's North Slope.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development is updating its 2018 Gasline Workforce Plan and expanding in-state training to meet industry needs. These efforts, alongside recent legislative initiatives and collaborative workforce development programs, reflect a coordinated strategy to connect Alaskans with high-quality careers in the state's vital resource sectors.

In October, the legislative gasline working group hosted a public meeting with developer Glenfarne. The project is structured in phases, with Phase One being the construction of the pipeline from the North Slope to tidewater and the delivery of in-state gas. Future phases will include processing facilities and a liquefied natural gas plant to prepare gas for shipment to Asian markets. A final investment decision for Phase One is expected at the end of this year.

The Association for Career and Technical Education and the Business Education Compact Workforce convened in October with industry representatives, trainers, and policymakers to learn from one another and maximize opportunities for students.

Building on this momentum, the Alaska Workforce



Investment Board collaborated with Alaska's regional training providers on new ways to support a robust training network, including through articulation agreements and a possible shared pool of career and technical instructors.

The department has also implemented statute and regulatory changes to allow greater reciprocity with other states for the electrical and plumbing trades, and provisional licensing and military credit toward certification.

In other updates, under the Typhoon Halong disaster declaration, the department recently secured funding to train and hire temporary workers for cleanup and stabilization. Numerous participants recently completed construction and framing training in Anchorage at the Alaska Works Partnership, and additional short-term trainings are scheduled for welding, carpentry, power tools, and sheetrock. For more information on upcoming training and employment services, see updates at our [Western Alaska Storms website](#).

With Christmas and the holidays quickly approaching, I wish all Alaskans a peaceful and enjoyable holiday season and a prosperous year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Muñoz".

Contact Commissioner Catherine Muñoz at (907) 465-2700 or commissioner.labor@alaska.gov.



Follow the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development on X and [Facebook](#).

DECEMBER
2025

Volume 45 Number 12
ISSN 0160-3345

SARA WHITNEY
Editor

DAN ROBINSON
Chief, Research
and Analysis

Design by Sara Whitney

ON THE COVER:

This photo of a big Santa outside the Santa Claus House in North Pole was taken in 2008 by Flickr user [Amaury Laporte](#)

[Creative Commons license](#)

ALASKA
DEPARTMENT of LABOR
and WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

Governor
Mike Dunleavy
Commissioner
Catherine Muñoz

ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

4 THE 'REAL'
NORTH POLE

11 JOB SEASONALITY IS
HIGHEST IN ALASKA

14 GAUGING
THE ECONOMY

Trends is a nonpartisan, data-driven magazine that covers a variety of economic topics in Alaska.

ON THIS SPREAD: The background image for 2025 is a panorama of snowy tundra at Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Lisa Hupp, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

If you have questions or comments, contact the authors listed at the end of each article or the editor at sara.whitney@alaska.gov or (907) 465-6561. This material is public information, and with appropriate credit it may be reproduced without permission. To sign up for a free electronic subscription, read past issues, or purchase a print subscription, visit labor.alaska.gov/trends.

The 'real' North Pole

Whimsical but tough, the community has always made its own footprint



By SARA WHITNEY

Ali is one of the tens of thousands of kids around the world who exchange letters with Santa Claus each year through his official mail stop in North Pole, Alaska. "*Santa Claws, I got your note,*" she wrote back to the Santa Claus House. "*I rily believe in you Santa Claws.*"

The iconic Santa Claus House in North Pole has been dispatching Christmas letters — with more than 25 designs available — for 73 years. It marked 2025 with a major expansion: a five-acre activity park that opened over the "fallidays" to host year-round celebrations in North Pole. Silver Bell Square joins the 18,000-square-foot store, reindeer farm, and world's largest fiberglass Santa statue.

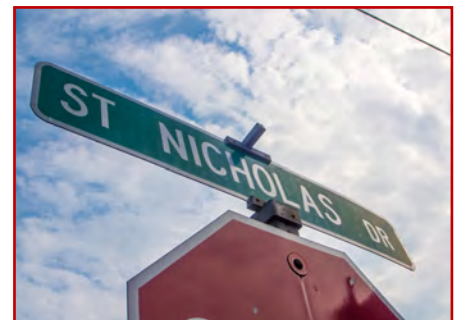
The store has come a long way from its start as an 800-square-foot trading post, established by trader Con Miller five years after arriving in the Interior with just \$1.40 and his family. It was the same year the town called North Pole was born.

A playful theme takes shape

Miller traveled around the villages trading merchandise before setting up his Christmas-themed trading post in 1952 in what would soon become North Pole.

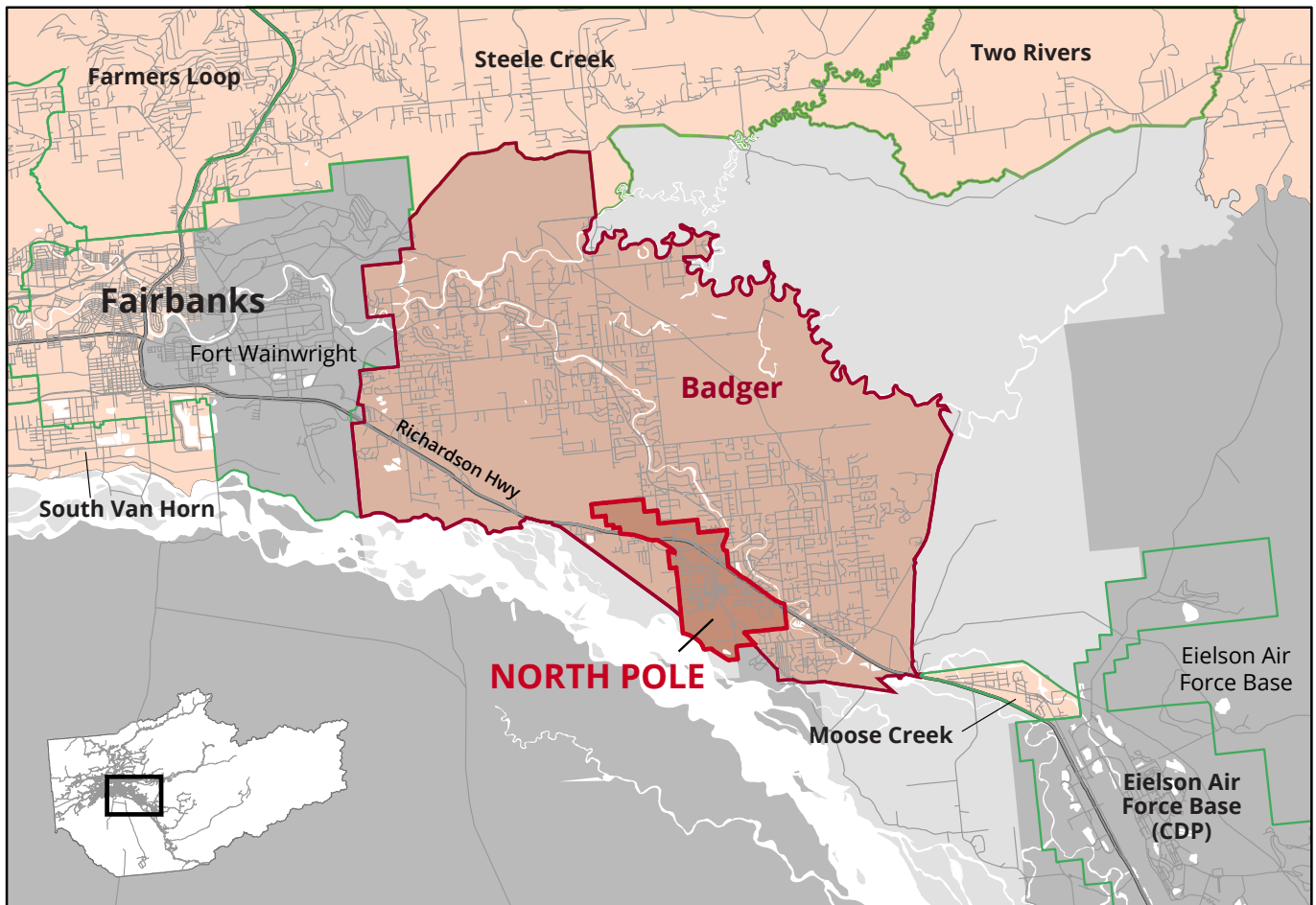
Miller had dressed as Santa when visiting the Interior villages. According to grandson-in-law Paul Brown, operations manager of Santa Claus House, kids in the villages would yell, "Hello Santa, are you building a house?"

That same year, a development company bought and subdivided land southeast of Fairbanks that homesteader Bon Davis had settled in 1944, naming it North Pole to entice a toy manufacturer that would advertise its products as "Made In North Pole." Whether the idea originated with Miller or the developers is a chicken-or-egg question, but the branding stuck even though the toymaker idea never came to fruition.



At left, two sled dog teams approach the finish line in the North Pole 6-Dog Championships 6.6-mile race. Photo by Flickr user [Arthur T. LaBar](#).

Above, one of the Christmas-themed street signs in North Pole. Photo by Flickr user [Dave Malkoff](#).



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

Miller expanded Santa Claus House and later became mayor of North Pole, a position he held for 19 years. His wife, Nellie, became postmistress. Meanwhile, the town leaned into the new identity.

Today, North Pole features candy cane posts under building signs and streetlights, adding a year-round festivity that brightens the winter darkness and looks quaint in the summer.

Street names include Kris Kringle Drive, Snowman Lane, Donner Drive, Blitzen Drive, Mistletoe Lane, St. Nicholas Drive, Holiday Road, and Santa Claus Lane. (That's where Santa holds office, and it's home to another of North Pole's longstanding landmarks — Pagoda Restaurant was featured on the Food Channel's "Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives" in 2009.)

In addition to the Letters From Santa program, the

Santa Claus House features a variety of themed products that also celebrate the town's broader identity, including its military history and large active-duty population.

The world's largest fiberglass Santa statue is 50 feet tall and 900 pounds with a 33-foot belly. He rests on a half-ton base.

Relationship with Eielson is vital

The Christmas theme fed the city's growth in the 1950s, but its proximity to military installations and a major highway solidified North Pole's place in the Interior after World War

II. It's on the Richardson Highway, which stretches nearly 400 miles from Fairbanks to Valdez, the terminus of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline.

While North Pole has always maintained its own identity, its location on the Richardson between Fairbanks and Eielson Air Force Base means it's intertwined

with both places. However, it's especially important to Eielson.

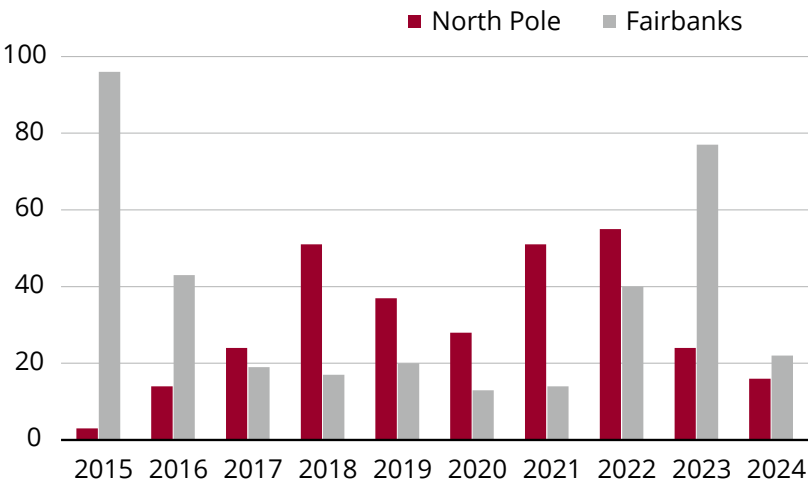
North Pole is a support and housing community for the Air Force base. Many service members live off base, and some students from Eielson attend school in North Pole, especially after Eielson's junior/senior high school closed in 2024.

Eielson has generated additional demand for housing and other services in recent years with the arrival of two squadrons of F-35A Lightning II fighter jets — 54 aircraft in all — a project the Department of Defense completed last year.

The F-35s brought in about 1,500 airmen and their families starting in 2021, plus a list of projects to support the buildup, boosting local contractors.

In December 2024, the Air Force announced it would assign four additional KC-135 refueling tankers to the base's current eight to support the squadrons, which would bring 220 additional airmen to Eielson. Although the arrival timeline isn't yet clear, that would create further housing demand.

More new homes were built with Eielson influx



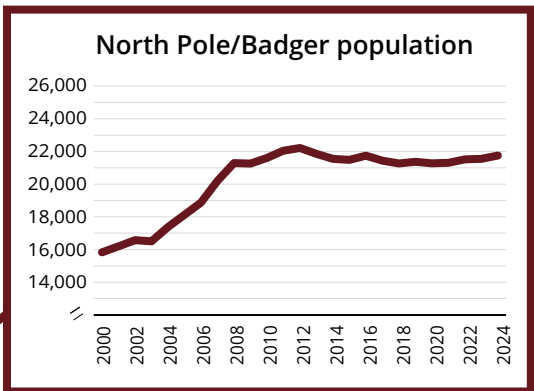
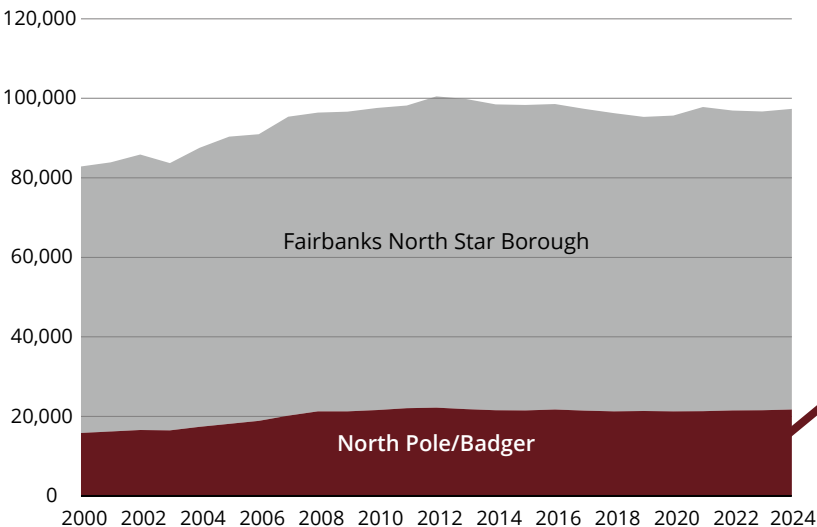
Note: Units are within city limits only. Nearly all of the borough's land lies outside city limits of North Pole and Fairbanks, and most new housing is built in the outlying areas, including Badger. More than 200 new homes are built each year in the balance of the borough.

Source: Fairbanks North Star Borough Community Research Quarterly

The population resumed growing

The F-35s marked a turning point for North Pole's population, which had taken a small hit starting in the mid-2010s with the closure of the Flint Hills refinery (discussed in the next sections), compounded

The North Pole area's population trends from 2000 to 2024



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, 2000-2024 population estimates



Like many signs and posts in North Pole, this welcome sign sports a candy cane pattern. Photo taken on New Year's Eve in 2019 by [Dylan Avery](#).

by the oil price plunge and recession that gripped the whole state from 2015 through 2018.

After many years of growth, the population of North Pole and the surrounding Badger area dropped from a peak of 22,217 in 2012 to 21,850 the following year, then trended downward after that. (See the graph on the previous page.)

From 2021 to 2022, with the Air Force influx in full swing, the population jumped by more than 200 people, then continued growing in 2023 and 2024, almost erasing the previous decade's decline.

The number of new housing units built in North Pole also rose during that time. (See the exhibit at the top of the previous page.) The increase was mainly in multi-family units, with 74 built within city limits in just those two years.

North Pole and Badger have a notable slice of the borough's newer homes. Home prices are comparable to Fairbanks within city limits, but North Pole is a shorter commute from Eielson. Some Fairbanks and Fort Wainwright workers also live in North Pole or because of the larger lots and quieter, rural feel.

City is a major energy supplier, especially jet fuel

The military also relies on North Pole for energy, as the town is a powerhouse for refining and moving North Slope crude. Many tanker railroad cars

About the data

For this article, unless otherwise specified, North Pole means the city of North Pole plus Badger.

Badger is a much larger, mostly residential outlying area that was recognized as a census-designated place in 2010 and is functionally part of North Pole.

According to our population estimates, North Pole's population was 2,404 in 2024 and Badger's was 19,349.

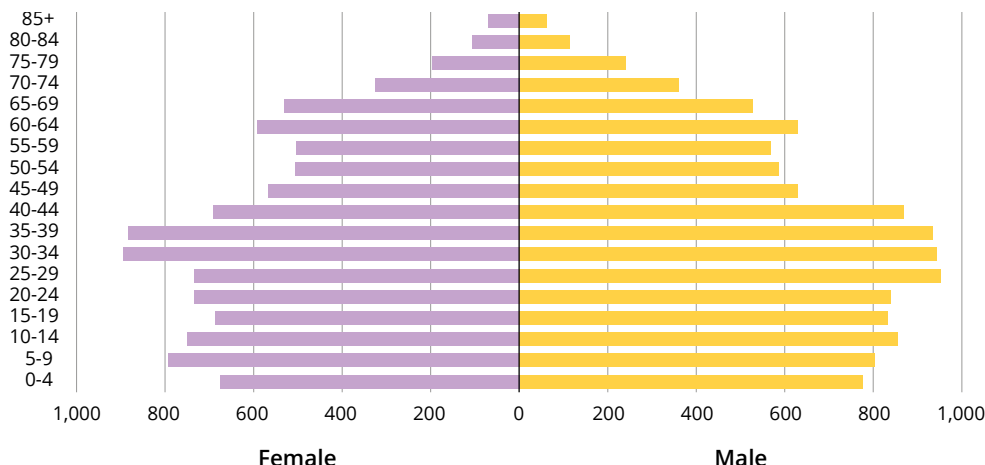
travel through, entering and leaving the refinery.

Petro Star, which owns the large Valdez refinery, operates a second, smaller refinery in North Pole. According to Petro Star, a subsidiary of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, the company employs about 300 Alaskans.

The Petro Star-North Pole refinery has a 24,000 barrel-per-day capacity and is a major supplier of jet fuel to Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport as well as Eielson Air Force Base. According to Petroleum News, 63 percent of Petro Star's output is jet fuel.

The company produces all of the military-grade jet and marine diesel fuel for Interior, Anchorage, and Kodiak installations and supplies thousands of civilian and military consumers in the Interior. It also produces heating fuel, turbine fuel, diesel, and asphalt base oil.

The North Pole area's population by age and gender, 2024



Note: Includes the city of North Pole and the Badger CDP

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, 2024 population estimates

Toxic leak cuts refineries from two to one, spurs long cleanup

North Pole had two refineries for decades, but its Flint Hills refinery shuttered in 2014. Owned by Koch Industries subsidiary Flint Hills, the refinery produced 85,000 to 220,000 bpd in its heyday, which began in the 1970s. The Flint Hills facility, originally owned by Williams Alaska Petroleum, was once the largest refinery in Alaska.

In the early 2010s, knowledge that the refinery had been leaking contaminants into the groundwater for years became public. The main toxin was sulfolane, and in 2018, PFAS (per/polyfluoroalkyl substances) were also discovered. PFAS were used in fire suppression at the refinery. Sulfolane is a solvent used in the refining process.

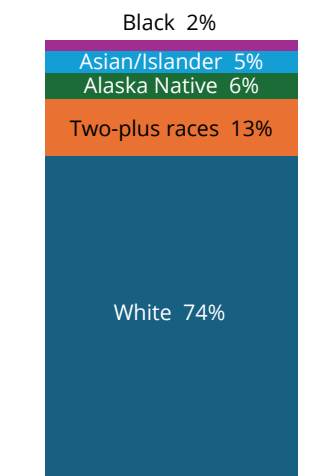
The leaked sulfolane plume extended about 3.5 miles out, two miles across, and more than 300 feet deep.

Using wells is common in the Interior, and the leak contaminated drinking water for hundreds of North Pole homes and businesses. The initial estimate was about 300, but by 2020, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation had more than doubled that number. The city has connected more than 650 affected properties to municipal water.

Demolition of some refinery units began in 2016, and remediation continues at the site, which is now owned by Marathon and serves as a terminal/storage facility.

The original owner, Williams, was found liable by the Alaska Superior Court in 2020 for the initial release

North Pole residents by race, 2020



Note: Includes the city of North Pole and the Badger CDP

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census

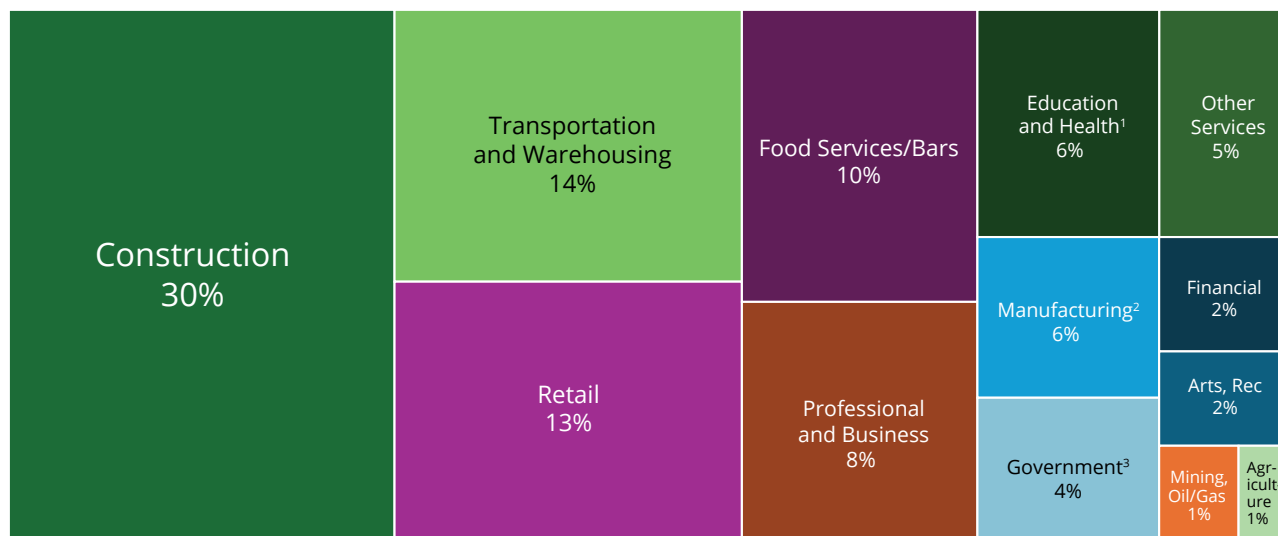
and for failing to report the contamination for years and disclose it to Flint Hills, which purchased the property in 2004. Flint Hills was found liable for a delayed response and failure to contain the spread.

In 2024, DEC deemed the plume "fairly stable," although mitigation will continue indefinitely and the plume remains a long-term issue, both environmentally and for future land use.

The ripple effect of the Flint Hills refinery closure

Mitigation costs were the final blow for the refinery amid rising costs and shrinking profit margins. Flint Hills had already downsized the site in 2010 and

Industry breakdown of jobs in North Pole and the outlying areas, 2024



Notes: In addition to North Pole and Badger, this data set includes other small places near the Richardson Highway (Big Horn, Birch Lake, Harding Lake, Moose Creek, Plack, Richardson, Salcha, and Salchaket). Uncategorized jobs and industries with job counts too small to disclose are excluded.

¹Private only. Public schools and tribal and municipal health employment are under government.

²Mostly refinery employment

³Includes public schools but does not include the military.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

2012, when it cut another 35-40 positions, according to the Anchorage Daily News.

That prompted the Alaska Railroad to eliminate more than 50 jobs, citing the revenue loss from dwindling fuel hauls. Two years earlier, the Alaska Railroad Corporation had reported to the state that the viability of the Flint Hills refinery was the “single biggest risk to the Alaska Railroad’s business.”

The 2014 closure eliminated another 80 of the remaining 126 jobs at the refinery. The company kept 35 jobs at the site and 10 in Anchorage. While the closure didn’t directly eliminate a large swath of local employment, the lost jobs were high-paying, averaging well over \$100,000 a year in 2014 dollars.

Downsizing and closure also coincided with the start of a multi-year population decline. As the housing exhibit on page 6 shows, new home construction was also almost nonexistent in 2015.

The closure also took large bites from the local tax base and the Alaska Railroad and reduced the state’s already-limited refining capacity, raising the need to import fuels.

Growth in North Pole area jobs, 2014-2024

Select industry	2014 jobs	2024 jobs	Percent change
Total, All Industries	1,677	2,342	39.7%
Total Private	1,603	2,253	40.5%
Construction	549	696	26.8%
Manufacturing ¹	156	99	-36.5%
Retail Trade	243	307	26.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	112	320	185.7%
Financial Activities	60	51	-15.0%
Professional/Business Svcs	145	192	32.4%
Education and Health Services ²	101	140	38.6%
Arts, Entertainment, Rec	11	42	281.8%
Food Services/Drinking Places	137	233	70.1%
Other Services	46	101	119.6%
Total Government³	74	89	20.3%

Notes: In addition to North Pole and Badger, this data set includes other small places near the Richardson Highway (Big Horn, Birch Lake, Harding Lake, Moose Creek, Plack, Richardson, Salcha, and Salchaket). Uncategorized jobs and industries with job counts too small to disclose in either year are excluded. Industries will not sum to the totals because of these exclusions.

¹Mostly refinery employment

²Private only. Public schools and tribal and municipal health employment are under government.

³Includes public schools but does not include the military.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Alaska has three main refineries today — Petro Star’s North Pole and Valdez refineries and the Marathon Petroleum Kenai Refinery in Nikiski — plus a handful of smaller operations around the state, such as topping and other specialty units.

Based on a range of publicly available estimates, between 15 and 25 percent of Alaska North Slope crude is refined in-state.

About 80 percent goes to West Coast refineries, mainly in Washington and California, according to energy market analytics company RBN Energy. (Cook Inlet crude production is far smaller than ANS, at less than 10,000 barrels per day, and is mainly refined in Nikiski.)

The seasonal farmer's market draws residents from all over the borough, showcasing the short but intense growing season.

Employment increased by almost 40 percent in 10 years

Although manufacturing employment fell with the refinery closure and remains about 35 percent lower a decade later, almost every other industry has added jobs since 2014. (See the table on the previous page.)

Transportation is the standout, with employment nearly tripling over the decade. About half of that sector's job growth is hauling between the Manh Choh Mine near Tetlin and Kinross' Fort Knox mill north of Fairbanks.

Overall, the North Pole area's job count increased from 1,677 to 2,342 over 10 years.

A look at the current economy

The refineries and Santa Claus House are visible markers that helped shape the area's identity, but most jobs are in other industries. Manufacturing makes up just 6 percent of the area's jobs, although some transportation jobs are linked.

The largest employer is construction (see the exhibit at the top of page 9), and about a third of construction employment is residential. Second-largest is the

transportation and warehousing sector at 14 percent of all jobs, then retail at 13 percent.

Job counts in construction and retail each increased by about 26 percent over the decade.

A hub with more shopping, services, and a farmer's market draws tourists and locals

Recent population growth has fueled many local industries. The town has more stores, clinicians, and community events than it had a decade ago. (See the table on page 9.)

A second grocery store, Three Bears, opened in North Pole in 2025. For many years, Safeway was the only major grocer.

Retail's growth also reflects its tourist draw. In addition to the hundreds of thousands who visit the Santa Claus House each year, North Pole receives ice carving festival attendees and others who travel to the borough for sled dog racing, aurora borealis viewing, and other cultural events.

North Pole also has its own seasonal farmer's market, which draws residents from all over the borough to the North Pole Plaza mall.

A range of crops dots the perimeter

Areas north and northeast of North Pole and around the Richardson are known for a range of crops, primarily peonies and grains. These include barley, oats, and wheat, which feed local livestock and supply home-brewing, distilling, and other specialties. Local forage crops also sustain area farms.

The farmer's market showcases the agricultural sector, which is the smallest at just 1 percent of North Pole's wage and salary jobs, but flourishes with the open, flat terrain and extreme seasons. Because North Pole is so close to the Arctic Circle, it gets 22-23 hours of sunlight at summer's apex with an hour or two of twilight, making its growing season short but intense.

Sara Whitney is the editor of *Alaska Economic Trends*. Reach her in Juneau at (907) 465-6561 or sara.whitney@alaska.gov.

Alaska first for seasonal job swing

Gap between our winter job low and summer peak is 14%

By DAN ROBINSON

Alaska has about 14 percent more jobs in July than in January, the highest and lowest employment months. That difference is the largest by far among states.

Maine and Montana come closest with a 6 percent seasonal employment difference, and 40 states have seasonality of 4 percent or lower. The two least-seasonal states, California and Vermont, had high-to-low gaps of just under 2 percent in 2024, the most recent full year available.

Seafood processing, construction, tourism are especially seasonal

Nearly all of Alaska's major industries that have seasonal patterns peak during the summer, unlike

a few states with busier winter industries. Colorado and Utah, for example, get significant job bumps when their ski resorts open each year.

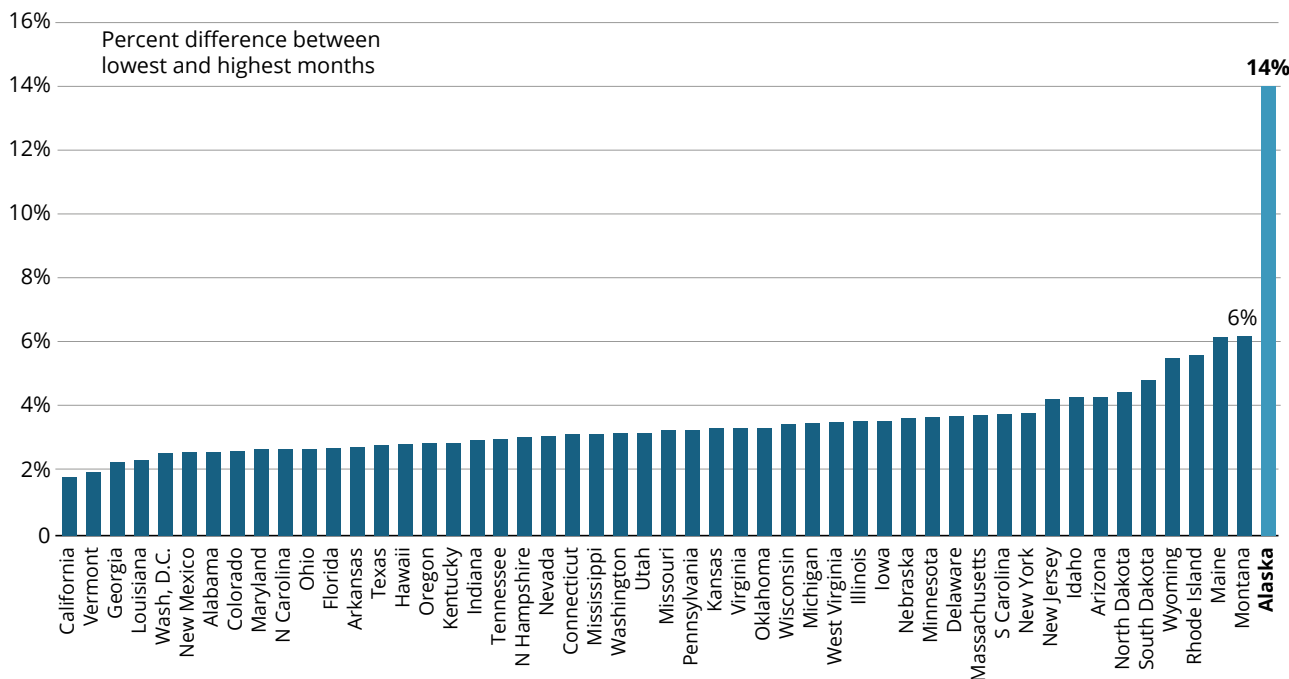
In Alaska, K-12 schools and universities are the seasonal exception: large employers that have less activity in the summer than the rest of the year.

Toward the opposite end is construction's high seasonality, which is probably not surprising in a northern state. August's high point of nearly 21,000 jobs in 2024 was 5,500 jobs above the January lull. Seafood processing's seasonality is Alaska's most extreme, though. The summer peak, July, typically has six to seven times more jobs than the December low.

Oil and gas is not very seasonal

It may seem counterintuitive that Alaska's oil and gas employment patterns are not noticeably

Alaska has the biggest seasonal employment swing of any state by far, 2024



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

seasonal, given that most jobs are well above the Arctic Circle, where darkness and extreme cold are factors. As the exhibit on the right shows, oil and gas employment shows no seasonal pattern, especially compared to the distinctly seasonal swings in construction employment.

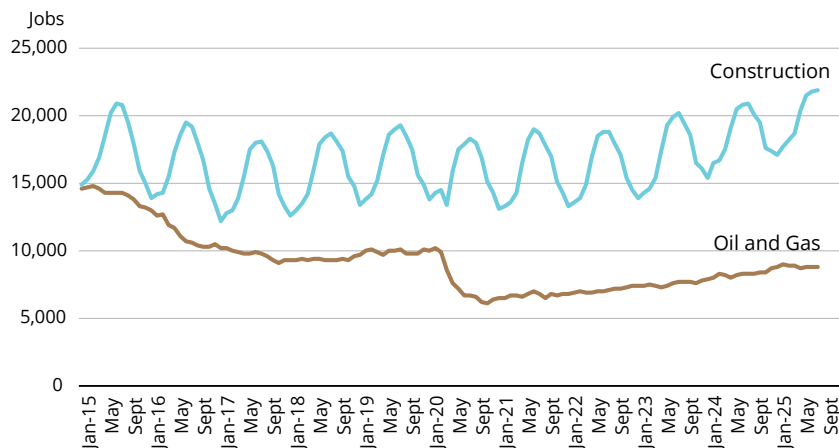
While the oil industry isn't seasonal overall, some work can only take place at certain times of the year. For about three months each winter, for instance, ice roads are built to help move the industry's large and heavy equipment. In the summer, activity shifts to drilling, exploration, and building that benefits from warmer weather and much more daylight.

Another reason for the lack of seasonality in oil and gas is that some of its jobs are year-round white-collar positions in Anchorage.

Alaska seasonality has fallen

In the 1960s, Alaska's employment seasonality was more than twice as high as it is now, with summer job peaks about 30 percent higher than winter lows.

Construction far more seasonal than oil and gas

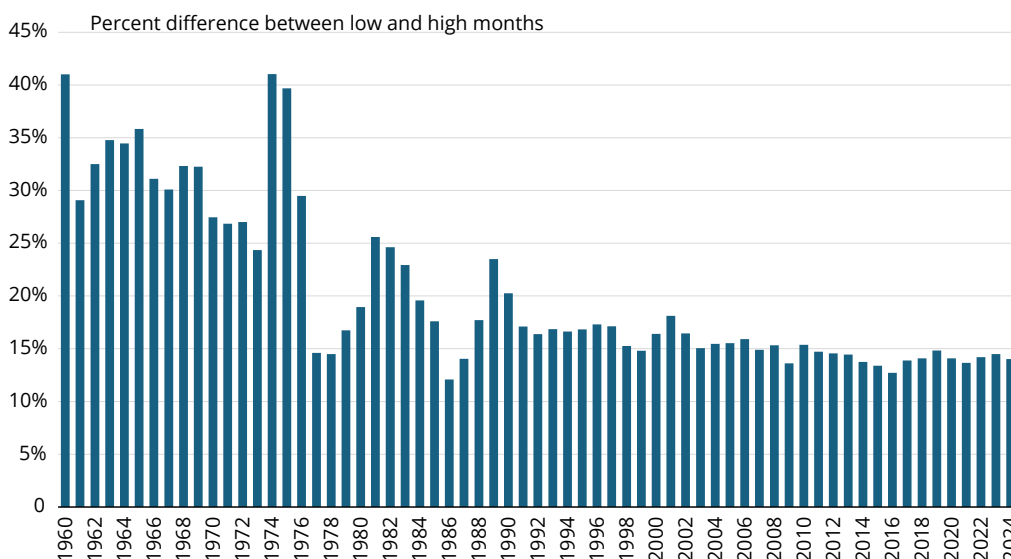


Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Preparing to build the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System juiced summer construction in the mid-1970s and drove seasonality even higher. It dropped way off when pipeline construction was completed, and oil began flowing in the summer of 1977.

After TAPS was complete, seasonal variations in the 1980s were mostly attributable to the ups and downs of construction during a boom-and-bust decade linked to oil and the state's new wealth. Construction had a seasonal high of nearly 27,000 jobs in 1983, but after the state's economy crashed, the peak in 1986 was just a little above 17,000.

Alaska's employment is less seasonal than it used to be



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Since the late 1980s recovery, Alaska's seasonality has trended gently downwards. Part of the explanation is that a growing population stimulated a variety of less seasonal industries such as health care and retail trade.

Drastic differences by area in Alaska

Alaska's overall seasonality, though highest among states, pales in comparison to what some parts of the state experience. Bristol Bay, for example, sees employment soar from about 500 in the depths of winter to more than 3,800 during the July salmon processing peak. (Fish harvesters are not counted in these numbers because they are self-employed.)

The Denali Borough and Skagway are dramatically seasonal because of tourism. Both have summer job numbers nearly four times higher than in January or February.

Anchorage has the smallest seasonal swing, though its 6 percent difference is still large compared to most states. The summer drop in school-related jobs in Anchorage moderates the summer increases in most other sectors.

One of the most unusual patterns for Alaska is in the Kusilvak Census Area in western Alaska, where October is the annual high point, and July is the low. Kusilvak gets very little summer tourism because of its sparse population and limited infrastructure. Subsistence (which these numbers don't reflect), combined with the summer school break, also reduces summer employment.

Implications of high seasonality

Such large seasonal employment swings likely contribute to Alaska also having the nation's largest gross migration rate — the percentage of the population that moves into or out of the state each

Fishing, tourism areas are the most seasonal, 2024

Borough or census area	Job peak	Peak month	Job low	Low month	Seasonal difference
Bristol Bay Borough	3,828	July	499	Jan	667%
Denali Borough	3,624	Jun/Jul	919	Jan	294%
Skagway, Municipality	2,122	Aug	550	Feb	286%
Aleutians East Borough	2,610	July	691	Dec	278%
Aleutians West Census Area	4,444	Mar	2,129	Dec	109%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	1,417	June	691	Jan	105%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,359	July	692	Nov	96%
Haines Borough	1,408	Aug	766	Feb	84%
Chugach Census Area	4,862	July	2,951	Jan	65%
Copper River Census Area	1,469	Aug	933	Jan	57%
Yakutat, City and Borough	402	Sept	258	Dec	56%
Dillingham Census Area	2,868	July	1,894	Jan/Dec	51%
Sitka, City and Borough	5,749	July	3,916	Jan	47%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	8,836	July	6,216	Jan	42%
Petersburg Borough	1,519	July	1,111	Dec	37%
Kusilvak Census Area	2,240	Oct	1,641	July	37%
Kodiak Island Borough	6,297	July	4,817	Dec	31%
Wrangell, City and Borough	901	July	701	Jan	29%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,662	Jun	2,130	Jan	25%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	24,014	June	19,721	Jan	22%
Prince of Wales-Hyder CA	2,386	Aug	1,970	Jan	21%
Juneau, City and Borough	19,750	Aug	16,510	Jan	20%
North Slope Borough	12,683	Dec	11,480	Jan	10%
Northwest Arctic Borough	3,178	Sept	2,883	Jan	10%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	39,844	Aug	36,150	Jan	10%
Nome Census Area	4,175	Oct	3,802	Jan	10%
Bethel Census Area	6,864	June	6,266	Apr	10%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	31,183	Sept	28,480	Jan	9%
Southeast Fairbanks CA	3,336	Jul/Aug	3,128	Jan	7%
Anchorage, Municipality	152,556	Sept	144,019	Jan	6%

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

year. Seafood processing, tourism, and construction bring a lot of people into the state, but many of those workers don't stay, or can't, because they need year-round work.

Of the 400,000-plus people who hold a wage or salary job in Alaska each year, about 20 percent don't stay long enough to establish residency. Many work for just a few months in the summer before returning to their home states.

Employers can hire residents from other states to take seasonal jobs in Alaska with minimal administrative hassle — a benefit to Alaska employers — though travel to and from the state adds cost. To the extent employers hire people from other countries, though, which is common for seafood processors, work visas can be challenging to obtain and create uncertainties from year to year.

Dan Robinson is the chief of Research and Analysis. Reach him in Juneau at (907) 465-6040 or dan.robinson@alaska.gov.

Gauging The Economy

Where are the new numbers?

Because the federal government shut down on Oct. 1, the data we typically use to generate the employment numbers and unemployment rate each month in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics were not produced or available for this issue.

Although the shutdown ended in mid-November, a lag will persist for a couple of months because some numbers that would have been reported over subsequent months were not collected during the shutdown.

Other Economic Indicators

	Current		Year ago	Change
Urban Alaska Consumer Price Index (CPI-U, base: 1982-84=100)	270.441	1st half 2025	264.376	+2.3%
Commodity prices				
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope,* per barrel	\$65.70	Oct 2025	\$74.62	-12.0%
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$3.35	Oct 2025	\$2.58	+30.2%
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$4,056.50	11/20/25	\$2,648.20	+53.2%
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$50.25	11/20/25	\$30.96	+62.3%
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$4.96	11/20/25	\$4.14	+19.8%
Bankruptcies**	54	Q2 2025	69	-21.7%
Business	7	Q2 2025	6	+16.7%
Personal	47	Q2 2025	63	-25.4%
Unemployment insurance claims				
Initial filings	4,007	Oct 2025	3,959	+1.2%
Continued filings	17,227	Oct 2025	17,565	-1.9%
Claimant count	4,539	Oct 2025	4,609	-1.5%

*Department of Revenue estimate

**Third quarter would typically be available now but is delayed because of the federal government shutdown.

Sources for this page and the preceding three pages include Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Bloomberg; U.S. Census Bureau; Yahoo Finance: COMEX; Alaska Department of Revenue; and U.S. Courts, 9th Circuit

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

Eligible Training Provider List shows proven programs

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Eligible Training Provider List is a compilation of statewide education and training programs for Alaska's in-demand occupations and industries. The ETPL displays useful information on training providers, their services, and the quality of their programs.

Students and prospective employers can be assured the programs on the ETPL are of the highest quality with the best success rates for graduates. This list can help businesses looking for a skilled Alaskan workforce, training or apprenticeship providers who want to attract candidates, and workers and job seekers who want to know which programs are best for gaining valuable skills and credentials.

Our Alaska Job Center Network staff uses the ETPL to find the most successful training for their clients.

Eligible students enrolled in a listed program also have access to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding, which can help pay for training and other supportive services.

More information about the Division of Employment and Training Services' ETPL, including guidelines for joining and the AlaskaJobs Provider Guide, [are available here](#).

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