

The Matanuska Valley's Economy is Throwing its Weight Around

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough's economic indicators all tell the same story: They describe the fastest growing area in the state. Growth measures including employment, population, business formation, in-migration, highway counts and new homes being built all point to the Mat-Su Borough. In fact, it's the only area in the state where the term "booming" is applicable.

It's not the first time in its history that the Mat-Su Borough has experienced strong economic growth, but it's the first time the boom hasn't been part of a larger trend that included other parts of the state or the state as a whole.

Because of its singular standing, a growing list of developers, businesses and others are either investing in the area or eyeing it with great interest.

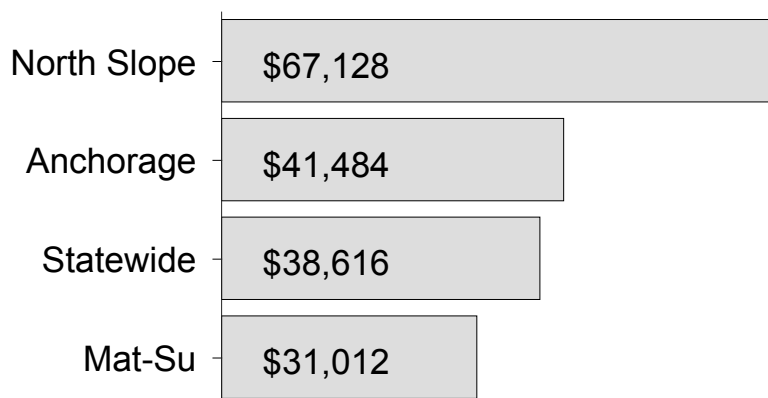
There's also room for growth

The Mat-Su Borough is the state's third largest in population and area. With 24,683 square miles, it's about the same size as West Virginia. It has a population of more than 70,000 residents; only Anchorage and the Fairbanks North Star Borough are larger. It's home to 2.9 residents per square mile compared to 163 in Anchorage. Although the borough is large, nearly all its residents live along the road system between Willow and Sutton. Only three of the communities in the borough are incorporated – Palmer, Wasilla and Houston – and they represent 18 percent of its population. A few communities, such as Chase and Skwentna, are off the road system but can usually be reached by snow machine, plane, boat, train or some other type of off-road vehicle. Other communities, such as Talkeetna, are on the road system but are far from the more densely populated areas of the borough.

Labor is a big export

Different forces have shaped the Mat-Su area's economy during the area's history. Mining and agriculture were the first major economic

1 Why Some Work Outside Mat-Su Average annual earnings, 2004



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

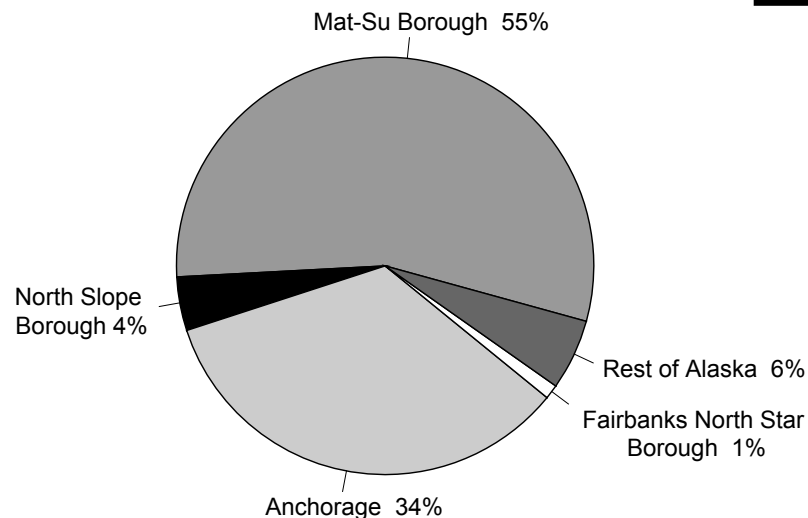
Where Mat-Su Residents Work 2003¹ **2**

forces. Although the Mat-Su Borough remains the state's largest agricultural producer, other economic forces are now the primary drivers. For more than 40 years the single biggest reason for the borough's growth has been its proximity to the state's largest city, Anchorage.

This economic interplay and symbiotic relationship between the areas isn't diminishing. It's accelerating. No longer can either of the two economies be analyzed without considering the other. It wouldn't be surprising if in the not-so-distant future someone visiting from outside the area would find it hard to tell where Anchorage ends and Mat-Su begins.

Such a strong, daily economic connection between two or more areas isn't unusual in many parts of the country but it's unmatched in Alaska. This relationship exists because most of the Mat-Su Borough's population lives within a 40- to 50-mile radius of Anchorage and the Anchorage job market attracts many of these commuters. The average annual earnings for jobs in Anchorage run 34 percent higher than the earnings in the Mat-Su Borough. (See Exhibit 1.) That isn't because wages for similar jobs pay more in Anchorage. Anchorage just has a higher percentage of high-wage jobs.

One of the borough's chief exports is simply its work force. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development estimated that roughly 34 percent of employed Mat-Su residents worked in Anchorage in 2003. (See Exhibit 2.) This is a conservative number because it excludes commuters who work for the federal government or are self-employed. The absolute number of these commuters has grown rapidly since the early 1990s. (See Exhibit 3.) There's also a small but growing number of "reverse commuters" – Anchorage residents who work regularly in Mat-Su.



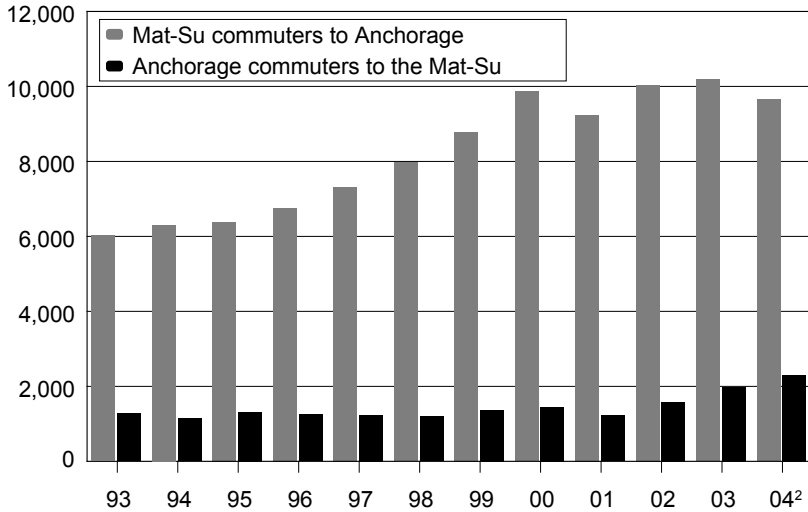
¹ Excludes federal and self-employed workers

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

It's also important to note that a significant group of Mat-Su residents even go beyond Anchorage to find work. They're the long distance commuters: oil industry workers on the North Slope, fishermen in Kodiak, miners at the Red Dog mine and elsewhere, and construction workers around the state. At last count, these commuters represented another 11 percent of the borough's residents. And, like the commuters to Anchorage, these workers are pursuing better economic opportunities.

Many of the Mat-Su residents who work in other places in the state then return home to invest their earnings in housing, consumer goods, businesses and services. These expenditures spur additional economic activity in the borough. When the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis adjusts Mat-Su's personal income figures for

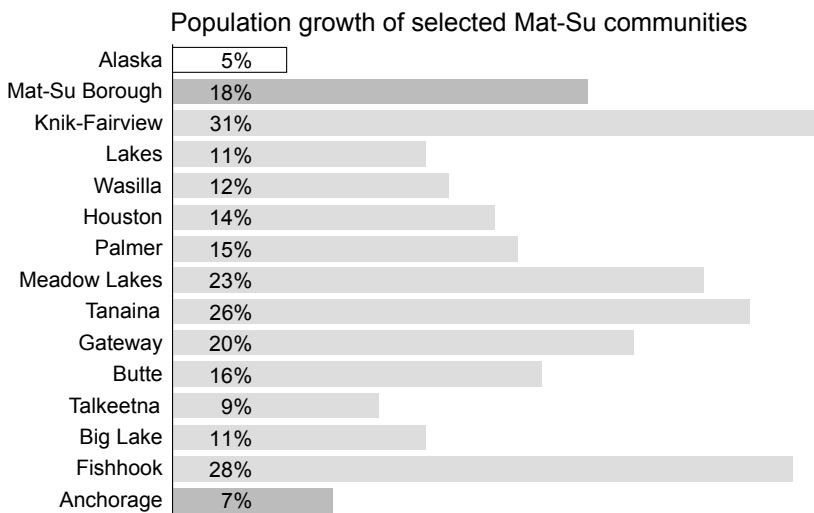
3 Commuter Traffic Grows Both Ways Number of commuters, 1993-2004¹



¹ Excludes federal and self-employed workers
² Preliminary

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

4 Strong Population Growth Mat-Su areas, 2000-2004



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

residency, it estimates that \$750 million of all personal income, or more than a third, comes from outside the borough. In fact, this net inflow of income from elsewhere in the state makes Mat-Su a unique place in Alaska. In nearly every other area of the state, the net income flow is negative.

Population growth is the leading economic indicator

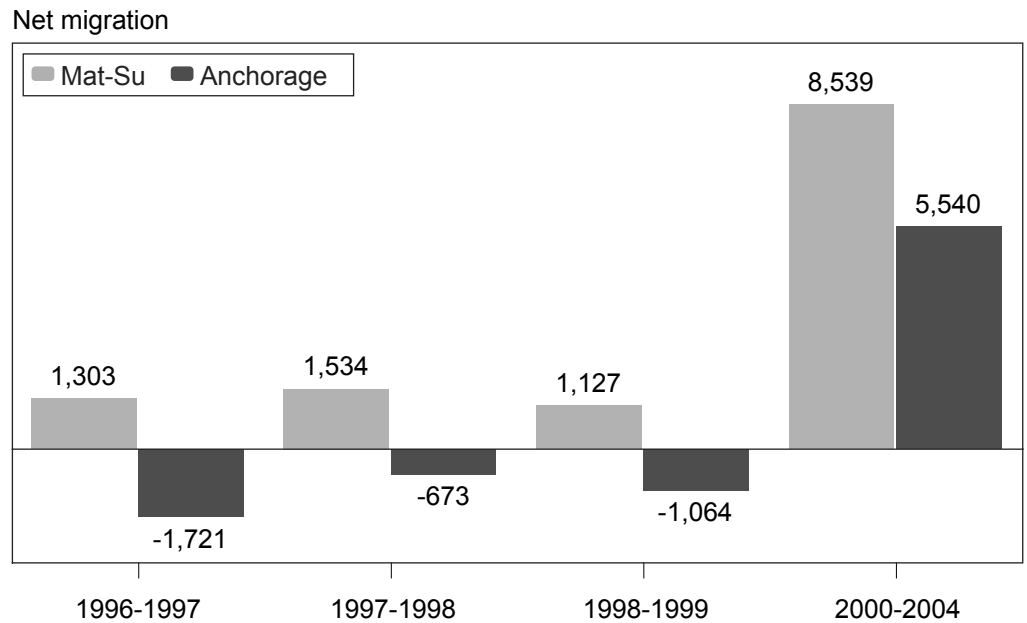
Mat-Su's population grew by 18 percent between 2000 and 2004, compared to 5 percent statewide and 7 percent in Anchorage. (See Exhibit 4.) That meant a 3.9-percent annual population growth rate for the Mat-Su Borough versus Anchorage's plodding 1.5 percent or the state's 1 percent. This isn't a new trend; it's been true since the early 1990s. The much stronger population growth has meant the Mat-Su Borough is now home to nearly 11 percent of the state's population versus 7 percent in 1990.

These differences are even more pronounced for in-migration, which is simply the number of people moving into an area minus those moving out. During three of the past five years the state has experienced net out-migration, but during each of those years, the Mat-Su Borough's numbers have remained positive. This means that more people moved to the borough during most of these years than to the rest of the state. In fact, Mat-Su was the only area in the state where population growth came primarily from in-migration. Although their exact numbers aren't known, a large share of Mat-Su's new residents came from Anchorage. Since 2000, Anchorage's net gain through in-migration amounted to 5,500 versus Mat-Su's gain of 8,500. (See Exhibit 5.) It's no wonder that people and businesses looking for the state's growth areas focus on Mat-Su.

Most areas in the borough have contributed to the population growth, but the hot spots have been the Knik-Fairview, Fishhook, Gateway, Tanaina and Meadow Lakes areas. (See Exhibits 4 and 6.) It comes as no surprise that these high-growth areas are situated mostly between Wasilla, Palmer and Houston.

The Mat-Su Migration **5**

More move to the Mat-Su than to Anchorage



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

The Mat-Su Borough's strong surge in population is also reflected in the borough's school enrollment figures. (See Exhibit 7.) Unlike statewide school enrollment, which declined in 2003 and 2004 and has seen little net change over the past five years, the borough's enrollment grew by 17 percent from 2000 to 2005. Preliminary numbers indicate that Mat-Su school enrollment grew another 5 percent in the 2005-2006 academic year.

Housing is Mat-Su's largest economic "export"

Part of Mat-Su's appeal is its affordable housing market. The numbers paint a compelling picture: The average sales price of a single-family home in the borough was \$210,530, or nearly a third less than the average sale price of an Anchorage home. (See Exhibit 8.) Caution must be taken with these comparisons, however, because the prices are for houses that actually sold, not necessarily houses that are strictly comparable in terms of square footage and lot size.

Nevertheless, this price differential is obviously extremely enticing to workers in both the Anchorage and Mat-Su areas, as well for those who may be working outside the Anchorage/Mat-Su region but want to live near a larger community. Because only the cities of Palmer and Wasilla issue building permits, it's hard to compare residential building activity in the Mat-Su Borough with Anchorage. A rough comparison, though, is available from data the borough assessor collects on new homes built in the borough. These data indicate that nearly half the new housing units built in the Anchorage/Mat-Su region in 2004 were built in the Mat-Su Borough. That's an especially impressive portion given that the 2004 job count in Anchorage was nearly nine times higher than in Mat-Su.

Another way to look at the housing picture is from the perspective of affordability. For the sake of this discussion, housing affordability is the combination of wages paid in a community and the cost of local housing. In other words, housing affordability is a measure of how

6 Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Cities and Census Designated Places (CDPs)

All are Census Designated Places unless marked:	Estimate 2004	Estimate 2003	Estimate 2002	Estimate 2001	Census 2000	Change 2000-2004	Percent Change 2000-2004
Totals	70,148	67,526	64,293	61,772	59,322	10,826	18.2%
Big Lake	2,912	2,889	2,717	2,580	2,635	277	10.5%
Buffalo Soapstone	744	740	748	740	699	45	6.4%
Butte	2,963	2,919	2,802	2,750	2,561	402	15.7%
Chase	27	34	36	34	41	-14	-34.1%
Chickaloon	298	280	237	228	213	85	39.9%
Farm Loop	1,138	1,161	1,146	1,070	1,067	71	6.7%
Fishhook	2,606	2,335	2,233	2,189	2,030	576	28.4%
Gateway	3,554	3,305	3,220	3,106	2,952	602	20.4%
Glacier View	266	250	260	249	249	17	6.8%
Houston, City of	1,368	1,351	1,253	1,178	1,202	166	13.8%
Knik-Fairview	9,223	8,561	7,896	7,637	7,049	2,174	30.8%
Knik River	626	676	628	625	582	44	7.6%
Lake Louise	99	111	91	101	88	11	12.5%
Lakes	7,467	7,053	6,900	6,818	6,706	761	11.3%
Lazy Mountain	1,233	1,202	1,180	1,167	1,158	75	6.5%
Meadow Lakes	5,945	5,579	5,236	5,064	4,819	1,126	23.4%
Palmer, City of ¹	5,197	5,267	4,959	4,621	4,533	664	14.6%
Petersville	15	14	19	25	27	-12	-44.4%
Point MacKenzie	216	201	199	211	111	105	94.6%
Skwentna	81	95	85	94	111	-30	-27.0%
Susitna	31	38	37	40	37	-6	-16.2%
Sutton-Alpine	1,154	1,159	1,147	1,129	1,080	74	6.9%
Talkeetna	844	856	851	787	772	72	9.3%
Tanaina	6,265	5,865	5,602	5,252	4,993	1,272	25.5%
Trapper Creek	436	425	405	405	423	13	3.1%
Wasilla, City of ²	6,109	6,387	6,120	5,515	5,469	640	11.7%
Willow	1,856	1,813	1,744	1,685	1,658	198	11.9%
Y	1,072	1,038	996	1,010	956	116	12.1%
Remainder of the Mat-Su Borough	6,403	5,922	5,546	5,462	5,101	1,302	25.5%
Native villages that overlap multiple CDPs:							
Chickaloon	19,373	18,649	17,755	17,041	16,918	2,455	14.5%
Knik	38,268	36,838	35,073	33,662	31,969	6,299	19.7%
Kanatak	12,287	11,827	11,261	10,808	10,252	2,035	19.8%

¹ Palmer had a series of small annexations in November 2002.

² Wasilla had a small annexation May 31, 2002.

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

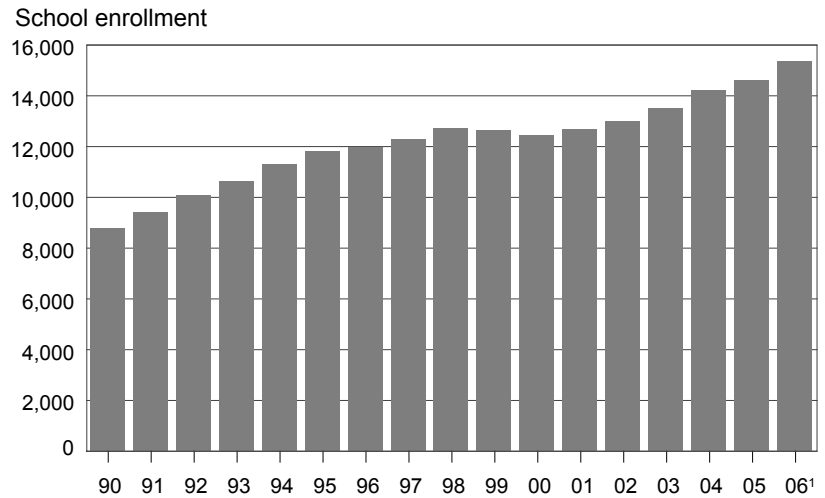
many wage earners it takes to support the average mortgage. It's a question of increasing importance given the rapid increase in housing prices.

If one looks at the number of Mat-Su wage earners it takes to afford the average home in the Mat-Su Borough, there's little difference in housing affordability between Mat-Su and Anchorage. That's because the average wage in Mat-Su – where service and retail jobs make up a much larger slice of the area's employment pie – is lower than in Anchorage. However, since so many Mat-Su residents work in Anchorage and elsewhere, the affordability equation changes considerably. (See Exhibit 9.) It takes only 1.2 Anchorage wage earners to buy a Mat-Su home versus 1.6 Anchorage wage earners to buy an Anchorage home.

Like many other parts of Alaska and the U.S., the Mat-Su Borough has experienced a dramatic increase in housing prices. According to Multiple Listing Service data from the Valley Board of Realtors, the price of a single-family home in the Mat-Su Borough has doubled since 1996, increasing much faster than wages or income. (See Exhibit 10.) These prices have also increased significantly faster than Anchorage's, narrowing the price differential in the same time period. (See Exhibit 11.) The reason for this isn't completely clear, and again, the comparisons may not be for identical housing stock. The quality of these "average" single-family homes could be quite different and those differences could also be widening the price differential. For example, the average square footage and lot size of Mat-Su single-family homes may be increasing relative to Anchorage single-family homes.

There are other factors aside from the cost of housing that may make Mat-Su homes more attractive to homeowners. A more rural life style and the ability to live on a larger piece of land is certainly appealing. Another attraction is that the alternate types of housing that exist in Mat-Su

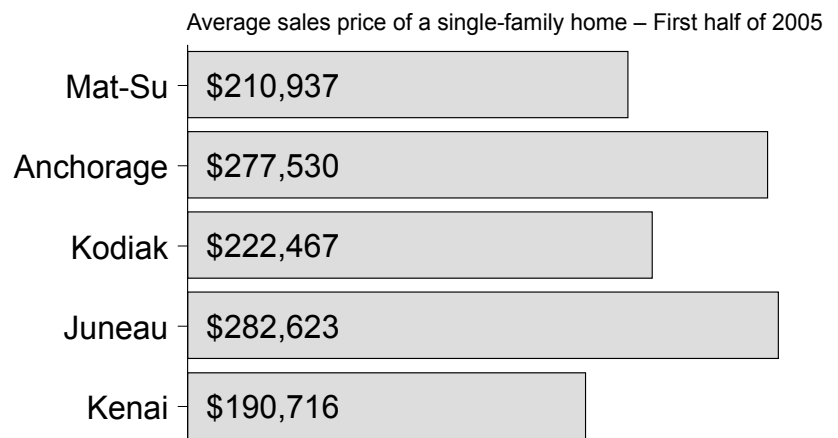
Mat-Su School Enrollment Climbs 7 One of the few areas where it's increasing



¹ Preliminary

Source: Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

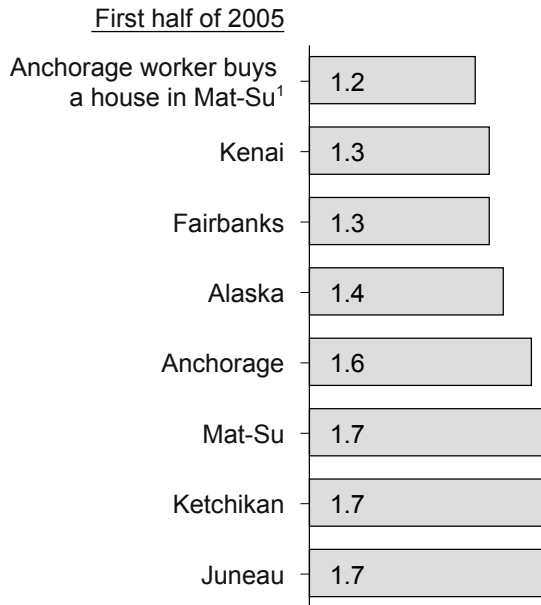
Housing Is Still a Big Attraction 8 Single-family home prices



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

9 Buying a Single-Family Home

Number of wage earners needed

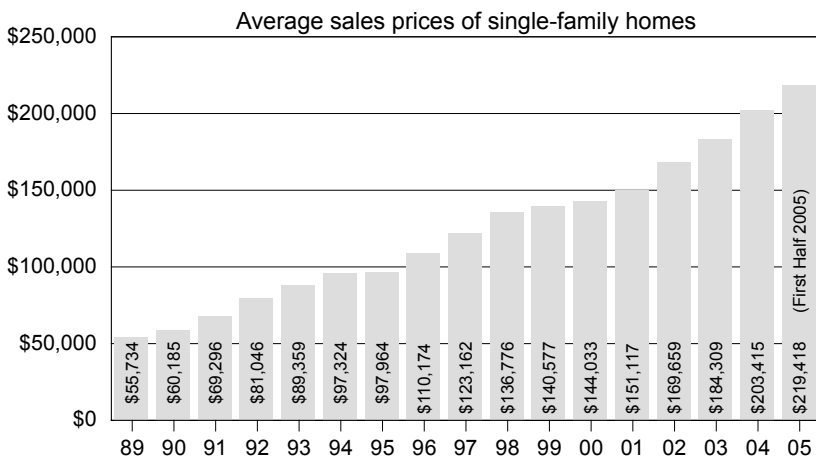


¹ All other bars represent the number of wage earners it would require to buy a house if a worker lived and worked in that community.

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

10 Home Prices Double Since 1996

Matanuska-Susitna Borough



Source: Valley Board of Realtors, Multiple Listing Service Data

are rarely available in Anchorage. For instance, last year roughly 16 percent of new residential building activity recorded in the borough was for cabin-like structures. That equates to 300 “cabins.” Although many were built for recreation, a substantial number also represent primary residences. This kind of housing typically doesn’t require lending or mortgage activity.

It’s also not as easy to build the “cabin-type” structures so prevalent in the Mat-Su Borough in urban areas such as Anchorage because the cost of land is considerably higher and planning and zoning regulations make building more difficult.

One recent negative development for commuters has been the dramatic rise in the price of fuel. How this will affect workers’ willingness to commute isn’t well understood because it’s not yet clear how long fuel prices will remain high or how high they’ll be when they stabilize. But unless prices rise considerably higher than current levels, Mat-Su should continue to capture a growing slice of the region’s population.

If Southcentral’s economy continues to grow – considering Mat-Su’s availability of land for development and the possibility of a Knik Arm bridge – it’s hard to imagine a scenario that would change Mat-Su’s strong growth trend. Increasingly, Mat-Su’s competitive advantage won’t be limited to residential development as the borough is likely to capture a bigger share of the other economic development that occurs in Southcentral Alaska. For example, a growing number of Mat-Su car dealerships also attract customers from Anchorage. Another example is the borough’s new port facility at Point MacKenzie, if it attracts traffic. This kind of economic activity will only increase with time.

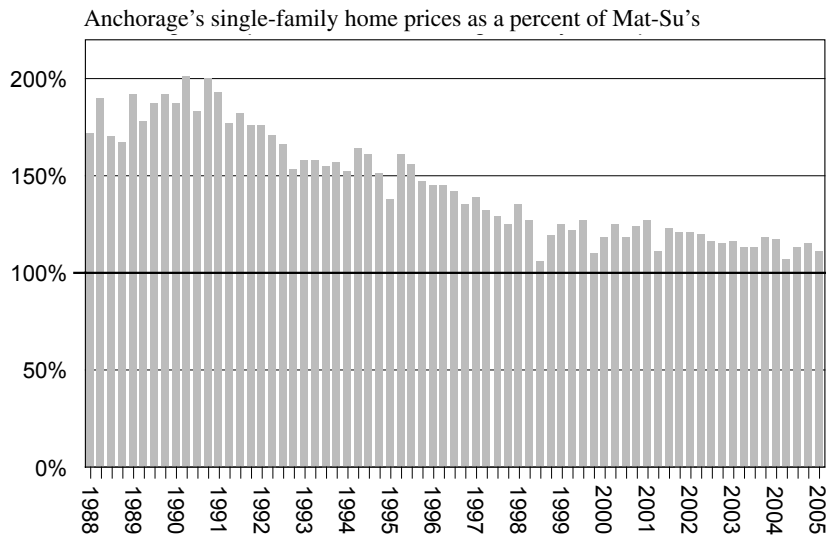
New jobs coming from health care, retail, construction, and leisure and hospitality

Employment has also grown faster in the Mat-Su Borough than anywhere else in the state, which makes sense because most of the borough’s

employment is driven by population growth and not vice versa like in most other areas of the state. (See Exhibits 12 and 13.)

Price Differential Narrows 11 1988-2005

Employment in the Mat-Su Borough grew 5.3 percent a year in the past decade, more than three times as fast as the rest of the state. In the last three years, net employment gains for the borough have exceeded 1,000 per year and growth over that period has averaged a booming 7.7 percent. In 2004, nearly a third of all job gains in the state came from Mat-Su. The story for 2005 won't likely be much different.

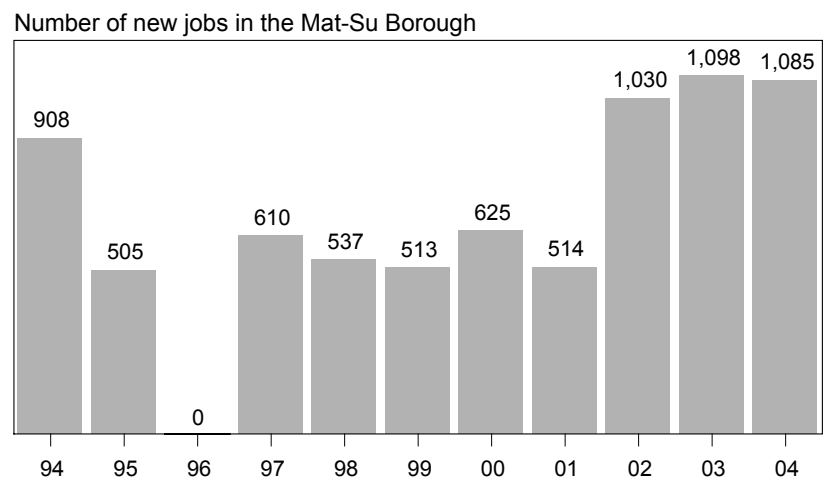


Source: Anchorage and Valley Board of Realtors, Multiple Listing Service Data

Over two-thirds of Mat-Su's growth from 2000 to 2004 came from the service sector. That's not surprising since this sector dominates the borough's labor market. (See Exhibit 14 and 15.) Most of the employment that exists in the borough is there to provide services to the local population and isn't export-related activity. The health care and social services sector has been the single-largest absolute contributor to this growth; with the opening of the new hospital in 2006, this trend is likely to continue.

2004: Another Strong Year for Jobs 12 New Mat-Su jobs, 1994-2004

Leisure and hospitality, mostly restaurants and hotels, came in a close second with retail right behind. Retail got a big additional boost in 2004 with the opening of the new Lowe's and Home Depot stores. And due to the broadening that has taken place in these industries, far more of the dollars spent by Mat-Su residents are remaining in Mat-Su instead of leaking to Anchorage and elsewhere. Sales taxes collected by the cities of Wasilla and Palmer illustrate this effect quite well. (See Exhibit 16.) Tax collections have grown faster than population or employment and may even explain sub-par retail growth in Anchorage in recent years as Mat-Su residents spend fewer of their retail dollars in "the big city" and choose to spend their money closer to home.

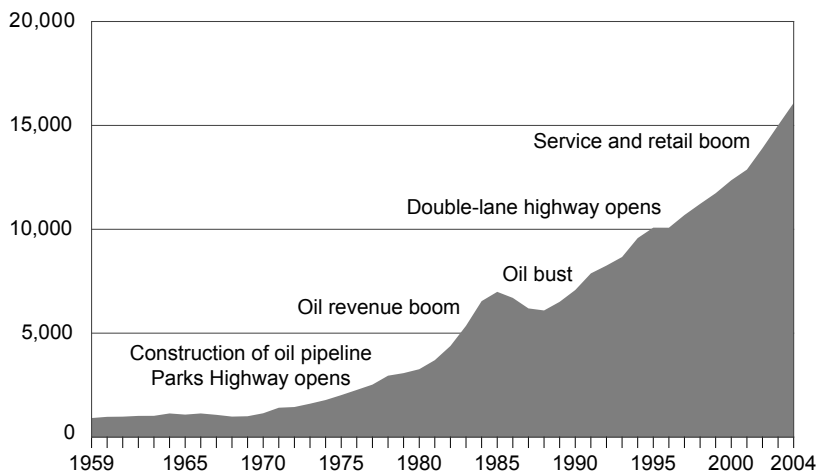


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

The construction industry has been another big contributor to employment growth. Booming residential and commercial markets have kept this industry busy and have also spurred growth

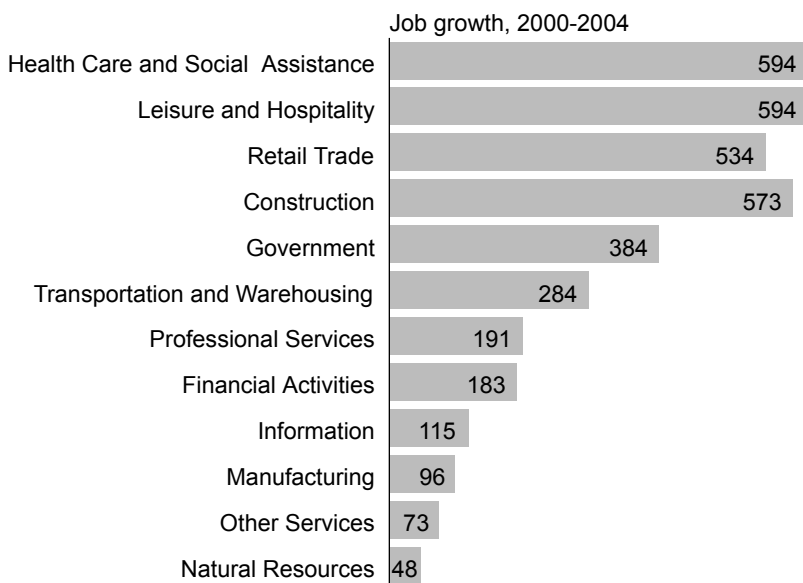
13 Employment Just Keeps Growing Mat-Su, 1959-2004

Number of wage and salary jobs in the Matanuska Valley



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

14 Job Growth in Most Industries Mat-Su Borough, 2000-2004



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

in the financial activities sector, which includes jobs in real estate, banks, credit unions and insurance companies.

Another industry continues to broaden

An industry largely independent of the effects of a burgeoning population has also contributed to Mat-Su's growth – the visitor industry.

The tourism mix in Mat-Su is different from many other areas of the state. It relies on a heavy mixture of Anchorage residents and others who have recreational property in the borough. Thousands of other visitors from Southcentral and elsewhere spend their vacations, holidays and weekends in Mat-Su during the summer. And during the past decade a rapidly growing number of destination tourists have been making their way to the Upper Susitna Valley.

The Mat-Su Borough also hosts a strong winter contingent of visitors that peaks with the start of the Iditarod sled dog race in Wasilla. Its biggest strengths are its proximity to Anchorage, the state's largest community, and to Denali National Park and Denali itself – the state's most popular mountain. The borough is also home to Denali State Park, which serves as the gateway to Denali tours and climbs and is a major fishing and hunting destination.

In the past, the vast majority of Mat-Su visitors were independent travelers. However, that started changing when Princess Tours opened its Mt. McKinley Princess Lodge near Talkeetna in 1997 and Cook Inlet Region opened the Talkeetna Lodge in 1999. Both of these hotels have since expanded and both ranked among the top-50 employers in the Mat-Su Borough in 2004. (See Exhibit 17.) The growth in this destination tourism activity is clearly illustrated by the more than doubling in bed tax revenues over the past five years. (See Exhibit 18.)

Unlike most of the rest of the state, which experienced at least two lean years after 9/11,

Mat-Su's numbers defied this trend and just kept on racking up impressive gains. Accommodation employment grew by 75 percent from 2000 to 2004. In addition to the large hotels mentioned above, a number of smaller lodges and hotels have opened in recent years. If current plans for a \$41 million Hatcher Pass ski area come to fruition, the Mat-Su will be adding even more to its strong and expanding visitor industry.

Some of the traditional industries still play a role

Once a dominant sector, agriculture is still a player but its role has diminished. In 2004, the value of agricultural production in the Mat-Su Borough was \$11.7 million. Mining in the borough has also declined. The area used to

have major gold and coal mining operations and that could happen again. But for now the mining operations are very small.

The unemployment picture improves in 2005

During the past two years the unemployment rate in the Mat-Su Borough was a bit above 8 percent. Preliminary numbers for 2005 indicate that the rate may fall as much as a full percentage point. Another positive development is the narrowing of the jobless rate between Mat-Su and Anchorage. In earlier years, it wasn't unusual for the Mat-Su Borough jobless rate to be more than twice as high as Anchorage's rate. At least part of the explanation may be

Average Annual Employment Mat-Su Borough, by industry sector **15**

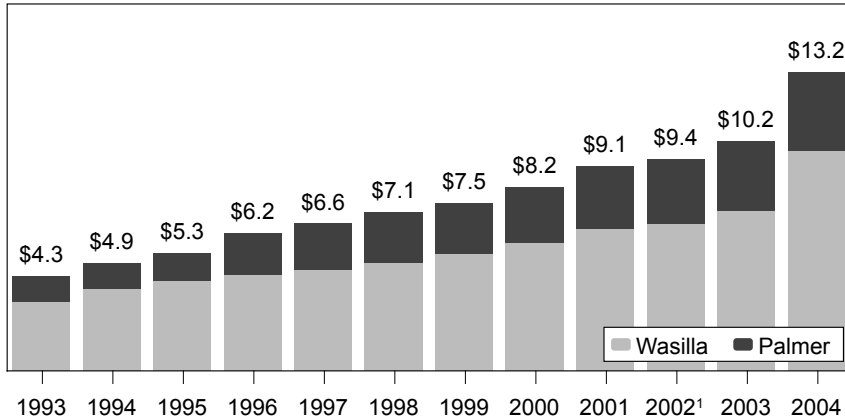
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Employment Change 2000-2004
Total Wage and Salary Employment	12,361	12,873	13,904	15,002	16,087	3,726
Natural Resources	69	83	105	120	117	48
Construction	1,163	1,298	1,439	1,546	1,736	573
Manufacturing	118	140	167	221	214	96
Trade	2,467	2,510	2,609	2,755	3,036	569
Retail	2,394	2,435	2,547	2,670	2,928	534
Transportation, Warehousing	259	280	397	453	543	284
Utilities	152	147	137	147	148	-4
Information	405	407	401	498	520	115
Financial Activities	368	362	404	494	551	183
Professional Services	703	731	805	836	894	191
Educational and Health Services	1,771	1,807	1,970	2,293	2,424	653
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,561	1,603	1,736	1,979	2,161	600
Leisure and Hospitality	1,323	1,446	1,579	1,760	1,917	594
Accommodations, Eating and Drinking	1,149	1,218	1,364	1,524	1,645	496
Accommodations	255	200	228	396	447	192
Eating and Drinking	894	1,018	1,136	1,127	1,198	304
Other Services	477	423	548	518	550	73
Government	3,042	3,140	3,344	3,357	3,426	384
Federal Government	206	163	171	182	192	-14
State Government	876	896	904	952	963	87
Local Government	1,960	2,081	2,269	2,223	2,272	312

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

16 The Valley: Capturing More of Its Sales Dollars

Wasilla and Palmer, 1993-2004

Sales tax receipts for Wasilla and Palmer, in millions of dollars



¹ City of Wasilla's sales tax increased from 2.0 percent to 2.5 percent.

Sources: The cities of Wasilla and Palmer

that the labor markets of the two areas are more integrated than ever.

Yet earnings and incomes lag

In 2004, average annual earnings for the Mat-Su Borough were \$31,012 versus \$41,484 in Anchorage. (See Exhibit 19.) The biggest reason for this differential is that a much larger percentage of the industry mix in the Mat-Su Borough is in the lower-paying sectors such as services and retail. Mat-Su also has relatively fewer jobs in the higher-paying sectors of oil, government and transportation. There is some anecdotal evidence as well that the wages for similar jobs may pay something less in the Mat-Su because of its larger relative supply of potential workers. The income figures of the borough also come in below both the statewide and national averages. Mat-Su's per capita income of \$29,483 in 2003 was 89 percent of the state's.

The future could continue to be impressive

If it's assumed that Southcentral's economy will continue to expand, the Mat-Su Borough is unlikely to relinquish its role as the strongest economic performer in the state. Population projections produced by the Alaska Department

of Labor and Workforce Development show the borough will become the state's second most populous area by 2018. And according to recent employment and population projections produced by the University of Alaska-Anchorage, Mat-Su's population could reach 162,000 in 2025, or as high as 174,000 if the Knik Arm bridge is built. Employment projections are equally impressive.

Even so, it's crucial to keep an eye on some of the economic fundamentals when contemplating Mat-Su's future. The economic health of the entire Southcentral region will be paramount for these trends to continue. If economic growth were to slow statewide or in Anchorage, the Valley would certainly not be immune. Other factors such as interest rates could also prove to be important.

The Mat-Su and Anchorage economies are inextricably linked and so are their futures. It's possible that developments underway could provide Mat-Su with a more independent path – developments such as its new port, growing commercial activity and growth in the non-Anchorage part of the visitor industry. Right now, however, the fate of Mat-Su's economy is more dependent on what happens in Anchorage than vice versa. But as Mat-Su becomes a bigger slice of the combined area, a more balanced relationship will develop.

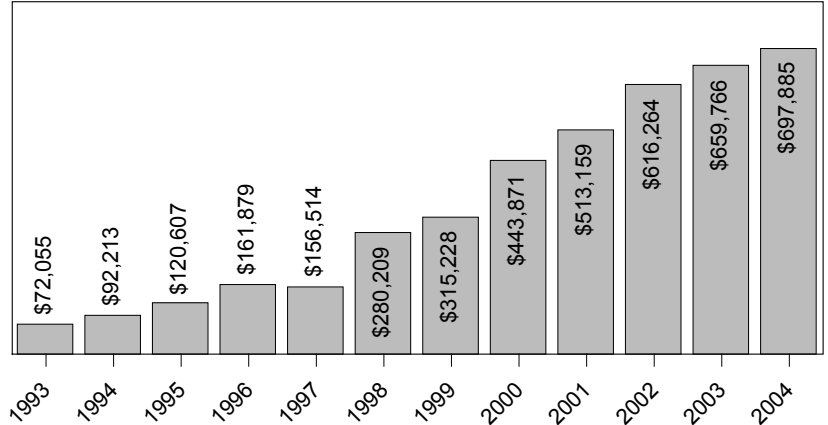
17 Top 50 Employers Mat-Su Borough, 2004

1	Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District	1,736
2	Valley Hospital	558
3	Wal-Mart	359
4	Fred Meyer Stores	347
5	Safeway	310
6	Matanuska Telephone Association	302
7	Matanuska-Susitna Borough	293
8	Alaska Department of Health and Social Svcs.	218
9	First Student	218
10	Spenard Builders Supply	192
11	Alaska Department of Corrections	169
12	Mat-Su Services for Children & Adults Inc.	157
13	Advanced Concepts (Job Corps)	147
14	University of Alaska	145
15	Job Ready	141
16	McDonald's	136
17	Matanuska Electric Association	124
18	Alaska Home Care	119
19	City of Wasilla	114
20	Nye Frontier Ford	113
21	Alaska Hotel Properties (Princess Hotels)	110
22	Alaska Department of Natural Resources	105
23	Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union	92
24	GCI Communications	87
25	Talkeetna Alaska Lodge	85
26	Alaska Department of Public Safety	85
27	Sears	83
28	Tesoro	79
29	Immediate Care	74
30	Meca Employment Connection	73
31	Behavioral Health Services of Mat-Su Inc.	70
32	U.S. Post Office	68
33	City of Palmer	66
34	Wells Fargo	59
35	The Alaska Club	59
36	K&G Enterprises	59
37	The Valley Hotel	58
38	Lithia Motors	54
39	New Horizons Telecom Inc.	54
40	Denali Foods (Taco Bell)	52
41	Alaska Department of Trans. & Pub. Facilities	52
42	Wolverine Supply Inc.	52
43	Chugiak Children's Services Inc.	51
44	Palmer Senior Citizens Center	50
45	Steve's Food Boy In & Out	48
46	Subway	47
47	A&W Windbreak	45
48	Hope Community Resources Inc.	44
49	Fishers Fuel	44
50	Aurora Foods	43

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

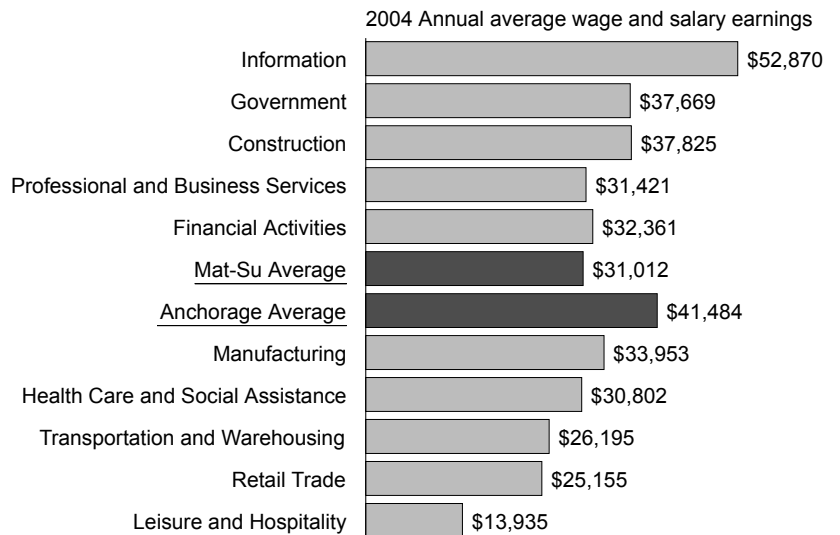
Hotel Activity Soars 18 Revenues defy statewide trends, 1993-2004

Mat-Su Borough bed tax revenues



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

How the Valley's Earnings Stack Up 19 Mat-Su's average annual earnings, 2004



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