



# UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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## **UFA PUBLISHES FISHING ECONOMIC FACT SHEETS TO HEIGHTEN COMMUNITY FISHERY AWARENESS**

The statewide commercial fishing umbrella association United Fishermen of Alaska, representing 37 fishing associations, has released a set of data sheets for major Alaska communities and boroughs. The group is seeking to provide UFA groups and members with economic information to illustrate the industry's significance in their communities.

UFA is alarmed at the lack of public awareness about the economic contributions of the fishing and processing industry across Alaska.

"These statistics are important not only to our member organizations and coastal communities, but for talking points to assist professional fishermen in advocating at public meetings, in correspondence, and even in conversations with their neighbors," said UFA President Arni Thomson. "Commercial fishing and seafood processing is increasingly forgotten in discussions about the relative importance of Alaska industries among policymakers and the public. Many fishermen may leave their local community to fish in other regions for as long as four or five months out of the year, and much of the processing employment is in remote areas out of sight. Out of sight, out of mind. UFA feels it is vital to our mission to bring this information out in a way that is clear and useful to help illustrate what the fishing industry brings back to the state of Alaska and its communities. Fishermen armed with the facts and figures about the value of their fisheries need to become ambassadors for their industry," Thomson concluded.

"The most commonly quoted number to gauge fishery economics, is ex-vessel value, the price paid to fishermen at the docks prior to the finfish and shellfish being processed. Quite often this value represents only fifty percent of the product value after it is processed, boxed and frozen. The value added processing (manufacturing) function then results in "the first wholesale value", which approximates the export value of the product. At this point, it does not include the value of additional jobs and income for transportation, distribution, and wholesale and retail sales and restaurant sales. Alaska's seafood exports are valued at \$2.35 billion in 2010. This is important to all Alaskans in terms of tax revenue contributions. In fiscal year 2009, the industry contributed \$79 million in state taxes and fees in addition to local fish taxes" Thomson said.

Many tend to compare ex-vessel value to the total economic value of other industries, so the economic impact of the fishing industry is routinely devalued and seldom is it corrected.

"While some of the harvest in offshore waters is taken by larger vessels and entities, most commercial fishing operations in Alaska are small LLCs or family businesses, with significant local investment in vessels, equipment, permits, and years of professional experience.

The 18 port profiles are for Anchorage, Cordova, Dillingham, Homer, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Petersburg, Seward, Sitka, Wrangell, Aleutians West Borough, Aleutians East Borough, Bristol Bay Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Lake and Peninsula Borough and Mat-Su Borough.

UFA intends to distribute the community fact sheets, not only to fishermen and processors, but to visitors at the upcoming Pacific Marine Expo trade show. The fact sheets will also be posted on the UFA website.

“We see more Alaska fishing families in one place at the Expo than we can reach in any one time in Alaska, but anyone who cannot make it to Expo, can download the fact sheets from our website or obtain them from their local UFA member group,” said UFA Executive Director, Mark Vinsel.

UFA had in previous years produced fishing facts sheets on request from members on their own community, and the consensus of UFA groups was to create a system to produce these for all the commercial fishing regions and fisheries.

“UFA is providing a service to individual fishermen and UFA member groups to make their economic value and contributions known in their own communities. Grassroots work that is necessary for access to fisheries needs to be networked through the thousands of fishing and support service businesses in Alaska,” said UFA Executive Director Mark Vinsel.

### **Additional information on State of Alaska data sources used by UFA for the Fishing Fact Sheets:**

Due to common confusion and varying numbers available among many agencies and organizations that gather and report on fisheries, UFA has used state and federal government sources, and has footnoted each statistic with online sources. Commercial fishing permit activity, estimated earnings by permit holders, and vessel homeports are from AK Commercial Fishery Entry Commission (CFEC). Crew numbers have been obtained from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game 2010 Crew license list, and is the number of individuals who list their address in a given city. 2010 Population used to calculate percentage of resident skippers and crew who fished is from the Alaska DCCED Alaska Community Information online database. Processor Employment and Wages Data is from Alaska Department of Labor, and processor first wholesale value by census area is provided by Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. Revenue figures are from 2010 Alaska Dept of Revenue Shared Taxes report. National rank and NOAA total landings and value for selected ports is from the NOAA Fisheries Office of Science & Technology.

These economic profiles are integral to the development of UFA’s in-state communications program, which has been a focus of UFA President Arni Thomson since his selection as the group’s president in June of 2010. Thomson’s first action as President was to move from Seattle to Anchorage, and set up an office in the downtown area, to strengthen the group’s presence in the state’s largest city and the business center of Alaska. The UFA main office remains in Juneau, across the street from the Capitol Building.

UFA over the past year has increased the commercial fishing and seafood industry profile in Alaska by joining and becoming active in the Resource Development Council of Alaska, the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, and the Southeast Alaska Economic Cluster Group, which is linked to the statewide program, Alaska Partnership for Economic Development. UFA is also a member of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce and participated in an industry panel at the Chamber’s Fall

Conference in Talkeetna this year. Just recently, the World Trade Center (WTC, of Alaska) has approved an exchange of memberships with UFA.

UFA represents 37 Alaska commercial fishing associations from fisheries throughout the state and federal offshore waters, and is online at [www.ufa-fish.org](http://www.ufa-fish.org) .

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