

# Chamber Disputes Population Decrease Figures

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Erik Wander/KMXT

When the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce presented its comprehensive economic development strategy to the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly recently, it was noted in the document that the borough's population fell by about 200 from 2007 to 2008 and by about 500 since the last U.S. census was conducted. According to Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development statistics, that trend is expected to continue over the next 20 years.

Kodiak Chamber of Commerce economic development specialist Trevor Brown, who presented the report to the assembly, says the population numbers may be misleading.

-- (Population  
1 31 sec. "The Alaska Department of Labor ... it's up in the air.")

Despite that prediction, Brown said that certain key indicators seem to suggest that Kodiak's population is not in fact currently on the decline.

-- (Population  
2 42 sec. "With the addition of the new ... state is predicted to decline.")

While Brown couldn't account for the disparity, he speculated that some of the state's estimates are based in part on transient labor and that village population is likely to have decreased between 2007 and 2008 as a result of high fuel costs. However, he said people seem to be returning to the villages as those costs have come down from their highest levels.

Dan Robinson, an economist with the Department of Labor, who participates in population studies, said the state's population estimates and projections are based on four factors. He also said factors such as employment and housing are not necessarily accurate predictors of population

growth or decline.

-- (Population  
3 50 sec. "Births and deaths, which ... about  
the population estimates.")

Brown said he's not placing a lot of stock in the state's numbers at this point until the 2010 census is conducted and the hard numbers resulting from it are tallied. He noted, however, that the state's estimates are important when it comes to government funding.

-- (Population  
4 42 sec. "A lot of things depend on ... and  
that won't be an estimate.")

According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Kodiak's population is expected to decline to less than 13-thousand by the year 2030. The U.S. census is conducted every 10 years as mandated by the U.S. Constitution. The next census will be conducted in 2010.

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