

# Alaska's Largest Employers

By Neal Fried, Greg Huff and Judy Hallanger

**F**or the first time the Alaska Department of Labor has produced a current list of Alaska's top 50 private employers (Table 1) based on the number of workers each company employs in Alaska.<sup>1</sup> Several of Alaska's top 50 employers are members of the Fortune 500. The others, if not of national or international stature, are regionally recognized and are major players in Alaska's economy.

While most of the companies listed are familiar, there may be a few companies which may not be easily recognized. For example, fifth ranked Lutheran Hospital & Homes of America may not be familiar because they are better known by their individual operations, such as Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. This, and other events, such as a company changing its names since 1985, are footnoted at the end of Table 1. These footnotes provide the best information available.

Two rankings are provided; one based on the company's average annual employment in 1985 (the last calendar year for which data is available) and their July 1985 through June 1986 employment. In some cases the rankings have changed.

Also provided is the major industry category and the location of each company. Two locations for each company are presented in Table 1. The first location covers the area where that company operates in Alaska, but if it operates in more than one community, as is the case with most of the firms, then a statewide designation is given. The second location gives the company's Alaska headquarters or the location of the largest operation.

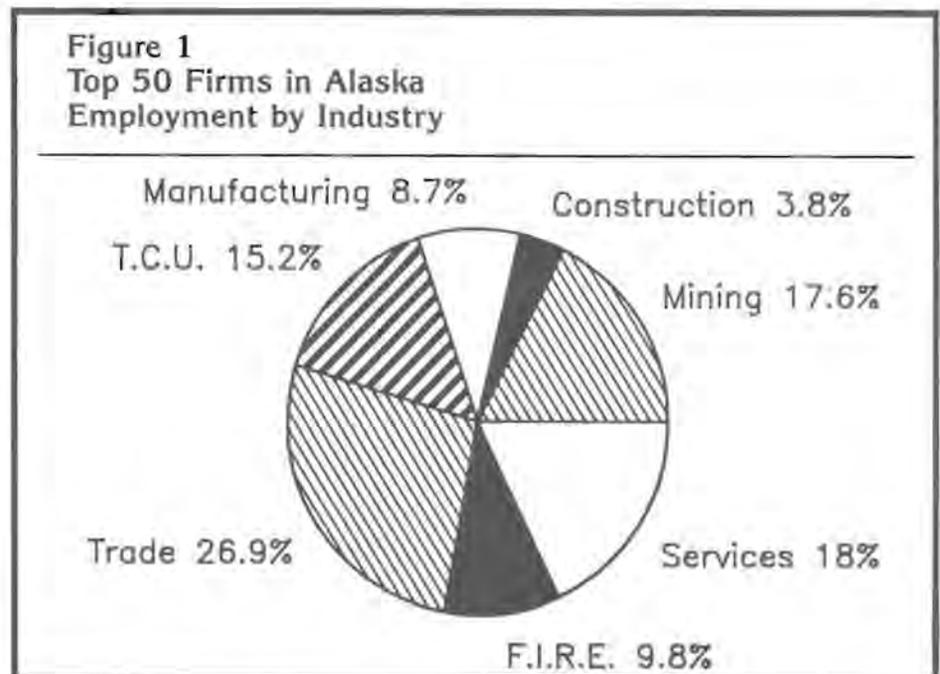
## Firm Size

Alaska's top 50 represent only a small percentage of private business firms operating in Alaska (less than 1/2 of 1%), but their employment represents nearly 20% of all private jobs in Alaska and an even greater portion of wages and salaries. While the top 50 only represent a small number of firms they are a major force in the Alaskan economy.

In 1985, Alaska's 50 largest private employers ranged in size, as measured by employment, from 308 to 2,835 employees. They were involved in a variety of activities: from oil and gas production to private social services. In total they employed an annual average 31,217 people in 1985,

<sup>1</sup> The employment data is based on records of unemployment insurance contributions reports. The data is based on U.I. account numbers, so the employment figures may not include the total employment of a parent company if the subsidiaries are under another account number. The employment information is protected by confidentiality laws and therefore it was necessary to receive written permission from each company to release the information before it could be published. All of the companies were very cooperative in this effort.

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20% of all private jobs  
in Alaska.**



19% of total private sector employment and 13.5% of total employment.

Alaska's top 50 paid \$1.06 billion in wages in 1985, 24% of all wages paid by private employers in the state. The top 50 firms tend to pay higher average wages and salaries than for all firms in Alaska. The average monthly pay in 1985 for employees working for Alaska's top 50 employers was \$2,793 compared to the average private sector monthly pay of \$2,369.

Because the top 50 employers are larger than the average company they tend to be able to weather economic downturns better. From the second quarter of 1985 to the second quarter of 1986 employment among the top 50 declined 2.5% compared to a 5.2% decline among the total private sector.

When examining the ranking of the top 50 Alaska firms in Table 1, the annual average data obscures the seasonal fluctuations in employment for some industries. If the ranking was based on a single month or quarter the seasonal fluctuations would result in shifts in the ranking during the course of a year. The primary examples are the seafood processing and construction industries. During the summer, seafood processing employment levels peak and the ranking of the processors climbs but their ranking falls just as quickly when the peak season ends. The construction industry generally follows a similar pattern of extreme fluctuations in employment levels.

### Industry Breakout

Not only do the top 50 represent a considerable portion of jobs in Alaska they represent a significant share of employment in their specific industries. Of the 31,200 jobs among the top 50 employers in 1985, the trade industry had the greatest number of jobs and construction the fewest. Trade also had the most firms in the top 50. These fifteen firms represented nearly a quarter of the top 50's employment in 1985, while the three construction firms within the top 50 made-up less than 4% of the 31,200 jobs (Figure 1).

The four oil and gas firms in the top 50 in 1985 represented nearly 60%

of total mining employment in Alaska. ARCO and SOHIO, the two largest oil companies, accounted for 44% of total statewide mining employment. The construction industry, on the other hand, was composed more than any other industry of small firms. Only 6% of total construction employment is within the top 50 employers list.

Although the members of the top 50 within the trade industry represented 18% of total trade employment, some members comprised a greater share of their specific retail business. For example, the largest two firms in the trade industry are Alaska's largest grocers, Carr's and Safeway, which represent 45% of total employment in Alaska's food store industry. The four merchants within the department store sector (Fred Meyer, Sears, J C Penney and Nordstroms) had employment levels in 1985 that accounted for nearly 85% of statewide employment levels within their industry.

The largest of the services firms; Providence Hospital, Lutheran Hospital and Homes of America, and Humana Hospital, accounted for over three quarters of private hospital and nursing and personal care employment in Alaska.

Several firms dominate their industries. Alyeska Pipeline Company represents 90% of oil pipeline employment in Alaska, while Alascom, the big player in the telephone communication industry, represents nearly 60% of that industry's total employment. (This does not include local government owned and operated systems.) Four of the eight firms in the transportation, communication, and utilities industry are air transportation firms which accounted for 34% of all air transportation employment in Alaska. The four banks among the top 50 represent 64% of banking employment statewide, while the single credit union represented 1/3 of total credit union employment statewide.

### Location of the Top 50

The top 50 firms can be found throughout Alaska, from Ketchikan to the North Slope, from Cordova to Adak. In 1985 the top 50 had employees in at least 57 communities across Alaska, although they tend to

be concentrated in Anchorage. As an industry group the financial institutions are most widely distributed among the top 50. On average, they had employees in 13 communities with one firm located in 22 communities.

In the trade industry, Sears and Spenard Builders Supply had operations in more communities than any other retail establishment. Carr's and Safeway were distributed in the six largest communities in the Southcentral part of the state, but along with Spenard Builders they have several locations in Anchorage.

Because of the scope of their services Alascom, MarkAir, and Alaska Airlines are well represented across the state, each having employees in at least 15 communities. The Salvation Army was in 13 communities. The only hotel operator in Alaska among the top 50 with locations in more than one community was Sheffield Enterprises.

Unique among the top 50 are the oil companies with operations on the North Slope and in Cook Inlet, but as is common with most top 50 firms they have an Anchorage headquarters. The construction firms are much the same as the oil firms. They are headquartered in Anchorage, but their main operations are related to oil field construction on the North Slope.

The manufacturing firms that are connected to fish processing and lumber and paper manufacturing, among the top 50, are the firms most likely to be based outside Anchorage and still have multiple locations. On the other hand, Alaska's two largest newspapers are Anchorage based, but distributed statewide.

### Conclusion

Alaska's 50 largest employers accounted for over 31,000 jobs (20% of total private employment) and \$1.06 billion in wages (24% of private wages) in Alaska. They represent a variety of industries and tend to have Anchorage headquarters with operations around the state. These firms were major contributors to economic growth and expansion in the past and will continue to play a leadership role in Alaska's future.

Table 1  
Alaska's Top 50 Firms  
(based on 1985 average employment)

Firm Name	1985 Rank	June 86 Rank	1985 Employment	Industry	Area	Headquarters or Largest Site
ARCO Alaska, Inc. 1/	1	1	2,835	Mining	Statewide	Anchorage
Carrs Quality Centers, Inc.	2	2	1,894	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Providence Hospital	3	3	1,627	Services	Anchorage	Anchorage
SOHIO Alaska Petroleum Co. 2/	4	4	1,348	Mining	Statewide	Anchorage
Lutheran Hospital & Homes of America 3/	5	5	1,066	Services	Statewide	Fairbanks
Alascom, Inc.	6	6	1,028	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Anchorage
National Bank of Alaska	7	7	942	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Statewide	Anchorage
Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., Inc.	8	10	907	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Anchorage
Safeway Stores, Inc.	9	8	845	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
1st National Bank of Anchorage	10	11	803	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Statewide	Anchorage
VECO, Inc.	11	9	771	Mining	Statewide	Anchorage
Alaska Airlines, Inc.	12	12	768	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Anchorage
McDonalds 4/	13	13	679	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Humana Hospital Alaska, Inc.	14	14	665	Services	Anchorage	Anchorage
Alaska USA Federal Credit Union	15	15	631	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Statewide	Anchorage
Icicle Seafoods, Inc.	16	17	630	Manufacturing	Statewide	Petersburg
MarkAir	17	16	619	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Anchorage
Union Oil Co. of California	18	20	547	Mining	Statewide	Anchorage
Fred Meyer Shopping Centers	19	19	524	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Spenard Builders Supply, Inc.	20	22	511	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Sears Roebuck and Co.	21	21	509	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Ketchikan Pulp Co.	22	18	494	Manufacturing	Statewide	Ketchikan
Captain Cook Hotel	23	24	459	Services	Anchorage	Anchorage
J C Penney Co.	24	26	454	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Nordstrom, Inc.	25	23	449	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Anchorage Daily News, Inc.	26	25	439	Manufacturing	Anchorage	Anchorage
Pioneer Construction Co.	27	36	437	Construction	Statewide	Anchorage
Anchorage Times Publishing Co., Inc.	28	31	426	Manufacturing	Anchorage	Anchorage
Felec Services, Inc.	29	28	408	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Fairbanks
Alaska Commercial Co.	30	29	408	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Wilsyk, Inc.	31	32	402	Services	Statewide	Anchorage
Sheffield Enterprises, Inc.	32	30	401	Services	Statewide	Anchorage
Pay N Save 5/	33	41	398	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
All Alaskan Seafoods, Inc.	34	27	398	Manufacturing	Statewide	Kodiak
AIC-Martin JV, Inc.	35	100	385	Construction	Statewide	Anchorage
Yukon Office Supply, Inc. 6/	36	34	379	Wholesale Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Chugach Electric Association, Inc.	37	33	375	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Anchorage
Alaska National Bank of the North	38	37	369	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Statewide	Anchorage
H C Price Construction Co.	39	81	365	Construction	Statewide	Anchorage
Lamonts, Inc.	40	35	352	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.	41	40	349	Services	Statewide	Fairbanks
Int'l. In-Flight Catering Co., Ltd	42	39	348	Retail Trade	Anchorage	Anchorage
Alaska Sales & Service, Inc.	43	49	338	Retail Trade	Anchorage	Anchorage
Sheraton Anchorage Hotel	44	44	335	Services	Anchorage	Anchorage
ERA Helicopters, Inc.	45	43	331	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Anchorage
Alaska Pulp Corporation	46	46	326	Manufacturing	Sitka	Sitka
Reeve Aleutian Airways, Inc.	47	51	313	Trans. Communication & Utilities	Statewide	Anchorage
Burger King 7/	48	42	312	Retail Trade	Statewide	Anchorage
Salvation Army, Alaska Division	49	48	310	Services	Statewide	Anchorage
First Interstate Bank of Alaska	50	54	308	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Statewide	Anchorage

1/ Includes Atlantic Richfield Co. employees.

2/ Currently named Standard Alaska Production Co.

3/ Includes Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and facilities in Kodiak, Soldotna, and Valdez.

4/ This is Alaska's largest McDonalds franchise. It includes only Anchorage, Palmer, and Wasilla McDonalds.

5/ Seattle Standard Corp. is the parent corporation.

6/ Currently named The Office Place.

7/ This franchise includes Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Wasilla Burger Kings.

*We would like to thank the employers for the cooperation and time in responding to our survey. The survey enabled us to provide this information and hope in the years to come that we may continue providing information of Alaska's Top 50.*