

# Jobless rate dips to 7.7 percent, setting record

JUNEAU — For the second consecutive month Alaska statewide unemployment levels registered record-breaking lows when the May unemployment rate came in at 7.7 percent, according to the Alaska Department of Labor.

The May rate, the lowest recorded for that month in the last 15 years, follows a record April low when that month's rate fell to 8.5 percent.

Two factors caused the May unemployment rate to fall to a new low, according to Alaska labor economist John Boucher, Alaska's continuing recovery from a two-year recession and the new jobs created by the cleanup effort of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

Despite the May record, Alaska's unemployment rate, however, is still higher than the nation as a whole. The United States' comparable unemployment rate for May was 5 percent.