JOB OUTLOOK

of workers needed by employers are diffi- government and in private firms over the cult quantitative values to determine. long term. The operation of many state The availability of jobs depends upon funded programs will necessitate technimany factors including national economic cal and professional staff additions. trends, seasonality of occupations, health of the Alaskan economy, competi- JOB OUTLOOK tion from other workers and the qualifications of the workers. The status of Currently the prospective job seeker is major projects and programs is also im- faced with Alaska's normal seasonal downportant in determining the anticipated turn which makes the search for employment. needs of industry and resulting opportun- a difficult undertaking. With normally ities for the Alaskan labor force, high unemployment rates during the first

# OVERVIEW

the economy in general. Fast growing in- employment are all at their low ebb. dustries provide the greatest opportuni- Manufacturing and construction employment ties for new employment. dustries have large needs during their tuations. Total employment is normally respective seasons. The state's economy 6 percent below the annual average has been very sluggish during the last during the first calendar quarter. This few years given the post oil pipeline year's seasonal downturn has been temdownturn which resulted in an excess pered to a certain extent by increased supply of labor and excess housing and oil industry employment during the winter business capacity in Anchorage and Fair- months and moderate employment changes banks. Over the past three years annual in federal and state government agencies average employment increased less than during the year. The seasonal constru-2 percent. Some occupations in some ction industry has been most negative-geographic areas have shown signifi- ly impacted by the slow growth in the cant increases in occupational demand, economy, resulting from high interest such as oil industry employment on the rates and an overbuilt condition in North Slope.

pected to grow at an annual rate of housing units authorized has declined approximately four percent for the during the last three years. The total next few years. This employment increase number of new single family units has will result from additional oil company stabilized but multifamily construction investment in exploration, drilling and has declined significantly. Home confield development on the North Slope; struction in Anchorage and most other state capital timber harvesting on Native lands in stable due to interest subsidies but Southeast Alaska; mineral exploration; multifamily construction is expected to government employment; and direct or remain low due to excess supply and high indirect redistribution of oil revenues interest rates. Total housing units by the state to citizens.

OCCUPATIONAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND: CURRENT Local government employment growth will be most pronounced, but state government employment is expected to grow as well. By Jeff Hadland The large number of capital projects should create an increased need for The available labor supply and the number engineering and design workers in state

calendar quarter of the year, the job seeker is in direct competition with seasonally laid off workers. Construc-The occupational demand in Alaska mirrors tion, timber, fishing and tourism related Seasonal in- exhibit the most extreme seasonal fluc-Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Total wage and salary employment is ex- Statewide, the total value and number of expenditures; increased areas of the state is expected to remain authorized in Anchorage in 1980 is about one-third the number authorized in 1975.

While housing and building construction has last year with higher prices anticipated. slumped, heavy construction will be posi- Last year's international surplus of saltively impacted by the 1980 legislative mon drove prices down, but markets are appropriations. The 1981 spring and summer expected to improve with increased demand months are expected to provide greater in the international markets. Fishing employment opportunities for construction industry jobs are competitive and diffiworkers. construction jobs over employment levels considering the relatively short but inof the last few years will occur as a tense employment period. result of the building of roads and structures, hydroelectric projects, harbors and cultural facilities.

Major construction projects to be worked show significant numbers of union members on this summer include ARCO's new \$30 without jobs. The construction and labormillion, 21 story Anchorage office build- ers unions have the highest proportion of ing, portions of the \$65 million "Project unemployed. Clearly there is a large 80's" program in Anchorage, state financed source of unemployed workers available airports, roads and harbors throughout should there be a major increase in conthe state and hydroelectric projects for struction activity. (Out of work statis-Ketchikan, Sitka and Valdez. Construction tics for unions may tend to overstate employment should increase over last year, unemployment of Alaskans. Many union with most jobs available in the south- members are out of state or working at central region. Over 40 percent of the other jobs). Heavy equipment operators state's capital projects budget will be are in excess supply in Anchorage, Fairspent in Southcentral Alaska.

Alaska timber industry activity is expected age building trade industry are one of to be modest during the first part of the the few areas with significant occupayear, but employment could increase signi- tional demand. Alaska's ficantly later in the year. forest products industry is subject to Shortages of certain skilled secretaries the needs of the world market and current and mechanics exist in Anchorage and demand is slack. Timber processing (saw- Fairbanks areas. Skilled clerical workmills, pulp) will experience a moderate ers are the most frequent job service level of activity with no major gains applicants and the expected.

billion in Alaska this year and some \$10 are all areas of employment opportunity. billion over the next five years. Upcoming activity on the North Slope in- Highly technical and professional occupacludes development well drilling, water tions are not generally listed through injection and other projects all designed job service locations and are sometimes to improve well performance and find other recruited from outside the state. Private oil sources. The transportation industry employment firms report a shortage of is expected to benefit greatly from the management, administrative, sales and increased activity in Interior Alaska in finance workers who are able to contrisupport of the oil industry.

not outstanding. Total catches for salmon make finding a job a much easier underand crab are expected to be lower than taking.

An increase of 1,500 to 2,000 cult but can be financially rewarding

airports, Current opportunities in typically union jobs remain limited. Union membership and out of work statistics for November banks and most other areas of the state according to local employment service Due to poor market conditions Southeastern reports. Electrician jobs in the Anchor-

most frequently placed. Turnover is high due to relatively low wages. Cooks, electricians, The oil industry plans to invest \$1.6 technicians, engineers and bank tellers

sales and bute to a company with little training required. As is generally the case, ex-The fishing industry outlook is good, but perience and readily identifiable skills

## LONGER TERM OUTLOOK

still awaiting decisions and financing or minerals, are areas of employment opporwhich are of questionable economic via- tunity that may provide new or additionbility. The major delay in full scale al jobs during the first half of the initiation of work on the Northwest Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline centers on financing problems. The project is expected to have significant employment impacts, although substantially less than those experienced during the conthe oil pipeline. IF struction of CONSTRUCTION PROCEEDS ON SCHEDULE MAJOR HIRING WOULD NOT OCCUR UNTIL 1983. A natural gas liquids pipeline and petrochemical project is also being considered with the outcome of those projects still during the coming year. uncertain. The gas liquids and natural education for job seekers should be congas projects will need skilled construc- sidered now. Consult your local Job Sertion workers, welders, and other crafts. vice Office and Planning Information for OCS exploration, hardrock mineral explo- Vocation Education, Alaska Department of ration, and major mining projects which Labor, Research and Analysis.

will employ heavy equipment operators and skilled technical people for discov-There are several major projects which are ering, extracting and/or processing the decade.

## SUMMARY

In general, employment opportunities are available for those with the right skills in the right place. Summer projects will provide a large number of seasonal jobs. The total number of jobs should be greater than last year's peak. Anchorage will provide the largest number of job openings Training and

### ALASKA'S LABOR FORCE IN JANUARY

### by Brit Harvey

Statewide employment followed the usual seasonal trend in January, decreasing from December by 3,700 jobs, or 2.3 percent. The January figure was 4.4 percent above year-ago employment, indicating moderate statewide growth.

Oil and gas extraction paced the growth from last January with approximately 1150 more jobs; and also registered a 5.7 percent increase over December. Unlike most Alaska industries, oil and gas activities maintain high employment throughout the winter. This counter-cyclical situation is due to a variety of industry activities which can occur only when the Prudhoe Bay area is frozen. Environmental restrictions limit exploratory off-shore drilling to the winter months and allow transportation over land only when snow and ice protect the tundra. Lower than usual temperatures this year allowed ice roads to be completed earlier than expected. Employment in the forest product manu-

The opening of the Kuparuk field west of Prudhoe Bay has contributed to greater employment this year.

Several other industries expanded employment. State-funded education increased 14.9 percent over year ago levels, influenced by growth in the University of Alaska system. Engineering, architecture and surveying, though experiencing a seasonal decline of 4.5 percent from December, remained 15.5 percent above year-ago levels, reflecting advance work for major hydroelectric, highway, public building and petroleum-related construction. Retail food employment increased by nearly 100 jobs for the month and by 600 compared to last year, a 17.1 percent in-Federal government remained crease. steady for the month, and increased by over 1,000 jobs from January 1980.