

ALASKA SHOULD ADD JOBS IN 2014



State labor officials in Alaska recently said that the state will have modest employment growth for the next 12 months. Employment growth should occur at a 0.4 percent clip, according to data from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The news was first reported by the Juneau Empire.

On Thursday, the department released its monthly Alaska Economic Trends report, which included the employment forecast, according to the Anchorage Daily News.

Caroline Shultz, a state economist, said that 2014 is going to be the fifth straight year for increased employment across the state of Alaska. Despite this, the projected numbers will be short of the 10-year average seen in Alaska.

"Shrinking government employment is a major reason for this tempered forecast," Shultz wrote. "Government has traditionally provided slow but steady job growth in Alaska, but several years of cuts — mainly federal — have put a damper on overall job growth."

Since 2011, federal jobs have dropped in the state. Shultz said that due to federal budget cuts, this trend should continue in 2014. For the year 2014, the state is expected to lose 900 government jobs, with 600 of them coming at the federal level.

"This is assuming agencies won't be forced to enact severe layoffs," Shultz wrote.

Another decrease in 2014 is expected to come in the industry of military-related construction. In the state, there will be an increase of healthcare jobs by 1.2 percent. An increase is also expected in energy and mining jobs in Alaska. The state also thinks that 100 jobs will be added this year in the leisure and hospitality industry in the southeast region of the state.

"Relatively small government job losses will mostly offset scattered private sector gains," wrote state economist Mali Abrahamson.

Government officials think that the economy in the southeast region of the state will be impacted by the lack of population growth and the growth in population of retirement-aged employees.