



# City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.  
Valdez, AK 99686

## Meeting Agenda

### Economic Diversification Commission

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Wednesday, September 7, 2016

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

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#### REGULAR AGENDA - 7:00 PM

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

#### II. ROLL CALL

#### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. [Economic Diversification Meeting Minutes](#)

**Attachments:** [Final ED draft 07062016 minutes](#)

#### IV. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

#### V. NEW BUSINESS

1. [Discussion Item: Strategic Initiatives](#)

#### VI. REPORTS

1. [Alaska Economic Trends - August 2016](#)

**Attachments:** [Trends Magazine August 2016.pdf](#)

2. [Accessible Communities PowerPoint Presentation](#)

**Attachments:** [Accessible Community.pptx](#)

#### VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT



## Agenda Statement

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**File #:** 16-0067      **Version:** 1

**Type:** Minutes      **Status:** Agenda Ready

**File created:** 8/16/2016      **In control:** Economic Diversification Commission

**On agenda:** 8/17/2016      **Final action:**

**Title:** Economic Diversification Meeting Minutes

**Sponsors:**

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** [Final ED draft 07062016 minutes](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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### **ITEM TITLE:**

Economic Diversification Meeting Minutes

**SUBMITTED BY:** Selah Bauer

### **FISCAL NOTES:**

Expenditure Required: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Unencumbered Balance: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Funding Source: [Click here to enter text.](#)

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

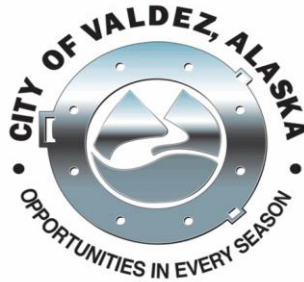
Approval

### **SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

Economic Diversification Meeting Minutes

# City of Valdez

*212 Chenega Ave.  
Valdez, AK 99686*



## Meeting Minutes - Final

Wednesday, July 6, 2016

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

**Economic Diversification Commission**

## WORK SESSION AGENDA - 6:00 pm

### Joint Work Session Ports & Harbor/ED Commissions

**Attachments:**

[Valdez Marine Center.pdf](#)

[Port of Valdez Study 2015.pdf](#)

Joint meeting between the Ports and Harbors Commission and the Economic Diversification Commission.

## REGULAR AGENDA - 7:00 PM

### I. CALL TO ORDER

### II. ROLL CALL

**Present** 9 - Chair Amanda Bauer  
Chair Pro Tempore David Dengel  
Commission Member Mike Meadors  
Commission Member Scott Hicks  
Commission Member Keith Thomas  
Commission Member Rhonda Wade  
Sr. Office Assistant Keri Talbott  
Director of Community & Economic Development Lisa Von Bargaen  
Staff Contractor Lamar Cotten

**Excused** 1 - Commission Member Colleen Stephens

### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### 1. Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2016.

**Attachments:** [06012016 draft minutes edited.docx](#)

**MOTION: Commission Member Meadors moved, seconded by Commission Member Thomas,**

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to Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2016. The motion carried by the following vote after the following discussion occurred.

Regular Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2016

**Yays:** 6 - Chair Bauer, Chair Pro Tempore Dengel, Commission Member Meadors, Commission Member Hicks, Commission Member Thomas, and Commission Member Wade

**Excused:** 1 - Commission Member Stephens

2. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2016

**Attachments:** [06152015 draft minutes edited.docx](#)

**MOTION:** Commission Member Thomas moved, seconded by Commission Member Hicks, to Approve Regular Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2016. The motion carried by the following vote after the following discussion occurred.

Regular Meeting Minutes of June 15th, 2016

**Yays:** 6 - Chair Bauer, Chair Pro Tempore Dengel, Commission Member Meadors, Commission Member Hicks, Commission Member Thomas, and Commission Member Wade

**Absent:** 1 - Commission Member Stephens

IV. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

V. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Americans with Disabilities Act Background Information

**Attachments:** [ADA small town.pdf](#)  
[ADA Common Problems.pdf](#)

Mr. Cotten explained that Ms. Von Bargaen had given a quick overview at the last meeting on what the challenges are, and that the City is looking at hiring a designer to identify what the needs is to be ADA compliant. Capital Facilities Director Jason Miles stated that the plan is to go out to bid for a Request for Proposals to identify needs and increment work in phases. Mr. Cotten explained that there were two overarching goals: The community as a whole, with aging population, and retaining them.

The second portion was something Commissioner Stephens brought up on the economic aspect of it. She suggested there parts of the ADA package that can be sold as part of the message that Valdez is a great place to be. She thinks it will have an impact on people visiting an isolated Alaska town if ADA items are addressed.

Commissioner Meadors stated that this might be a good topic at one of the monthly business luncheons - educate the business community that they do have a responsibility in providing ADA compliant facilities. Ms. Von Bargaen stated that there are communities in Alaska who have adopted this and are seeing significant benefits. She explained that it would be nice to see if there is a representative who would come and talk about that. It would be a good thing.

Mr. Cotten explained he would put these people on the list to contact and have them give a presentation when it is convenient for them to come down. Mr. Cotten asked if there is a priority list the Commission wants him to follow or if he should schedule them whenever they were available. The Commissioners agreed whenever they are available would work.

## 2. Discussion Item: Strategic Initiatives

**Attachments:** [Valdez Strategic Initiatives - 6-15-16.docx](#)  
[City of Valdez EDC letter Dennis Ragsdale-a.docx](#)  
[Draft letter EDC to Council on zoning Enforcement.docx](#)  
[BRE status 6.30.2016-A.docx](#)  
[Valdez BRE Project Information 7.6 2016.docx](#)  
[Alaska RuralRetention Survey-Ethan Tyler .pdf](#)  
[SBDC Annual Report 2015.pdf](#)  
[July 13 Valdez Luncheon.docx](#)

Mr. Cotten explained that the memo Ms. Houston put together was from information from the last meeting. Abatement issues have been brought up several times and this would be another great topic to discuss with the City Council. Commissioner Thomas questioned when they would be able to meet with the City Council. Ms. Von Bargaen stated she would inquire with the City Clerk. Commissioner Dengel stated that when they sent the memo to the City Council it should lay out what items they wanted to talk about.

Mr. Cotten stated that two of the items are housing and abatement. He inquired what other topics they should list. Ms. Von Bargaen stated they should tell the City Council that their recommendation is to hire a full time Economic Diversification person instead of a VHIA person as staff. Commissioner Dengel stated that they needed to get confirmation from the City Council that they are moving in the direction that the Council envisioned.

Mr. Cotten explained that he attached a copy of the Survey with the BRE information. It's called the Alaska Rural Retention Survey. Mr. Ethan Tyler gave an overview at the last meeting. Mr. Cotten explained his memo includes things that have been learned since the last meeting. The program provides interviews along with the compiling of the data and then a staff person works with businesses who did want to follow up and get benefits. Benefits like programs, or direction on where to receive assistance.

Mr. Cotten stated that he and Ms. Von Bargen were getting ready to draft a letter for the mid-year budget to see if they could get funding to fund this program; halftime person for one year. They identify what the needs are and get assistance for the businesses.

Mr. Cotten explained that he and Ms. Houston had met with a representative from SBDC, Small Business Development Center. Ms. Houston explained they help with small business development. They had met with Isaac who is the executive director statewide. They are part of the UAA Business Center.

Ms. Houston explained that the program is part of the University system that provides assistance for small business development also. Talking with Isaac they had discussed about having a remote advisor. He explained that with any business advisor with the University has to make certain milestones. Those metrics are very hard to meet on time. Supporting those positions is very challenging. Ms. Houston explained that the best option for them is to have a meeting with Isaac and ask specific questions. There is an opportunity to get into a partnership.

Mr. Cotten explained that the August business meeting would be a good meeting to have Isaac attend and see if there is interest from the business community, and then meet again to see how to pursue this more. Isaac could talk about his program and possibly other programs. Commissioner Dengel stated it is important to gauge the interest of the community.

Mr. Cotten stated that Allie Ferko from the City Clerk's office had contacted him about having a lunch meeting with the Beautification Task Force on July 20th at noon. He stated he would send out the invitation to the Commission.

Mr. Cotten stated he wants to ask the Commission if the need is there to support some type of needs assessment for the New Boat Harbor and maintenance and repair. Commissioner Meadors stated yes.

Commissioner Hicks stated that their discussion could go on for days, but they needed to come up with a plan. Their role is to promote development. They should send a memo that there needs to be more strategy put into the development of the new boat harbor. Commissioner Dengel stated that the needs assessment is the approach to take. Director Miles stated that this is the ideal time to stop and take a closer look at a few of these things. He explained that it would be great to have the support of this Commission as well.

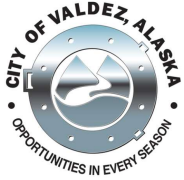
Mr. Cotten explained that Mr. Ragsdale, City Manager would be speaking at the July 13th business lunch meeting. Roads, Harbor, marketing, and possibly housing would be topics.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Bauer adjourned the meeting at 8:48 P.M.





## Agenda Statement

**File #:** 16-0068      **Version:** 1

**Type:** Discussion Item      **Status:** Agenda Ready

**File created:** 8/16/2016      **In control:** Economic Diversification Commission

**On agenda:** 8/17/2016      **Final action:**

**Title:** Discussion Item: Strategic Initiatives

**Sponsors:**

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:**

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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### **ITEM TITLE:**

Discussion Item: Strategic Initiatives

**SUBMITTED BY:** Lamar Cotten, ED Commission Staff Advisor

### **FISCAL NOTES:**

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

None. Discussion item only.

### **SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

Per our last meeting's discussions (7.6.16), attached please find an updated Strategic Initiative Overview. Secondly, below are key updates to the document since the July meeting.

1. Promote Housing Affordability and Availability. Request of the city to advance housing needs assessment. *Dennis Ragsdale, City Manager indicated he will have the task addressed in the broader community planning project.*
2. Enhance Senior and Developmental Disability Services and Oppt. *Per our internal discussions and a suggestion by Ruthie Knight, Mayor, EDC may want to consider a joint meeting with the Medical Center Health Advisory Council on issues of mutual concern. EDC requested a joint work session with the manager/mayor and city council. To date no meeting date has been determined.*

3. Downtown Beautification and Redevelopment. EDC and MBTF held a joint meeting on July 20th. There were no meeting minutes taken, however there is an available audio tape on line. Topic discussed included but were not limited to community-wide abate enforcement challenges, re-cycle issues, access to landfill, abandon buildings, use of the CoV baler, downtown themes, current and future use of Three Bears property, along with a general discussion of residential area clean up initiated and completed at the block level.

My initial thought was most of such matters were within the purview of city government and therefore would be handled by city administration or council action. However, EDC may want to explore a role in some of these issues.

*In our current Strategic Initiatives we list as a possible task,*

*“At the completion of the main street improvements, working w/ main street property owners to engage them in discussion and additional project opportunities.” My sense is that this task will be included in the upcoming broader community planning project. However, we could at some point recommend it to be a break-out task for EDC.*

4. Improve Marine-Related Facilities and Industries. EDC and Ports and Harbors Commission held a joint workshop meeting prior to our regular meeting held on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

*EDC directed staff to work with the harbor master and city CIP director on a draft harbor needs assessment scope of work. At this stage, both individuals are asking only for a cost estimate only and hold off on sending out the RfP until the CoV has a better read on other possible waterfront development in the area I sent a suggested cost (\$30,00) to staff based on a conversation with McDowell and local experts elsewhere.*

5. Link and Expand College Programs to Existing and New Industries. EDC staff has had a series of discussions with Dan O'Connor on a number of fronts. We both agreed that until issues such as waterfront development, housing development and business training move ahead that we are in holding pattern on working together on projects.

6. Reduce Energy Cost and Increase Access to Power. EDC still listed a group involved in energy production, government assistance programs and non-profits for an EDC meeting or business luncheon presentation in the near future. At this time, there are no other EDC action items.

7. Recreation/Tourism. At EDC's direction, Doug Toelle, Access Advocate, Fairbanks was this month's Business Luncheon guest speaker. There were about 20 local attendants. Mr. Toelle's compelling presentation focused on (1) adequate and affordable access for all local residents and (2) benefits to businesses, in particular tourism. Topics covered included but limited to:
- a. Loss of Dignity/Burden on Family;
  - b. Use of Universal Design Standards;
  - c. Signage and other common sense ideas;
  - d. Road and sidewalk access;
  - e. Community access map;
  - f. Bathroom use challenges and alternative designs;
  - g. Snow Plowing Priority;
  - h. Home Service Cost and other related challenges;
  - i. Entertainment Related Accessible;
  - j. Access investments during construction v. post construction;
  - k. Use of tax credits to encourage such investments;
  - l. Tourism packet should include access information; and
  - m. Better access to wilderness areas can require a small investment  
for a large return.

The core question for EDC is what role, if any, should it seek to advance increase public access in Valdez. If the EDC wants to head in that direction, it may wish to consider, in no particular order, the following steps.

- a. Have a joint meeting with the Medical Center Health Advisory Council on issues of mutual concern.
- b. Worked and possible serve as a sounding board for community concerns as the city assesses its properties as well possibly business properties to increase access benefits for public use.
- c. Lead or work with a group to continue public education efforts on improve access benefits
- d. Work with recreational interest to improve park access;
- e. Work with or the VCVB on issues of mutual concern;
- f. Investigate and possibly advance for council consideration housing tax credits for new housing with access improvement.

8. Increase Arctic and Water Related Training Program. There are no recent tasks, events or actions for this topic.

Business Luncheon Schedule. Our business luncheons entail the following:  
September 7th- Julie Nolen, Assistant State Director Alaska Small Business Development Center;  
Possible Second September Meeting-Silver Bay, Peter Pan and Valdez Fisheries Development  
Association-2016 Fisheries Report; October Year Around Mountain Recreation Site Study; November  
Summer-Winter Visitors Study.

Other Possible Candidates in no particular order include.

- A. Housing Matters-Pacific Rim Housing Authority; Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and a local bank representative.
- B. Possible Ship Yard Development in Valdez.
- C. The City Comprehensive Community Visioning-Redevelopment Program
- D. Update or Outlook by Alyeska representative.
- E. New Boat Harbor Construction Update and Implications for Business Development.



## Agenda Statement

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**File #:** 16-0069      **Version:** 1

**Type:** Report      **Status:** Agenda Ready

**File created:** 8/16/2016      **In control:** Economic Diversification Commission

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**Title:** Alaska Economic Trends - August 2016

**Sponsors:**

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**Attachments:** [Trends Magazine August 2016.pdf](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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### **ITEM TITLE:**

Alaska Economic Trends - August 2016

**SUBMITTED BY:** Lamar Cotten, ED Staff Advisor

### **FISCAL NOTES:**

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

None. Report only.

### **SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

Please see the attached Alaska Economic Trends Magazine. Page 11 begins an article discussion about the Valdez::Cordova Census District.

# ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

AUGUST 2016



## ALASKA'S RENTAL MARKET

### **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE**

How we spend our money  
The Valdez-Cordova area

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



## ALASKA'S RENTAL MARKET

Rents have held mostly steady in recent years

**PAGE 4**

By KARINNE WIEBOLD

## HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY

Data on Alaskans' personal consumption available for the first time

**PAGE 8**

By NEAL FRIED

## VALDEZ-CORDOVA

Vast census area covers towns with a broad range of identities

**PAGE 11**

By ALYSSA RODRIGUES

## THE MONTH IN NUMBERS

**PAGE 17**

To request a free electronic or print subscription, e-mail [trends@alaska.gov](mailto:trends@alaska.gov) or call (907) 465-4500.  
*Trends* is on the Web at [labor.alaska.gov/trends](http://labor.alaska.gov/trends).

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ON THE COVER: House keys photo by Flickr user Matte.  
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*Alaska Economic Trends* is a monthly publication whose purpose is to objectively inform the public about a wide variety of economic issues in the state. *Trends* is funded by the Employment and Training Services Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and is published by the department's Research and Analysis Section. *Trends* is printed and distributed by Assets, Inc., a vocational training and employment program, at a cost of \$1.37 per copy. Material in this publication is public information, and with appropriate credit may be reproduced without permission.

# AVTEC a world class training option for graduates



**Heidi Drygas**  
Commissioner

August in Alaska: The silver salmon are running, juicy berries are ready to be picked, and state fair season is in full swing. And for many families, August is time to get ready to go back to school.

For students entering their final years of high school, it's also time to make decisions about their futures. There's no better choice than AVTEC—Alaska's Institute of Technology for young Alaskans seeking high quality career training.

The state's world class training facilities are located in Seward, and its quality programs and instructors are primary reasons students enroll each year. With a 90 percent average over the last four years for job placement and a variety of job training options, it is a reliable provider of skilled training for Alaska students.

AVTEC provides room and board, and 10 months is the longest scheduled program. The courses are affordable and students will graduate well prepared to enter the workforce.

AVTEC's programs range from Business and Office Technologies (including Information Technology) to Maritime Training. This year, AVTEC opened a state-of-the-art Applied Technologies building for training Alaskans to maintain and operate a variety of heavy equipment, and for learning structural and pipe welding. Students will find a balance of shop and classroom experiences that readily transfers to careers in construction, welding, mining, or logging.

Each training program is monitored by industry advisors who review and approve curriculum, providing guidance to respond to changing workforce trends. AVTEC is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education, and its overall guidance for programs is derived from the Alaska Workforce Investment Board.

AVTEC's Energy Building Technologies programs provide a wide range of equip-

ment and training systems in construction trades, electrical, power production, plumbing and heating, and refrigeration. Graduates of the industrial electrical program can earn the "Golden Ticket" and articulate directly to the NECA/IBEW electrical apprenticeship training program. Many trainees from AVTEC programs are hired by employers that attend annual job fairs held in Seward each spring for this purpose.

The AVTEC Maritime Training Center, a U.S. Coast Guard approved training facility, boasts full mission bridge simulators that have the ability to replicate entry and exit into harbors across the world. These simulators can test different weather conditions, tidal flow and visibility, multiple vessels working together, and a wide range of ships that employees might pilot.

The maritime industry regularly contracts for its employees to train at AVTEC. Simulations provide the necessary training in a safe environment in terms of life and property while putting students through the grueling conditions of working at sea.

AVTEC's Professional Cooking and Baking program operates in an industrial kitchen and operational dining room. Students learn professional culinary skills and techniques using the same industrial kitchen equipment they will encounter throughout the culinary industry.

Finally, as a condition of completion, trainees must master the critical soft skills Alaska employers value: being safe, ethical, on time, and productive at work and mastering innovative thought processes with an eye for efficiency of operation.

Families with high school age students would be wise to consider how AVTEC can prepare young Alaskans for rewarding careers. For more information about the available training opportunities, please visit [www.avtec.edu](http://www.avtec.edu).



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



# ALASKA'S RENTAL MARKET



**Rents have held mostly steady in recent years**

## About the yearly rental survey

Each March, in cooperation with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development surveys thousands of landlords across the state to gather residential rental unit information. Data on approximately 15,000 units annually provide insight into statewide and local market conditions.

By **KARINNE WIEBOLD**

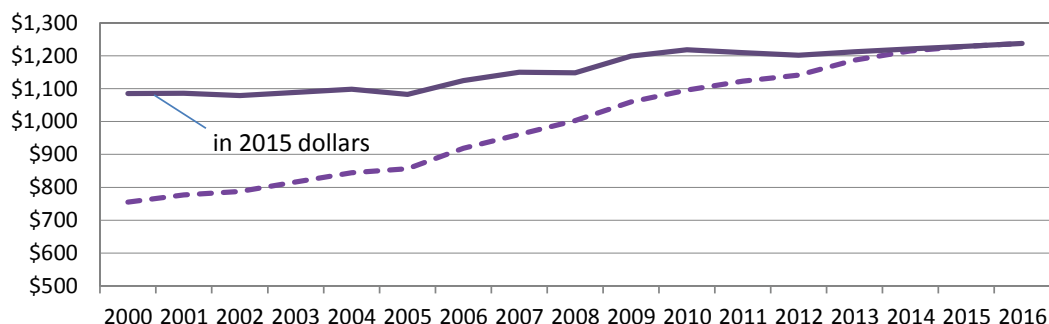
**O**ur 2016 annual residential rental survey shows that Alaska rents are essentially level with last year (see Exhibit 1) and the overall rental vacancy rate has fallen slightly.

Statewide, rents have increased just seven-tenths of a percentage point, or \$9, since last year, bringing the average rent for all unit types to \$1,238 including utilities.

Rents went up faster in some areas, such as the Kenai Peninsula Borough (up 7 percent), Valdez-Cordova Census Area (6 percent), and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough (4 percent). Anchorage, Kodiak, and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough rents each increased

## 1 Inflation-Adjusted Rent Has Been Flat in Recent Years

ALASKA AVERAGE RENTS INCLUDING UTILITIES, 2000 TO 2016



Notes: Rent includes utilities. Because 2016 inflation adjustments are not yet available, adjusted rent uses 2015 dollars.  
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Annual Residential Rental Survey

# 2 Rents and Vacancy Rates by Area

## FOR ALL TYPES OF UNITS, 2016

Survey Area	Average Rent		Median Rent		Number of Units			Percentage of Units with Utility Included in Contract Rent						
	Contract	Adjusted	Contract	Adjusted	Surveyed	Vacant	Vac Rate	Heat	Light	Hot Water	Water	Garbage	Sewer	Snow
Anchorage	\$1,135	\$1,259	\$1,075	\$1,214	8,215	311	3.8%	76.7%	22.4%	80.1%	48.7%	95.0%	48.7%	88.0%
Fairbanks N Star	\$1,049	\$1,199	\$1,000	\$1,115	2,955	330	11.2%	89.9%	15.8%	79.0%	92.6%	84.6%	92.0%	80.5%
Juneau	\$1,185	\$1,333	\$1,100	\$1,253	1,062	35	3.3%	52.0%	19.7%	47.5%	99.0%	90.7%	98.1%	78.9%
Kenai Peninsula	\$888	\$1,059	\$850	\$992	1,000	88	8.8%	67.1%	23.5%	64.3%	86.8%	72.6%	85.7%	76.5%
Ketchikan Gateway	\$990	\$1,122	\$984	\$1,094	389	36	9.3%	74.8%	33.9%	67.6%	50.6%	48.3%	50.6%	69.4%
Kodiak Island	\$1,288	\$1,448	\$1,250	\$1,419	363	29	8.0%	75.5%	9.1%	67.8%	97.8%	96.7%	97.8%	67.5%
Matanuska-Susitna	\$1,076	\$1,224	\$900	\$1,072	1,134	41	3.6%	47.6%	10.6%	46.2%	90.8%	70.9%	83.1%	70.2%
Sitka	\$979	\$1,230	\$900	\$1,163	276	23	8.3%	39.5%	8.7%	40.6%	13.0%	22.5%	26.1%	66.7%
Valdez-Cordova	\$1,189	\$1,365	\$1,100	\$1,300	237	14	5.9%	65.8%	34.2%	56.1%	78.5%	75.9%	78.5%	77.2%
Wrangell Petersburg	\$700	\$888	\$700	\$865	134	13	9.7%	53.0%	14.2%	44.0%	46.3%	49.3%	43.3%	54.5%
<b>Survey Total</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>	<b>\$1,238</b>	<b>\$1,050</b>	<b>\$1,175</b>	<b>16,025</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>73.8%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>72.4%</b>	<b>66.9%</b>	<b>86.4%</b>	<b>66.4%</b>	<b>82.1%</b>

Note: Contract rent is the amount paid to the landlord each month, and it may include some utilities. Adjusted rent includes all utilities.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Annual Residential Rental Market Survey

by less than 1 percent. Fairbanks was the only surveyed area whose rent fell, dropping 1 percent to \$1,199.

Changes in rents and vacancies affect more than 92,000 households in Alaska, or about a third of the state's total. Unlike home ownership, where monthly mortgage payments are established at purchase and remain fixed, rents are flexible and can move up or down in response to changing market conditions. Rents can be affected by changes in a community's population, jobs and wages, and the for-sale housing market. Though renters aren't insulated from price changes in the same way as homeowners, they can more easily change their housing costs by moving.

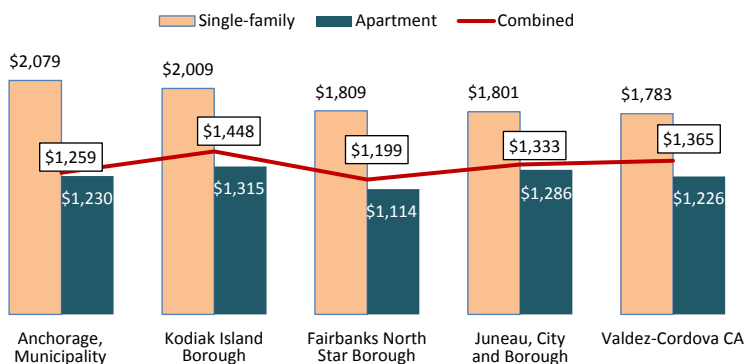
## High and low cost areas

Some communities are consistently more expensive than others. Higher cost areas include some of the state's most populated, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. Lower cost areas in the survey are Wrangell, Kenai, Ketchikan, Sitka,

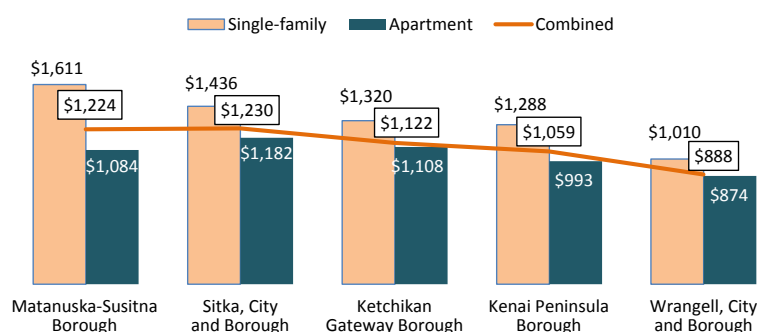
## 3 Higher and Lower Cost Markets

### ALASKA RENTS, 2016

#### Higher Cost Rental Markets



#### Lower Cost Rental Markets



Note: Adjusted to include utilities

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Annual Residential Rental Market Survey

and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough — although Mat-Su is an unusual case.

Mat-Su, the second most populated borough, falls close to the middle of the spread, even with vacancies well below the statewide average the last five years and the fastest rate of rent increase in the survey over the last 10 years, at 44 percent.

Thirty percent of working Mat-Su residents commute to Anchorage, where wages are considerably higher. Mat-Su also has a much higher rate of homeownership than Alaska overall, at 76 percent versus 63 percent.

In all markets, rents are highest for single-family houses, but the difference between the average apartment and the average single-family home can vary greatly. In Wrangell-Petersburg, a single-family home costs \$136 more, or 16 percent. The spread is much greater in Anchorage, with a single-family home costing \$849 more, or 69 percent. (See Exhibit 3.)

## Affordability remains constant

The rental affordability index looks at how many average wage earners are required to afford the average contract rent — the amount paid to the landlord each month — assuming 24 percent of gross income is available for rent.

Affording the average rent statewide requires a single wage earner. By area, Kenai and Wrangell-Petersburg are the most affordable, requiring less than a single earner, while Kodiak topped the charts by requiring 1.44 average earners.

Mat-Su, as discussed earlier, may have lower rent than some other places but it isn't necessarily more afford-

# 4

## Rental Affordability Indexes

PAYCHECKS NECESSARY, 2000 AND 2016

	2000	2016
Municipality of Anchorage	0.96	1.00
Fairbanks North Star Borough	0.99	1.04
Juneau, City and Borough	1.27	1.17
Kenai Peninsula Borough	0.93	0.92
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	1.11	1.10
Kodiak Island Borough	1.43	1.44
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	1.25	1.26
Sitka, City and Borough	1.20	1.15
Valdez-Cordova CA	1.09	1.11
Wrangell Borough-Petersburg CA	1.09	0.92
Survey-wide	1.01	1.01

Note: The affordability index measures how many monthly paychecks it would take to afford the area's average rent, using the area's average wages.

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

able for borough residents because average wages are also lowest. A bit more than a quarter of an additional paycheck is required to afford the average rent in Mat-Su.

When looking back to 2000, we can see affordability hasn't changed much in most places. (See Exhibit 4.) Wages and rents have been moving mostly in tandem.

## Vacancies go down slightly

The survey-wide vacancy rate of 5.8 percent was down nine-tenths of a percentage point from 2015, but equal to the 10-year average. (See Exhibit 5.)

# 5

## How Vacancy Rates Have Changed

ALASKA AREAS, 2000 TO 2016

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016
Municipality of Anchorage	4.3%	6.2%	5.2%	6.9%	4.7%	1.8%	2.6%	3.2%	3.8%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	8.3%	5.8%	9.9%	12.0%	10.6%	5.0%	8.3%	15.6%	11.2%
Juneau, City and Borough	5.0%	3.8%	4.2%	4.9%	5.5%	4.1%	3.2%	3.4%	3.3%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	12.3%	5.1%	13.0%	9.4%	8.0%	8.6%	5.5%	6.7%	8.8%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	13.4%	17.8%	7.5%	8.4%	7.1%	12.0%	8.2%	10.4%	9.3%
Kodiak Island Borough	7.5%	7.4%	8.2%	5.5%	4.0%	1.3%	2.3%	5.7%	8.0%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	6.2%	3.3%	5.0%	9.3%	5.6%	5.3%	3.5%	5.3%	3.6%
Sitka, City and Borough	8.1%	2.9%	4.4%	6.2%	11.9%	7.8%	7.7%	7.2%	8.3%
Valdez-Cordova CA	4.8%	8.3%	26.2%	8.6%	7.6%	6.4%	3.1%	3.5%	5.9%
Wrangell Borough-Petersburg CA	17.5%	22.1%	8.2%	12.7%	8.8%	4.4%	4.4%	5.6%	9.7%
Survey-wide	6.6%	6.8%	7.2%	8.2%	6.7%	3.9%	4.4%	6.2%	5.8%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Annual Residential Rental Survey

Fairbanks' vacancy rate of 11.2 percent was the highest in the survey but down considerably from last year, when it topped 16 percent, and only slightly below its five-year average of 11.4 percent. Military movements and population changes have historically factored into Fairbanks' vacancy rate shifts.

Anchorage (3.8 percent) and Juneau (3.3 percent) both have historically low vacancy rates. In Anchorage, the 2016 vacancy rate is right at the 10-year average, also 3.8 percent. Juneau's 3.3 percent is the same as its five-year average but below its 10-year average of 4.1 percent.

Vacant units say a lot about the rental market. When vacancies are low, the market is "tight" and the demand for units is high, indicating the potential for rents to rise. Because renters are competing for a limited number of units, landlords can charge more. In the long term, low vacancies may be incentive for developers to create more housing.

High vacancies show there are more rentals on the market than there is demand for, and landlords are under pressure to lower rents or offer incentives to attract tenants. Changes in vacancy rates can also mean renters are being attracted to or priced out of homeownership, or that the population is shifting.

When a community's vacancy rate changes, the important questions include: Has there been an influx of new residents? Have home prices fallen, making ownership an attractive alternative? Has a new industry come or gone, affecting jobs and wages? Has credit become easier or harder to come by, affecting the feasibility of ownership?

Although there's no consensus on an ideal vacancy rate, it's generally considered to be between 6 and 7 percent. Some level of vacancy at a variety of sizes and price points is necessary to accommodate renters coming and going. Also, between renters, landlords need to clean, paint, update, and show units to prospective tenants, all of which require periods of vacancy.

Vacancies put pressure on landlords to remain competitive, which benefits tenants by providing them with choice, and therefore power. With tenants having the choice of where to live, landlords have the incentive to compete for their dollars by keeping units in good repair, being responsive to existing tenants, and keeping prices competitive. Without some level of vacancy, this incentive disappears.

Karinne Wiebold is an economist in Juneau. Reach her at (907) 465-6039 or [karinne.wiebold@alaska.gov](mailto:karinne.wiebold@alaska.gov).

# HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY

**Data on Alaskans' personal consumption available for the first time**

By **NEAL FRIED**

**P**ersonal consumption spending by state was released for the first time last year, and it showed Alaskans consumed \$34 billion in goods and services in 2014. These statistics are important nationally because personal consumption expenditures represent about two-thirds of U.S. economic activity. It's a closely watched economic indicator with the power to move the stock market and affect economic policy.

Personal consumption is often considered the nation's broadest measure of how consumers feel about the economy — the prevailing wisdom is that if we're spending more, things must be good, and vice versa. Although what we can conclude from the state data alone is limited (see the sidebar for more information), it can help paint a more comprehensive picture of the state's economy when combined with other economic indicators, such as employment and income.

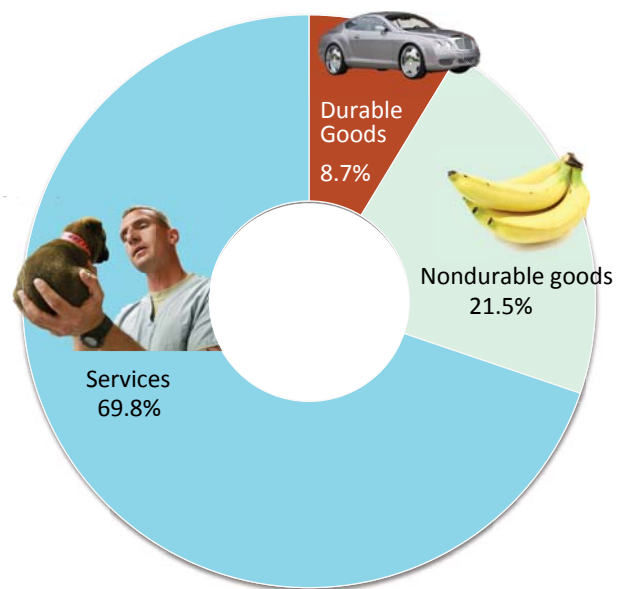
## Where we spent this \$34 billion

This \$34 billion went mainly toward services, at 70 percent. (See Exhibit 1.) Services include not just what we spend in obvious places such as the barbershop or mechanic's garage, but what's spent on our behalf. The biggest piece is in health care, which includes what employers, Medicare, and Medicaid contribute.

The other 30 percent is for "stuff," which is broken down into durables and nondurables. Durable goods

## 1 We Mainly Buy Services

ALASKA PERSONAL CONSUMPTION, 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

include items that last at least three years, such as cars, furniture, and many appliances. Nondurables include not just food but clothing, gasoline, and medication — things that typically come to mind when we think of consumables.

Alaska consumers don't spend much differently from

## A new statistic for Alaska

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, which releases the monthly national personal consumption expenditure data, released the first statistics for individual states in 2015. Unlike the national data, BEA calculated the state figures on an annual basis and released them two years after the fact.

This first release was for 1997 through 2014, making it more of a “rearview mirror” economic indicator than a hint at future trends. The categories are also broad and lack detail. Finally, most of the data come not from consumers but other sources such as the more business-oriented economic census conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Despite these shortcomings, Alaska’s personal consumption expenditure data can be useful for looking at the big economic picture when combined with other state indicators. It can also help explain some of the differences and similarities between Alaskan consumer behavior and the rest of the nation and, because the data go back to 1997, provide historical economic insight.

the rest of the nation, which may seem surprising, as we’re often outliers in other economic indicators. (See Exhibit 2.) One exception is health care, where we spend 20 percent of our consumer dollars versus 16 percent nationwide.

Alaska’s health care costs are higher than anywhere else in the country, at an average of \$9,303 per person in 2014. In contrast, the national average was \$6,128. Alaskans also spent more on food, both at the grocer and at restaurants, as a share of total consumption as well as per capita.

## 2 How Per Capita Spending Compares ALASKA AND THE U.S., 2014

	Alaska	Percent Share	U.S.	Percent Share
<b>Personal consumption expenditures</b>	<b>\$46,229</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$37,196</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>GOODS</b>	<b>\$14,008</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>\$12,365</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Durable goods</b>	<b>\$4,031</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>\$4,015</b>	<b>11%</b>
Motor vehicles and parts	\$1,113	2%	\$1,381	4%
Furnishings and durable household equipment	\$1,000	2%	\$903	2%
Recreational goods and vehicles	\$1,464	3%	\$1,112	3%
Other durable goods	\$455	1%	\$619	2%
<b>Nondurable goods</b>	<b>\$9,977</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>\$8,350</b>	<b>22%</b>
Food and beverages purchased for off-premises consumption	\$3,924	8%	\$2,780	7%
Clothing and footwear	\$964	2%	\$1,157	3%
Gasoline and other energy goods	\$1,451	3%	\$1,258	3%
Other nondurable goods	\$3,638	8%	\$3,155	8%
<b>SERVICES</b>	<b>\$32,221</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>\$24,831</b>	<b>67%</b>
Household consumption expenditures (for services)	\$30,272	65%	\$23,820	64%
Housing and utilities	\$7,591	16%	\$6,720	18%
Health care	\$9,303	20%	\$6,128	16%
Transportation services	\$1,100	2%	\$1,112	3%
Recreation services	\$1,416	3%	\$1,429	4%
Food services and accommodations	\$3,274	7%	\$2,355	6%
Financial services and insurance	\$3,363	7%	\$2,768	7%
Other services	\$4,226	9%	\$3,309	9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

In most of the larger categories, such as housing and transportation, Alaskans’ consumption patterns mimicked the rest of the country. A small surprise was that “outdoorsy” Alaskans actually spent slightly less for recreational services and the same percentage on recreational goods and vehicles.

### Per capita, Alaska spending is high

Overall, our per capita consumption expenditure was high, ranking us fourth among states at \$46,229. (See Exhibit 3.)

Big spending is partly due to how expensive things are in Alaska, but it’s also because we tend to have more to spend. Alaska ranked

## 3 Alaska Ranks 4th Nationwide

### PERSONAL CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURES, 2014

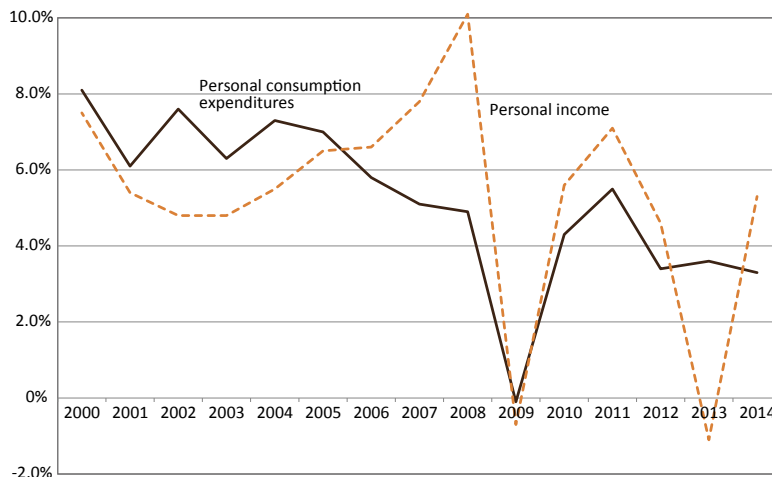
1	Massachusetts	\$48,020
2	North Dakota	\$47,739
3	New Hampshire	\$46,633
<b>4</b>	<b>Alaska</b>	<b>\$46,229</b>
5	Connecticut	\$45,844
6	New Jersey	\$45,496
7	Vermont	\$44,768
8	New York	\$43,727
9	Delaware	\$41,701
10	Maryland	\$41,460
	United States	\$37,196

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



## 4 Consumption Tracks With Income

### ALASKA, ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGE, 2000 TO 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

sixth among states for personal income and first for gross domestic product per capita in 2015.

Gross domestic product can be a good gauge of economic well-being because it measures, to some degree, the productivity of a workforce. However, only part of the GDP accrues to Alaska residents. A large slice goes to the federal government, multinational companies, and individuals and businesses outside the state. Personal income, however, is closely related to personal consumption. It accrues only to Alaskans, and as Exhibit 4 shows, how much we receive in income affects how much we buy.

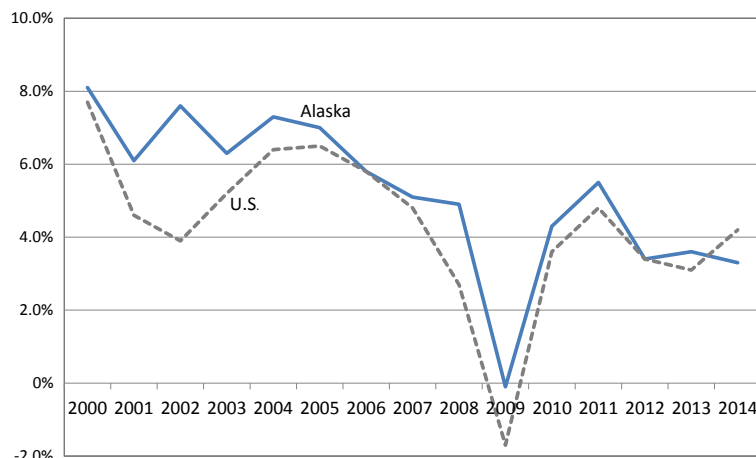
## Alaska's spending grew faster

Since 2000, Alaska's personal consumption expenditures grew faster than the nation's every year except 2014, at an annual average of 5 percent versus 4 percent. (See Exhibit 5.) During this 15-year period, the nation fell into two recessions, including the "Great Recession" of the late 2000s when Alaska's downturn was comparatively mild. Rates fell for both Alaska and the U.S. in 2009, but Alaska's dipped 0.1 percent while the nation's expenditures dropped by 1.7 percent.

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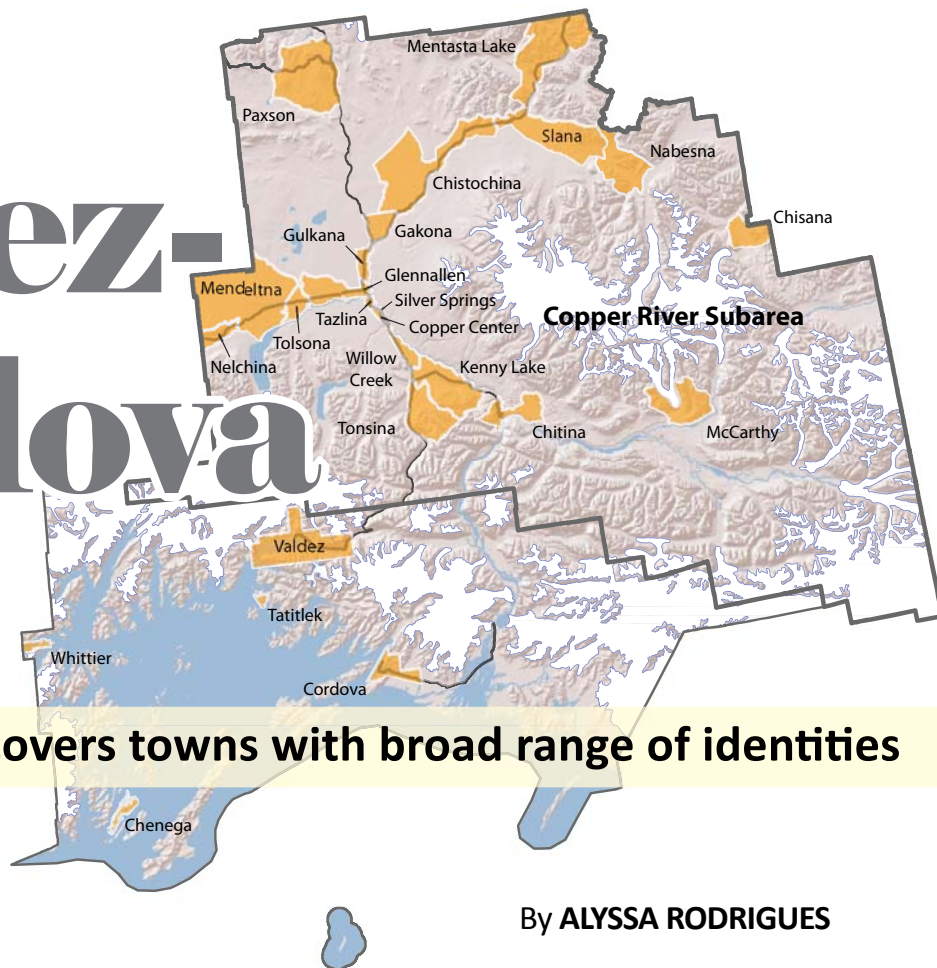
## 5 Consumption Trends for Alaska, U.S.

### ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGE, 2000 TO 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

# Valdez-Cordova



**Vast census area covers towns with broad range of identities**

By **ALYSSA RODRIGUES**



The Sheridan Glacier is between the Copper River Delta and Cordova. Photo by Flickr user Russ Wigh

**B**esides their foundation in natural resources, the communities that make up the vast Valdez-Cordova Census Area have little in common. The land, which is the size of Kentucky, extends from Mentasta Lake in the north to Chenega in the south, Whittier in the west, and the Canadian border in the east. It's home to more than 20 unincorporated communities and just three cities: Valdez, Cordova, and Whittier.

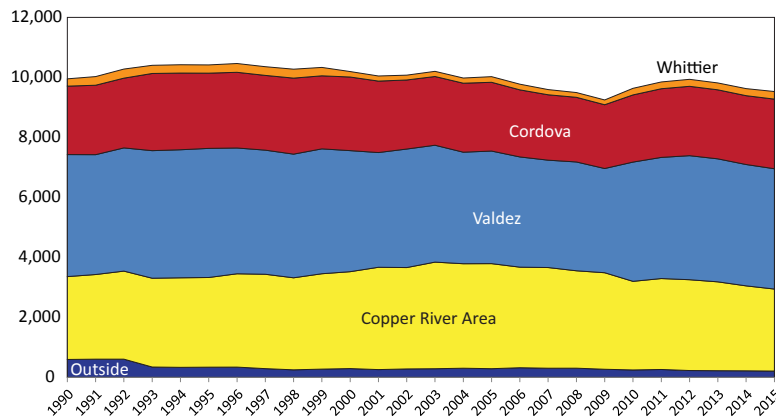
The population throughout the census area is older — a median 39 years versus 35 for Alaska in 2015 — and the population and job numbers have been fairly stable since the 1990s. (See exhibits 1 through 3.) But that's where the major similarities end. From industries and wages to racial makeup, the region varies drastically from one place to another.



# 1

## Steady Population

VALDEZ-CORDOVA, 1990 TO 2015

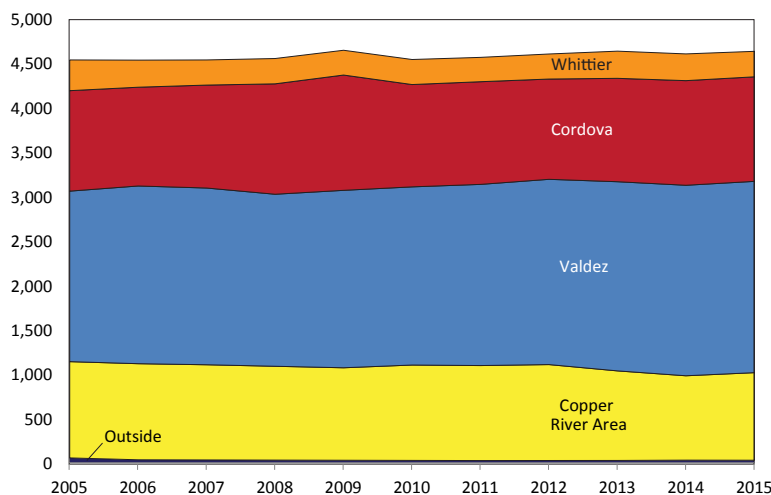


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

# 2

## Steady Employment

VALDEZ-CORDOVA, 2005 TO 2015



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

Valdez is heavily tied to transportation because of oil, while Whittier and Cordova derive most of their income from the seafood industry. (See exhibits 4 and 5.) Copper River area residents largely rely on subsistence in an area where average wages are low and food costs and unemployment are high.

### Valdez and the pipeline

The largest community, Valdez, is also perhaps the most well-known. The town, which was relocated after the Good Friday earthquake of 1964, is the terminus of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline System. It's also the census area's largest city, with a population of 4,011.

The pipeline provides the city with stable employment as well as a steady source of tax revenue. In 2014, property tax from the oil and gas industry alone generated \$53.5 million.

Because most of the city's employment revolves around transportation of oil, transportation made up 17 percent of the city's jobs in 2015. Transportation also provided the highest-paying jobs in Valdez, averaging \$103,123, which is why Valdez had the highest average wages of any community in the area, at \$58,824.

Valdez's transportation industry supports its small commercial fishing fleet as well. Its seafood industry grossed \$3.3 million in 2015, equivalent to about 3 percent of the area's wage and salary earnings. While these earnings have historically been highly variable, they've been between \$2.4 million and \$5.4 million since 2010: just a fraction of what Cordova brings in each year. (See Exhibit 6.)

# 3 Demographics by Town

## VALDEZ-CORDOVA, 2010 TO 2014

	Valdez	Cordova	Copper River	Whittier	Alaska
Unemployment rate	9.6% (+/-5.2)	4.4% (+/-2.9)	16.1% (+/-4.1)	5.8% (+/-6.5)	8.4% (+/-0.3)
Poverty rate	9.2% (+/-4.2)	2.4% (+/-1.4)	16.4% (+/-4.8)	17.5% (+/-8.9)	10.1% (+/-0.3)
Household size	2.9 (+/-0.3)	3.1 (+/-0.5)	2.9 (+/-0.4)	2.3 (+/-0.6)	2.8 (+/-0.02)
Median household income	\$99,973 (+/-6,370)	\$93,750 (+/-17,181)	\$43,063 (+/-8,582)	\$45,000 (+/-13,291)	\$71,829 (+/-735)

### Commuting patterns

Drive to work	76.6% (+/-8.9)	61.7% (+/-11.8)	61.2% (+/-8.3)	32.9% (+/-10.9)	67.7% (+/-0.6)
Walk to work	10.3% (+/-6.4)	9.5% (+/-5.5)	16% (+/-5.8)	45.5% (+/-15.8)	7.9% (+/-0.3)

### Racial profile

White	78.3% (+/-5.9)	76.6% (+/-5.9)	64.9% (+/-5.5)	71.5% (+/-12.7)	66.5% (+/-0.2)
Alaska Native/Amer Indian	12% (+/-4.5)	5.6% (+/-3)	30.3% (+/-5)	5.7% (+/-4.5)	14.1% (+/-0.2)
Black/African American	0.1% (+/-0.2)	0% (+/-0.8)	0.9% (+/-1.4)	0% (+/-7.8)	3.5% (+/-0.1)
Asian	1.1% (+/-1.2)	8.4% (+/-4.4)	0% (+/-0.8)	10.6% (+/-11.5)	5.6% (+/-0.1)
Pacific Islander	0.2% (+/-0.5)	0.3% (+/-0.5)	0.6% (+/-0.8)	4.1% (+/-6.1)	1.1% (+/-0.1)
Two or more races	5.9% (+/-3.1)	8.9% (+/-5.6)	3.2% (+/-1.3)	7.3% (+/-6.2)	8% (+/-0.2)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

## Cordova brings in most seafood earnings

Cordova, with a population of 2,321, was once a railroad town connecting the Kennecott Copper Mine to tidewater. Today it's a fishing town that consistently brings in 90 percent of the census area's gross commercial seafood earnings, mainly from salmon, amounting to more than \$38.3 million last year.

While most commercial fishermen are self-employed and not included in the job numbers here, the 373 commercial permits fished in Cordova in 2015 provide some context. If each permit were counted as a job, those would make up about 18 percent of all the city's jobs in July, which is peak harvesting month.

The city's reliance on fishing is also reflected in its high percentage of jobs in seafood processing. Processing jobs tend to pay less, though, which is largely why Cordova's average wage of \$46,382 last year was well below the statewide average of \$54,191.

## Whittier has fishing and tourism

Many seafood processing workers travel to Whittier during the summer, when the town has more wage and salary jobs than it has residents. The town is also

buoyed by summer tourism, and hosts about 700,000 visitors per year.

This highly seasonal economy means at the summer peak, the town's employment can be twice the population, at 500 jobs and 253 residents — nearly all of whom live in a single building built by and originally for the military.

The military established itself in Whittier during World War II because the area provided a deep, far north, year-round ice-free port. The federal railroad to Portage was completed in 1943 and became the primary debarkation point for cargo, troops, and dependents of the Alaska Command, which remained active until 1960. At that time, the population was 1,200.

The town has so little buildable land and such a small population that a single building provides most of its needed housing. The 14-story Hodge Building, now called Begich Towers, was completed in 1957 and contains 150 apartments of varying sizes. At one time, it was one of the largest buildings in the state.

The town's second-largest sector, leisure and hospitality, is tied to the Whittier Tunnel, owned by the State of Alaska. The combined one-way road and railway tunnel had its second-highest traffic year in history in 2015, with more than 240,000 vehicles

passing through, mainly between May and August. Visitor traffic includes buses full of cruise ship passengers as well as independent tourists and travelers heading to or from the ferries.

Whittier will host 29 cruise ships in summer 2016. The largest will be the *Star Princess*, which can hold nearly 15 times the entire population of Whittier, at 3,700 passengers and crew.

Whittier also has strong ties to fishing, including commercial and sport fishing and marine support services. From a commercial standpoint, Whittier brings in less than 1 percent of the census area's annual commercial harvest and gross earnings, but seafood processing is the town's largest single source of jobs. As a result, Whittier's average annual earnings were relatively low in 2015, at \$34,490.

The future of the city's seafood processing industry is uncertain, however, because its main employer, Great Pacific Seafoods, filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy and closed its local processing plant in May. The closure means not just job loss but also the loss of revenue from the plant's use of city water and sewer.

Sport fishing also boosts local tourism. Whittier has a harbor and boat launch that can accommodate 350 boats, and it's at full capacity with a waiting list of five to seven years. During the summer peak, an average of 150 boats launch in a single weekend day, or one boat every 10 minutes.

## Subsistence is vital in Copper River area

The Copper River area, which contains 20 of the area's 22 unincorporated communities and 2,735 residents, differs considerably from the three main cities. The three are proportionally more white than the statewide average, while the Copper River area has

more than double the statewide percentage of Alaska Natives. Thirty percent in the Copper River area identify as Native alone versus 14 percent for Alaska as a whole, and many who say they are more than one race are also Alaska Native. (See Exhibit 3.) The Copper River area also has the lowest percentage of those who self-identify as white, at 65 percent.

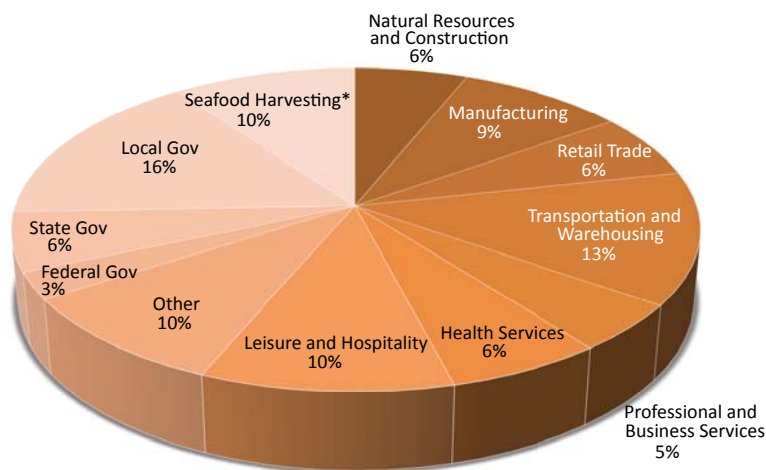


Cordova from the water. Photo by St. Louis Julie, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# 4

## Area Has a Diverse Economic Base

VALDEZ-CORDOVA, 2015

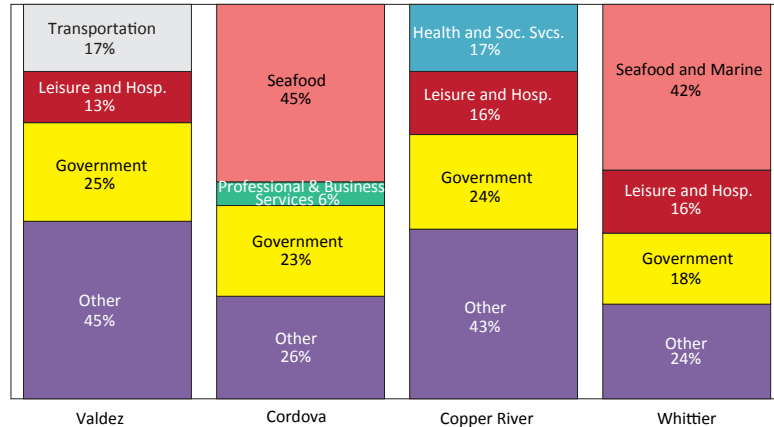


\*Because seafood harvesters are mainly self-employed and not included in employer data, this is an estimate based on permits fished.

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

## 5 Each Dominated by Different Industry

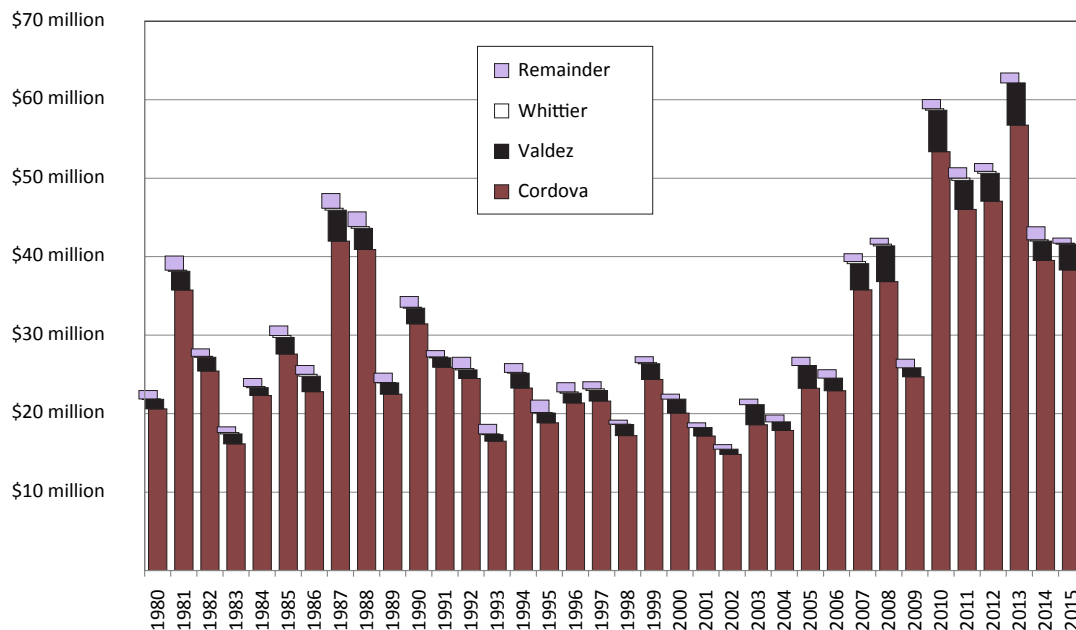
### VALDEZ-CORDOVA, 2015



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

## 6 Cordova Dominates Commercial Fishing Earnings

### VALDEZ-CORDOVA, 1980 TO 2015



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

The area has strong historic ties to the Copper River, and like many rural places in Alaska, a good deal of labor is devoted to harvesting subsistence resources such as fish, moose, and berries, something the employment and wage numbers don't reflect. The average subsistence harvest for the Copper River area is roughly 200 pounds per person per year. This is on

the lower end for rural places in the state, but significantly higher than more urban areas such as Valdez, where it's about 45 pounds per person per year.

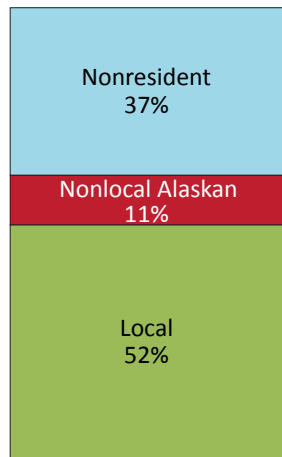
Participation in traditional and customary subsistence harvest is both culturally and economically important. Subsistence helps mitigate low incomes and high food



The Whittier Tunnel, above, a combined one-way road and railway tunnel. Photo by Flickr user Arthur Chapman, and Audrey Bendus

## 7 Many Workers Live Elsewhere

### VALDEZ-CORDOVA WORKERS, 2014



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

costs, which were 26 percent higher than Anchorage in 2008, the most recent year available.

The core industries in the Copper River area are health care, social services, and leisure and hospitality. Health care and social services include health clinics and Native associations that focus on community care. The leisure and hospitality businesses and jobs in the area exist largely to serve travelers on the Glenn and Richardson highways, which both run through the area. These combined industries made up a third of the area's wage and salary jobs in 2015.

At 9.4 percent, the Copper River area's unemployment rate is high, and both of the major private industries have lower-than-average wages. Health and social services jobs paid an average of \$37,582 in 2015 and leisure and hospitality jobs paid \$21,122.

The highest-paying jobs in the area were in construction, which paid more than \$100,000 on average in 2015 but made up just 6 percent of jobs. The area has some higher-paying jobs with the state and federal government as well, which paid an average of \$57,464 and \$66,989 respectively. Government jobs made up 14 percent of the area's employment.

## Nearly half of workers live outside census area

Nearly half of the people who work in the Valdez-Cordova Census Area, 48 percent, don't live there. (See Exhibit 7.) Nonresidents make up the largest slice of those who live elsewhere, at 37 percent in 2014. Many of these workers travel in for seafood processing, which had the highest rate of nonresident hire among industries in 2014, at 84.8 percent.

Of the commuters who are Alaskans, the biggest share come from Anchorage, followed by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Kenai Peninsula.

Alyssa Rodrigues is an economist in Anchorage. Reach her at (907) 269-4863 or [alyssa.rodrigues@alaska.gov](mailto:alyssa.rodrigues@alaska.gov).

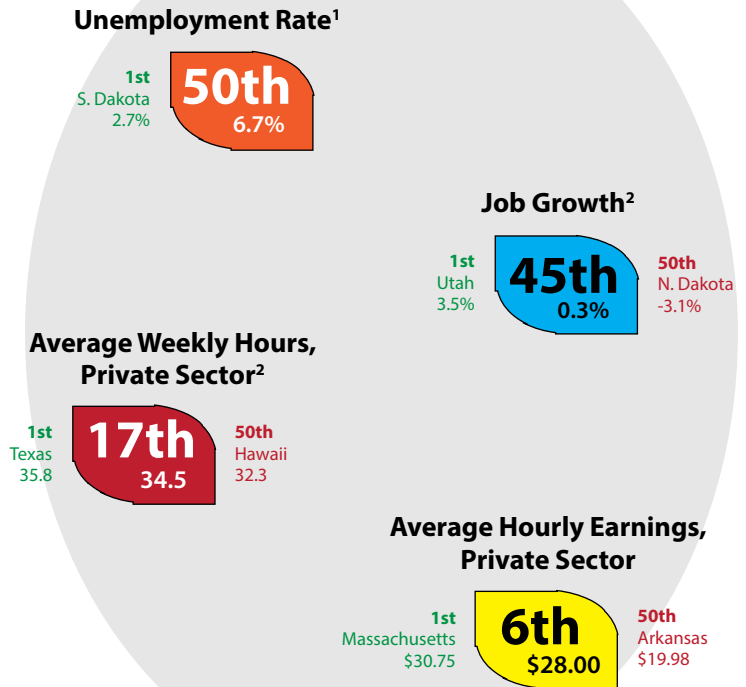


# The Month in Numbers

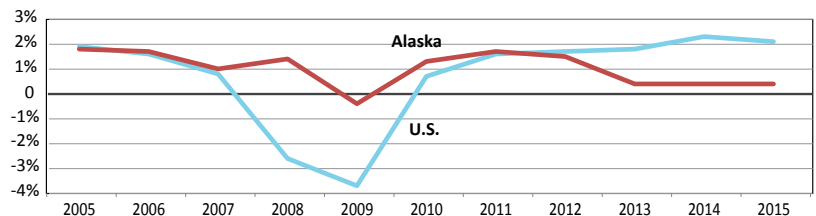
## Unemployment Rates

	Prelim.	Revised	
<b>SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>	<b>6/16</b>	<b>5/16</b>	<b>6/15</b>
United States	4.9	4.7	5.3
Alaska Statewide	6.7	6.7	6.5
<b>NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>			
United States	5.1	4.5	5.5
Alaska Statewide	6.8	6.6	6.6
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su Region</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>
Municipality of Anchorage	5.7	5.3	5.3
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	8.3	8.0	8.0
<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>7.0</b>
Kenai Peninsula Borough	7.7	8.1	7.3
Kodiak Island Borough	5.3	4.7	5.5
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	6.5	7.8	6.9
<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.5</b>
Denali Borough	3.8	5.4	4.1
Fairbanks North Star Borough	5.7	5.6	5.7
Southeast Fairbanks CA	9.4	10.1	10.1
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	17.1	16.4	17.4
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>11.6</b>
Nome Census Area	15.1	13.4	13.2
North Slope Borough	7.2	6.7	6.5
Northwest Arctic Borough	17.5	17.5	16.6
<b>Southeast Region</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>6.0</b>
Haines Borough	8.4	9.6	7.8
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	8.7	10.5	11.8
Juneau, City and Borough	4.3	4.2	4.7
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	5.5	6.1	6.1
Petersburg Borough	8.2	8.6	8.3
Prince of Wales-Hyder CA	10.6	11.4	10.9
Sitka, City and Borough	4.1	4.2	4.5
Skagway, Municipality	3.6	4.7	4.8
Wrangell, City and Borough	6.7	6.4	7.6
Yakutat, City and Borough	6.3	5.7	6.8
<b>Southwest Region</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>11.7</b>
Aleutians East Borough	2.8	6.0	3.3
Aleutians West Census Area	3.6	5.4	4.6
Bethel Census Area	14.8	14.9	14.8
Bristol Bay Borough	6.2	6.5	6.2
Dillingham Census Area	8.8	10.2	8.7
Kusilvak Census Area	23.5	22.4	25.0
Lake and Peninsula Borough	12.1	12.8	11.5

## How Alaska Ranks



## Job Growth in Alaska and the Nation<sup>3</sup>



All data sources are U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>1</sup>June 2016

<sup>2</sup>June 2015 to June 2016

<sup>3</sup>Annual average percent change; 2016 data are for January to June compared to the same months in 2015

# Safety Minute

## Older buildings may lack ground-fault circuit interruptors

Using electrical outlets in a damp or wet location has caused many injuries and deaths, which was the primary reason Professor Charles Dalziel of the University of California Berkeley studied the effects electricity on humans. One result from his study was the invention of the ground-fault circuit interrupter.

A GFCI is an electrical device that measures the amount of current that enters the device and compares it to current that returns to the device. If the resulting measurement is not equal, the GFCI disconnects the power. This monitoring system became a safe and effective way to use electrical equipment in a variety of environmental conditions.

Though expensive at the time, this safety device was recognized by the National Electrical Code in 1971 and became a required protection method. With the adoption of building codes and safety standards,

the increase in demand for these devices prompted manufacturers to produce more, which decreased their cost and made them economical.

Many homes and businesses built before these codes were enacted still use outlets without ground-fault circuit interrupters, posing serious risk to anyone using the building's electrical system.

Whether you're an owner or a tenant of a home or workspace, installing GFCIs is an inexpensive way to protect your family, workers, or property from fires and electrocution hazards. GFCI breakers can be installed at your electrical distribution panel, or GFCI receptacles can be installed in wet or damp locations.

Safety Minute is written by the Labor Standards and Safety Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

# Employer Resources

## Alaska Resident Hire requirements apply to 23 occupations

The most recent employment preference, or “Alaska Resident Hire” determination, became effective in June 2015 when Alaska was declared a Zone of Underemployment by the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Heidi Drygas. Alaska’s employment preference applies to certain construction projects funded by the state or any agency of the state and requires that qualified Alaska resident job seekers are given a minimum of 90 percent employment preference over nonresidents in 23 job classifications:

Boilermakers	Bricklayers	Carpenters
Cement Masons	Culinary Workers	Electricians
Engineers and Architects	Equipment Operators	Foremen and Supervisors
Insulation Workers	Ironworkers	Laborers
Mechanics	Millwrights	Painters
Pile-driving Occupations	Plumbers and Pipefitters	Roofers
Sheet Metal Workers	Surveyors	Truck Drivers
Tug Boat Workers	Welders	

Alaska Resident Hire is crucial to the economic well-being of Alaska. It helps stabilize the economy by putting Alaskans to work, keeping earned income in Alaska, and reducing the unemployment rate. The construction industry in Alaska accounts for a substantial percentage of all available employment. Historically, the rate of unemployment in the

construction industry in Alaska has been higher than the combined federal unemployment rate, resulting in a higher percentage of unemployment insurance benefits paid to Alaska construction workers than to their counterparts nationwide.

Alaska contractors recognize that investing in Alaska’s workforce is not only in their own best interest, but in the best interest of Alaska. Alaska Resident Hire ensures public works contractors from other states gain first-hand knowledge of Alaska’s commitment to protect the welfare of its citizens.

Staff from the department’s Wage and Hour Administration and the Division of Employment and Training Services work together to ensure contractors understand Alaska Resident Hire laws and help them every step of the way, including facilitating recruitment and alerting statewide Alaska Job Center staff to find and refer qualified Alaskans to the positions. For more information about Alaska Resident Hire, contractors can call offices in Anchorage (907) 269-4900, Fairbanks (907) 451-2886, or Juneau (907) 465-4842 or visit <http://labor.alaska.gov/lss/home.htm>.

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





## Agenda Statement

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**File #:** 16-0070      **Version:** 1

**Type:** Report      **Status:** Agenda Ready

**File created:** 8/16/2016      **In control:** Economic Diversification Commission

**On agenda:** 8/17/2016      **Final action:**

**Title:** Accessible Communities PowerPoint Presentation

**Sponsors:**

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** [Accessible Community.pdf](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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### **ITEM TITLE:**

Accessible Communities PowerPoint Presentation

**SUBMITTED BY:** Lamar Cotten, ED Commission Staff Liaison

### **FISCAL NOTES:**

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

None. Report only.

### **SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

Last Wednesday the ED Commission hosted the third monthly business luncheon. Doug Toelle from Access Alaska provided the presentation. For those who could not attend the presentation is attached.

# Accessible Community

Doug Toelle  
Advocacy Director  
Access Alaska

**Advocacy Director at Access Alaska**, Board of Directors, National Council on Independent Living, Multiple Sclerosis Leadership Council, City of Fairbanks Diversity Council, member of National MS Society Advocacy Hall of Fame, owner Information Insights, chief herder at Running Reindeer Ranch.

Been a zoo keeper, teacher, tech guy, non profit director, created Fairbanks Food Bank, Alaska's first website, Fairbanks first ISP, owned several Internet/IT companies.

**I am not a lawyer, accountant or ADA technician,  
I advocate for people who experience disabilities.**

## About me

**800-949-4232**

Northwest ADA Center



Access Alaska was created by people with disabilities for people with disabilities as a private, non-residential, consumer-controlled non-profit to provide independent living services to older Alaskans and those who experience a disability.

As a federally recognized Independent Living Center, our mission is to encourage, promote, mentor, and advocate for the total integration of older Alaskans and those who experience a disability to live independently and productively in the community of their choice.

## About Access Alaska



*Independent Living does not mean that we want to do everything by ourselves, do not need anybody or like to live in isolation.*

*Independent Living means that we demand the same choices and control in our every-day lives that our non-disabled brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends take for granted.*

*We want to grow up in our families, go to the neighborhood school, use the same bus as our neighbors, work in jobs that are in line with our education and interests, and raise families of our own.*

*We are profoundly ordinary people sharing the same need to feel included, recognized and loved.*

Dr. Adolf Ratzka

# Independent Living

The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by Federal agencies, in programs receiving Federal financial assistance, in Federal employment, and in the employment practices of Federal contractors.

**What is the Rehabilitation Act?**



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

**What is the ADA?**



An undue burden is something that involves a significant difficulty or expense or in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the goods or services provided by a entity. Key factors include the cost of the aid or service and the overall financial resources of the entity. Undue burden will always be determined on a case by case basis. The ADA recognizes that what constitutes an undue burden for a small office in a rural setting is different than for a large metropolitan hospital.

## Undue Burden

Individuals may file private lawsuits or they may file complaints with the Department of Justice (DOJ). The DOJ may resolve the complaints through settlement agreements, mediation, or litigation.

**How is the ADA enforced?**

There are two questions that may be asked:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What task or service has this animal been trained to do?

One cannot ask:

What is your disability?

Can I see your dog's certification?

## Service Animals

**Accessible Communities**

- Aging population
- Aging and more tourists who experience disabilities

**Issues**

- Customer Service #1
- Loss of Dignity
- Burden on Family

**Attitude**



- Universal design (often inclusive design) refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities.



The ADA provides much needed access, but accessibility solutions may be last-minute additions that are unattractive and stigmatizing to users.



Universal Design incorporates accessibility into every stage of the design process, so that solutions are attractive and useful for everyone.

# Universal Design

- Equitable use
- Flexibility in use
- Simple and intuitive
- Perceptible information
- Tolerance for error
- Low physical effort
- Size and space for approach and use



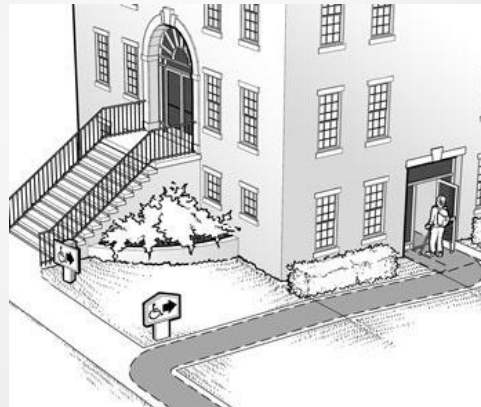
# Universal Design

- Transportation
  - Transportation and housing are two of the biggest barriers identified by people who experience disabilities.
  - What does Valdez have?
- Sidewalks
- Accessible Routes

# Getting Around

- An accessible route is a pathway specifically designed to provide access for individuals with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs or mobility devices.

- Handrails
- Signage
- Snow removal



## Accessible Routes

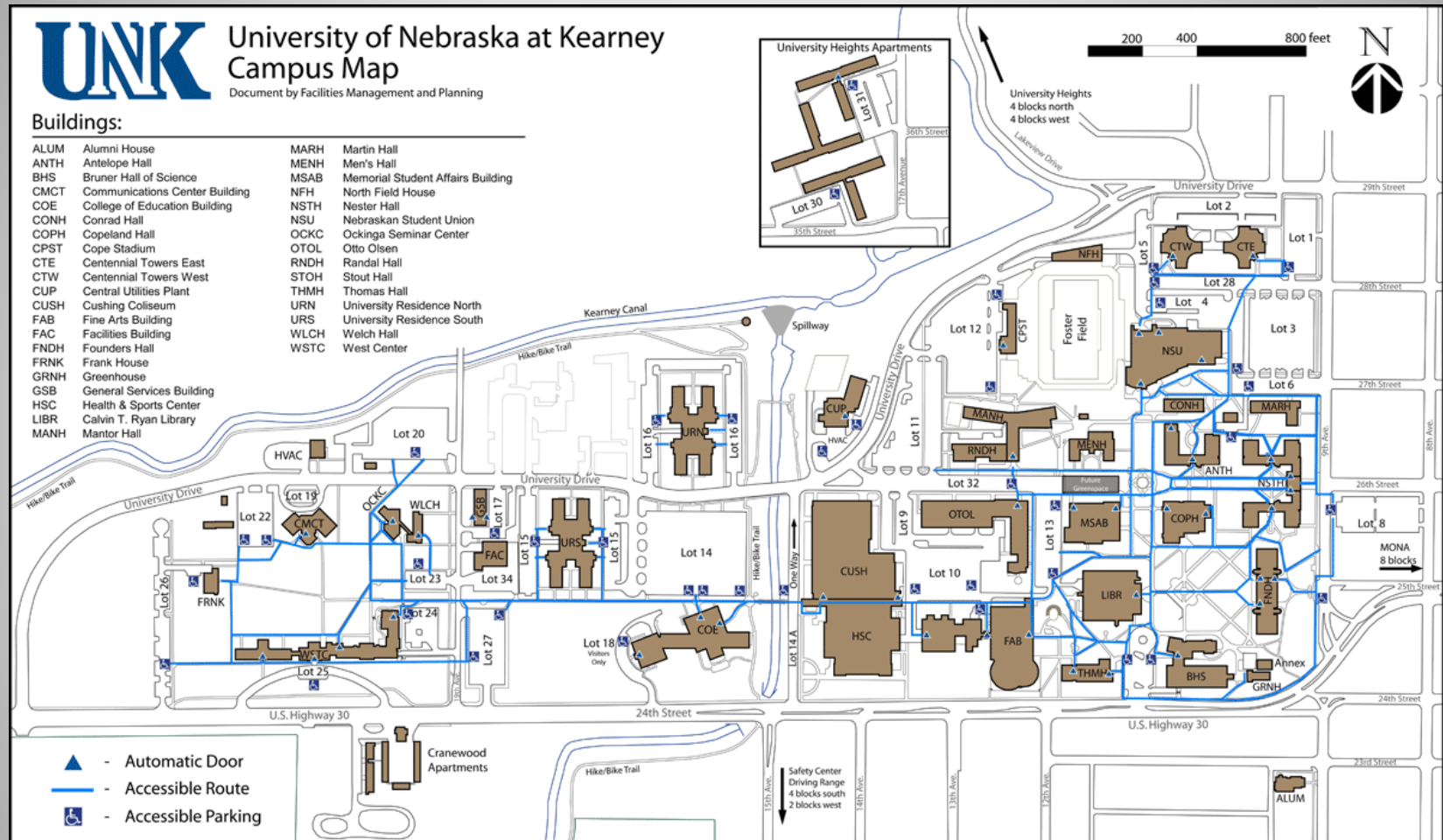


# University of Nebraska at Kearney Campus Map

Document by Facilities Management and Planning

## Buildings:

ALUM	Alumni House	MARH	Martin Hall
ANTH	Antelope Hall	MENH	Men's Hall
BHS	Bruner Hall of Science	MSAB	Memorial Student Affairs Building
CMCT	Communications Center Building	NFH	North Field House
COE	College of Education Building	NSTH	Nester Hall
CONH	Conrad Hall	NSU	Nebraska Student Union
COPH	Copeland Hall	OCKC	Ockinga Seminar Center
CPST	Cope Stadium	OTOL	Otto Olsen
CTE	Centennial Towers East	RNDH	Randal Hall
CTW	Centennial Towers West	STOH	Stout Hall
CUP	Central Utilities Plant	THMH	Thomas Hall
CUSH	Cushing Coliseum	URN	University Residence North
FAB	Fine Arts Building	URS	University Residence South
FAC	Facilities Building	WLCH	Welch Hall
FNDH	Founders Hall	WSTC	West Center
FRNK	Frank House		
GRNH	Greenhouse		
GSB	General Services Building		
HSC	Health & Sports Center		
LIBR	Calvin T. Ryan Library		
MANH	Mantor Hall		



# Accessible Routes



- The topic never spoken: It's all about bathrooms



# Bathrooms



- Aging in place
- Visitability
- Home services
  
- Isolation

# Housing

- Availability of healthcare
- Medicaid providers in the community

**Personal Care**

- What can you do around here and is the venue accessible

**Entertainment**

- Real jobs / real wages
- Flexible jobs for people on benefits
- Volunteer opportunities

**Employment**

There are currently more than 54 million people with disabilities in the United States and 180 million worldwide, representing the single largest untapped tourist market in the world.

- 2014-2015

- More than 26 million adults with disabilities traveled for pleasure and/or business, taking 73 million trips
- Adults with disabilities spend \$17.3 billion annually, up from \$13.6 billion in 2002.

**Accessible Tourism**



- Be flexible (attitude)
- Mobility aids available
- Know about service animals
- Hire people with disabilities
- Para Sky to Surf?

**Accessible Tourism**



**Accessible Wilderness**



**800-949-4232**

Northwest ADA Center  
[www.nwadacenter.org](http://www.nwadacenter.org)



- [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)
- [www.adabasics.org](http://www.adabasics.org)
- Me – [doug@toelle.com](mailto:doug@toelle.com) 479-7940
- Independent Living Center - 235-7911
- Google it

## Other Resources

**Questions?**

