

Construction Cost Survey 2009

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Construction Cost Survey	3
Introduction	3
Comparing 2009 to 2008.....	3
Construction Costs Around the State	4
Alaska Suppliers Comparison Index.....	7
Construction Costs in Alaska vs. Seattle	8
Transportation Index for Market Basket from Seattle	8
Alaska Construction Cost Survey Methodology.....	9
 Appendix A - Tables and Charts	10
 Tables	11
Table 1 - Average Price for Construction Materials	11
Table 2 - Average Price for Doors and Windows	11
Table 3 - Average Price for Construction materials.....	11
Table 4 - Transportation Cost of Market Basket	12
 Figures	13
Figure 1 - Artist Rendering of Model Home	13
Figure 1 - Floor Plan of Model Home	13
 Graphs	14
Graph 1 - Average Cost of Market Basket 2009	14
Graph 2 - Alaska Suppliers Comparison Index	14
Graph 3 - Transportation Index for Market Basket From Seattle	14
Graph 4 - Average Cost of Market Basket 2007-2009	14
Graph 5 - Average Cost of Market Basket 2009	14

Introduction

In January 2009, the seventeenth annual survey of building supply, concrete, and shipping companies was conducted to determine the cost of a market basket of construction materials in communities throughout Alaska. The survey simulates contractor pricing for a market basket of materials used in the construction of a model home. The market basket represents approximately 30 percent of the materials used in the construction of the model home; however, it does not represent 30 percent of the total cost to build the model home. Figure 6-1 shows the floor plan of the model house used in this survey.

The market basket provides a benchmark for comparing costs between the urban communities of Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Sitka, and Wasilla, as well as the rural communities of Barrow, Bethel, and Nome. In addition to the materials included in the market basket, suppliers also report the cost of doors and windows for the model home, while shipping companies provide the cost of transporting the market basket materials from Seattle to each community. A complete list of the market basket items and their specifications is included in Table 1.

Construction techniques, building requirements, and styles vary greatly from region to region. For this reason, not all of the materials surveyed are necessarily used in all areas. Beginning in 2003, Barrow, Bethel, and Nome included metal roofing, which is more common in rural areas, in their respective market baskets instead of the asphalt shingles used in urban areas. Costs for the three rural areas surveyed, Barrow, Bethel, and Nome, exclude concrete and rebar since pilings support houses above permafrost in these locations instead of slab foundations. Unless otherwise specified, the market basket prices quoted exclude concrete, rebar, doors, and windows.

Comparing 2009 to 2008

Alaska Market Baskets

- Three of the 11 communities experienced decreases in the overall cost of market basket materials. Decreases ranged from less than one percent in Bethel to 4 percent in Sitka. The remaining eight communities experienced increases in the overall cost of the market basket materials. The percentage increases ranged from three percent (Wasilla) to 16 percent (Fairbanks).

Seattle Market Basket

- The Seattle market basket decreased \$64, less than one percent, from \$17,055 in 2008 to \$16,991 in 2009. The most significant price decreases were seen in plywood and copper pipe, which dropped by 22 and 37 percent, respectively. Shingles and single breakers were the two items with the most significant price increases this year at 53 and 34 percent, respectively. The price of shingles broke \$2,000 this year with an average of \$2,044, up from \$1,339 in 2008. The average price of single breakers in Seattle has more than doubled in the past two years, starting at \$49 in 2007, jumping to \$70 in 2008 and skyrocketing to \$94 in 2009.

Concrete

- Kodiak remains the most expensive locale for concrete this year, with an average price of \$6,300. Kodiak is the only location that did not see an increase in 2009. Percentage increases in concrete ranged from a high of 13 percent (Sitka) to six percent (Kenai and Ketchikan). Wasilla remains the least expensive location for concrete (\$3,363), followed closely by Fairbanks (\$3,600) and Anchorage (\$3,640).

Rebar

- The price of rebar increased in all of the urban locations. Percentage increases ranged from 14 percent (Ketchikan) to 56 percent (Fairbanks). Sitka recorded the second highest increase with a notable 55 percent. In Seattle, the price of rebar increased 16 percent, to \$741. In 2009, the price of rebar in Seattle came in above two Alaska prices; Anchorage (\$665) and Juneau (\$734), and came in below two other locations by mere dollars; Kodiak (\$743) and Wasilla (\$745).

Doors and Windows

- Five Alaska locations experienced decreases in the total cost of doors and windows. The percentage decreases ranged from 4 percent (Bethel) to 20 percent (Wasilla). The remaining six Alaska locations experiencing price increases ranging from 2 percent (Nome) to 42 percent (Juneau). Seattle experienced a 7 percent decrease in the overall price of doors and windows.

Shipping Costs from Seattle

- The 2009 cost of transporting the building materials from Seattle decreased in all areas except Juneau, following an increase to all locations in 2008. The percentage decreases this year ranged from one percent (Kodiak) to 16 percent (Kenai). As the only community to experience an increase in shipping costs, a 2 percent increase in 2009 raised Juneau's transportation cost to \$4,032.

Construction Costs Around the State

- Statewide, the weighted-average costs of the market basket ranged from a low of \$18,938 in Anchorage to a high of \$49,885 in Barrow.
- The disparity between the most expensive urban location and the least expensive rural location in 2009 decreased to \$6,103. Kodiak maintained its position as the most expensive urban location, with a total market basket cost of \$25,041. For the seventh consecutive year, Bethel is the least expensive rural location with a cost of \$33,019. The urban/rural gap decreased this year; with Kodiak's overall increase of \$1,333 and Bethel's decrease of \$138, the disparity diminishes.
- Building materials cost more in rural areas than urban areas, and more in northern Alaska than in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska. The main reason for this cost differential is the added expense of transportation – the further a community is from Seattle, the more expensive the price of building materials. The lack of infrastructure in rural areas requires materials to be barged or flown to the different areas and contributes to higher prices.

- The cost of the Anchorage market basket increased 5 percent in 2009 to \$18,938, following a 14 percent decrease last year. Eight of the 15 market basket items decreased in price, ranging from 1 percent (plywood and 2x4 studs) to 31 percent (copper pipe). The seven items with price increases ranged from type X sheetrock (5 percent) to shingles (40 percent).
- Marking the largest decrease in overall market basket price, Sitka's total fell 4 percent in 2009, falling from \$21,433 to \$20,525. A 17 percent decrease in the cost of siding contributed to a savings of \$620. With a total decrease of \$908, Sitka's cost savings was the highest of all the locations surveyed and the cut in price marked the first time in the past six years that Sitka's cost did not grow.
- Fairbanks reported a market basket cost of \$23,514. Unlike 2008, when Fairbanks saw the first decrease in market basket cost in six years, 2009 charted the largest overall increase of all locations. Prices in Fairbanks increased in 10 out of 15 market basket items affecting the total by \$3,239. Percentage increases ranged from 2 percent (2x4 studs) to 63 percent (shingles). The five items with price decreases in 2009 ranged from 3 percent (underlay) to 31 percent (copper pipe).
- Juneau's market basket increased by \$1,159, or 6 percent, in 2009 to \$20,685. Eight of the 15 market basket items experienced an increase, ranging from less than 1 percent (R-21 insulation) to 74 percent (shingles). In 2008 the cost of shingles in Juneau fell 21 percent, but this year's price spike pushed the cost of Juneau's market basket up by \$1,165.
- Ketchikan experienced an 8 percent increase in the overall cost of market basket items. With increases in sheetrock (60 percent in plain and 64 percent in type X), Ketchikan's market basket was affected by \$1,300. This year's decreases in siding (28 percent) and shingles (33 percent) did alleviate some of the upward pressure of the spike in sheetrock, knocking down the overall cost by \$1,424. The price of the basket for Ketchikan still increased \$1,533 over the year.
- Six items in Barrow's market basket fell in price and three items remained the same in 2009. The six items with a higher price in Barrow resulted in a 7 percent increase to the market basket total. The most significant price increases were plywood (20 percent) and metal roofing (27 percent), affecting the total cost by \$2,678.
- Bethel was the only rural community to record a decrease in the market basket total price this year; down \$138 from 2008, allowing this community to maintain its position as least expensive rural location with an overall total of \$33,019. Price increases ranging from 7 percent (siding) to 35 percent (2x4 studs) were not enough to counteract the price decreases in six market basket items, including plain sheetrock (\$300) and R-38 insulation (\$842).

- Juneau's 2009 market basket saw a reverse in the price of electric wire from the year before; last year's 72 percent decrease was countered by this year's 51 percent increase and the cost is now averaging \$209, positioned between Anchorage (\$201) and Wasilla (\$212).
- Last year, there were only two price increases in copper pipe: Kodiak (3 percent) and Bethel (22 percent). This year, there were three increases in copper pipe: Nome (10 percent), Kodiak (56 percent) and Ketchikan (57 percent). With gradual but consistent price swelling in Ketchikan, copper pipe has gone from cheapest of all 11 communities in 2002 (\$86) to the most expensive in 2009 (\$703). Today's cost of copper pipe in Ketchikan is more than twice that of Barrow's (\$330).
- Six out of 11 communities surveyed experienced increases in the cost of truss. Of those six locations, three saw increases of more than 20 percent. The percentage increases to Bethel, Kodiak and Fairbanks (24, 26 and 33, respectively) affected the market baskets in each community by \$427, \$676 and \$731.
- The price of 2x4 studs had the most significant impact in Bethel, with a 35 percent, or \$269, increase over last year. The price of 2x6 studs had a far greater impact to the communities overall. A 25 percent decrease in Barrow deflated the market basket by \$792 and a 39 percent increase in Ketchikan elevated the market basket by \$270.
- The cost of a single breaker increased by double-digit percentages in six urban locations in 2009. The result to the average cost of the item for urban locations climbed from \$80 in 2008 to \$107 in 2009; a 34 percent growth.
- The 2009 cost of ABS pipe in Nome and Kodiak represents the greatest percentage increases in those two locations this year (43 percent and 86 percent, respectively). In contrast, Sitka experienced a 73 percent price decrease in the cost of ABS pipe, marking the greatest percentage decrease of any market basket item in any location this year.
- The average cost of shingles increased by \$584 statewide in 2009. The location with the greatest increase in price was Juneau, with a spike of \$1,165, or 74 percent, this year. Fairbanks also experienced a significant increase in the cost of shingles; \$1,110, or 63 percent. In contrast, Ketchikan's cost of shingles decreased by \$527, or 33 percent.
- The cost of concrete increased in all areas except Kodiak, where the price remained the same. Kodiak was still the most expensive area for concrete with a cost of \$6300. Even with a 10 percent increase in price, Wasilla was still in the least expensive locale for concrete at \$3,363. The price difference between Kodiak and the second most-expensive area for concrete (Sitka, at \$5,580) decreased from \$1,350 in 2008 to \$720.

- In 2009, the price of rebar increased in all locations by double-digit percentages ranging from 14 percent in Ketchikan (following last year's spike of 51 percent) to 56 percent in Fairbanks. Fairbanks ranked as the most expensive location for rebar, at \$1,041, followed closely by Sitka, at \$1004. (As noted in the introduction, rebar is not used and, therefore, not reported in the three rural areas.) Anchorage again ranked as the least expensive at \$665.
- With Bethel's four percent decrease in the cost of doors and windows, it is no longer the most expensive location. Barrow, with an 18 percent increase and a total cost of \$5,180, is now the most expensive location. Juneau experienced two consecutive years of price decreases, ranking it as the least expensive place for doors and windows in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, however, with a 42 percent increase, raising the overall cost by \$1,113, there are now four locations spending less than Juneau for doors and windows. Wasilla, with a 20 percent decrease, is now the least expensive place for doors and windows, at a total cost of \$2,930.

Alaska Suppliers Comparison Index

Fluctuations in cost can best be examined in terms of the yearly change each area experiences in relation to a point of reference. One way to do this is to establish an index comparing each community's market basket cost to a benchmark. The Alaska Suppliers Comparison Index uses the largest city in Alaska, Anchorage, as its benchmark. To create this index, Anchorage's market basket cost is given an index value of 100. Dividing the average cost for a survey area by the Anchorage value (\$18,938) produces the index value for that community.

- The Anchorage market basket cost increased five percent, or \$852, in 2009. Areas with cost increases greater than five percent experienced increases in their indices. Areas with cost increases of less than five percent or with cost decreases saw their indices fall.
- In 2009, indices fell in five areas. Decreases ranged from one point in Wasilla and Nome to 11 points in Sitka.
- The remaining five communities experienced increases in their index values. Increases ranged from one point in Juneau and Kodiak to 12 points in Fairbanks. None of the changes to index points in 2009 came close to last year's greatest change; a 51-point increase in Barrow.
- The gap between the two locations with the highest index values, Barrow and Nome, grew again this year, from 43 to 50 points. The disparity between the urban area with the highest index value, Kodiak, and the rural area with the lowest, Bethel, decreased from 52 points in 2008 to 42 points in 2009. Of the eight urban locations, Fairbanks had the highest percentage increase in market basket prices as well as the highest index value change with a 12-point increase from last year.

Construction Costs in Alaska vs. Seattle

- The Seattle market basket fell less than 1 percent in 2009 to \$16,991. For four consecutive years (2004-2008), contractors in all eight urban Alaska locations would realize cost savings by purchasing the market basket items locally instead of buying in Seattle and having them shipped north.
- In 2009, Ketchikan builders would see a small savings (\$517) by purchasing items in Seattle and shipping them to Alaska. All of Alaska's remaining urban locations would realize fewer savings by shipping from Seattle than in 2008, ranging from \$664 in Sitka to \$3,963 in Fairbanks.
- The greatest disparity between local and Seattle prices occurred in Anchorage again this year, where local prices beat Seattle prices plus shipping by \$4,428. Wasilla followed Anchorage with a savings of \$3,197 by purchasing locally instead of buying and shipping from Seattle.
- The greatest year over year change in savings for contractors in Alaska's urban areas was in Fairbanks. While in 2008, contractors would have saved \$5,573 to purchase locally, the 2009 savings decreased to \$1,610.
- Seattle prices offer savings to contractors all three rural Alaska areas. With a decrease in cost of Bethel's market basket and a decrease in cost of shipping this year, the extra cost to purchase locally in Bethel decreased by \$2,427, for a total of \$1,628. In Nome, however, the savings to purchase supplies in Seattle and ship to Alaska grew by \$4,842, for a total of \$11,628. Barrow is not far behind with contractors paying an extra \$10,343 to purchase locally.

Transportation Index for Market Basket from Seattle

Like the Alaska Suppliers Comparison Index, the Transportation Index assigns Anchorage an index value of 100. Dividing the average value for a survey area by the Anchorage shipping cost (\$6,375) produces the index value for that community.

- Shipping costs to Anchorage decreased \$407, or 6 percent, in 2009. Areas with cost decreases of greater than 6 percent experienced decreases in their indices. Areas with cost increases of more than 6 percent experienced increases in their indices.
- Wasilla's shipping cost decrease was three percentage points lower than Anchorage's. As a result, the spread in index value grew three points from 110 to 113.
- Barrow experienced the largest change in index value, a 55-point increase over 2008. The only other location to experience an increase in shipping cost and in index value was Juneau with an \$88 growth resulting in a five point increase in its index.
- Kenai had the largest percentage change with a decrease of 16 percent, which corresponded to a 13 point index decrease from 127 to 114.

- Ketchikan is the closest city in proximity to Seattle of the 11 communities surveyed. Therefore, shipping costs to Alaska's "First City" remain the lowest. Ketchikan's shipping costs of \$2,221, and corresponding index value of 35, were only about one-third of Anchorage's. On the opposite end of the scale, shipping costs to Barrow, the furthest city from Seattle, were \$22,551. This figure is more than three times the cost of shipping to Anchorage and more than ten times the cost of shipping to Ketchikan.

Alaska Construction Cost Survey Methodology

- Thirty-two local building materials suppliers in Alaska and 13 in Washington participated in this year's survey. Alaska participants represent 13 unique firms, as some companies have stores in multiple locations. Similarly, Washington participants represent six unique firms. In addition, 15 concrete suppliers and six shipping companies participated in this year's survey.
- It is expected that larger building supply firms get volume discounts that are then passed on to the contractor. To reflect the vendors' respective market shares, respondents' values are weighted by the size of the respective firms. For Alaska businesses, size is based on the reported number of employees from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's employment security tax wage database for the second quarter of 2008. America's Labor Market Information System provides 2008 employee counts for Seattle suppliers.

Appendix A

Construction Cost Survey Tables and Charts

Average Price for Construction Materials

Alaska Suppliers

2009

Table 1

Market Basket Items	Quantity	Units	Size	Length	Urban								Rural *		
					Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Kenai	Ketchikan	Kodiak	Sitka	Wasilla	Barrow	Bethel	Nome
BCI 60 Series	768	ft	14"		\$2,573	\$2,928	\$2,290	\$3,546	\$2,404	\$3,318	\$2,336	\$2,614	\$2,560	\$2,171	\$4,831
2-4-1 T&G FF Underlay 4' x 8'	62	pcs	1 1/8"		2,057	2,409	2,162	2,234	2,158	2,674	2,734	2,243	6,199	3,702	4,182
T-111 8" Center Groove 4' x 10' Siding	60	pcs	5/8"		2,887	4,205	3,505	3,223	3,422	2,980	3,230	3,230	5,999	4,181	4,695
CDX 4' x 8' #53	106	pcs	5/8"		1,660	1,881	1,838	1,991	2,035	1,976	2,289	1,855	6,359	3,248	3,716
Studs #2 & btr Kiln-dried	164	pcs	2" x 4"	92 5/8"	293	415	353	367	315	428	323	386	1,310	1,046	849
Studs #2 & btr #14 Kiln-dried	263	pcs	2" x 6"	92 5/8"	630	907	848	930	966	1,157	753	955	2,364	2,096	2,010
4' x 12' Plain Sheetrock #84	95	pcs	1/2"		1,488	1,721	1,642	1,550	1,865	1,758	1,682	1,496	5,699	3,123	3,416
4' x 12' Type X Sheetrock #109	68	pcs	5/8"		1,227	1,408	1,345	1,334	1,550	1,503	1,345	1,277	4,759	2,806	2,996
Fiberglass Bat Insulation (2,560 sq ft)	40	bags	R-38" x 24"	64 sq ft	2,081	2,772	2,024	2,595	2,039	2,501	2,237	2,276	3,600	3,368	4,677
Fiberglass Bat Insulation (2,034 sq ft)	30	bags	R-21" x 15"	68 sq ft	1,144	1,358	1,165	1,333	1,524	1,522	1,369	1,308	2,400	2,580	2,325
NMB Electric Wire	3	boxes	250'		201	222	209	187	443	254	202	212	297	361	362
Single Breaker	15	pcs	15 Amp		109	102	90	106	120	78	155	94	150	175	128
Copper Pipe Type 'M'	150	ft	3/4"		161	183	291	218	703	507	263	201	330	536	668
ABS Pipe	100	ft	3"		121	141	180	154	219	317	63	147	300	308	315
3 Tab Shingles Brown	102	bundles			2,306	2,862	2,743	2,813	1,067	3,626	1,794	2,687	N/A	N/A	N/A
Metal Roofing	3,215	sq ft	3' x 20'		N/A	7,559	3,318	5,249							
Total (Without Concrete & Rebar)					\$16,938	\$23,514	\$20,685	\$22,581	\$19,729	\$25,041	\$20,525	\$20,981	\$49,885	\$33,019	\$40,419
Concrete	30	yds			3,640	3,600	5,100	3,786	5,250	6,300	5,590	3,363			
#4 Rebar	93	pcs	1/2"	20'	865	1,044	734	849	836	743	1,004	745			
Total (With Concrete & Rebar)					\$23,243	\$28,155	\$26,519	\$27,216	\$25,815	\$32,084	\$27,001	\$25,089			

* Rural areas exclude concrete & rebar

Average Price for Doors & Windows

Alaska Suppliers

2009

Table 2

Market Basket Items	Quantity	Units	Size	Urban								Barrow
				Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Kenai	Ketchikan	Kodiak	Sitka	Wasilla	
R7 Metal Insulated Doors with 6" Jamb	2	pcs	3'	\$383	\$353	\$396	\$393	\$420	\$527	\$544	\$417	\$800
Low E Argon Windows with R > 2.8 Vinyl Casements	3	pcs	2.6' x 3'	\$649	\$641	\$647	\$678	\$668	\$646	\$764	\$461	\$960
Low E Argon Windows with R > 2.8 Vinyl Casements, 5.7 E-Gress	6	pcs	2.6' x 4'	\$1,370	\$1,515	\$1,586	\$1,532	\$1,462	\$1,513	\$1,655	\$1,171	\$2,280
Low E Argon Windows with R > 2.8 Vinyl Casements, 5.7 E-Gress	2	pcs	8.0' x 4'	\$1,129	\$1,438	\$1,163	\$911	\$999	\$1,564	\$1,148	\$881	\$1,140
Total Cost of Doors & Windows				\$3,431	\$3,947	\$3,792	\$3,514	\$3,549	\$4,250	\$4,111	\$2,930	\$5,180

Average Price for Construction Materials

Seattle Suppliers (without Concrete, Doors and Windows)

2009

Table 3

Market Basket Items	Quantity	Units	Size	Length	Seattle Area
BCI 60 Series	768	ft	14"		\$2,369
2-4-1 T&G FF Underlay 4' x 8'	62	pcs	1 1/8"		1,934
T-111 8" Center Groove 4' x 10' Siding	60	pcs	5/8"		2,630
CDX 4' x 8' #53	106	pcs	5/8"		1,503
Studs #2 & btr Kiln-dried	164	pcs	2" x 4"	92 5/8"	275
Studs #2 & btr #14 Kiln-dried	263	pcs	2" x 6"	92 5/8"	709
4' x 12' Plain Sheetrock #84	95	pcs	1/2"		937
4' x 12' Type X Sheetrock #109	68	pcs	5/8"		880
3 Tab Shingles Brown	102	bundles			2,044
Fiberglass Bat Insulation (2,560 sq ft)	40	bags	R-38" x 24"	64 sq ft	2,046
Fiberglass Bat Insulation (2,034 sq ft)	30	bags	R-21" x 15"	68 sq ft	1,182
NMB Electric Wire	3	boxes		250'	134
Single Breaker	15	pcs	15 Amp		94
Copper Pipe Type 'M'	150	ft	3/4"		150
ABS Pipe	100	ft	3"		104
Total (Without Rebar)					\$16,991
#4 Rebar	93	pcs	1/2"	20'	741
Total (With Rebar)					\$17,732

Transportation Cost of Market Basket

Table 4

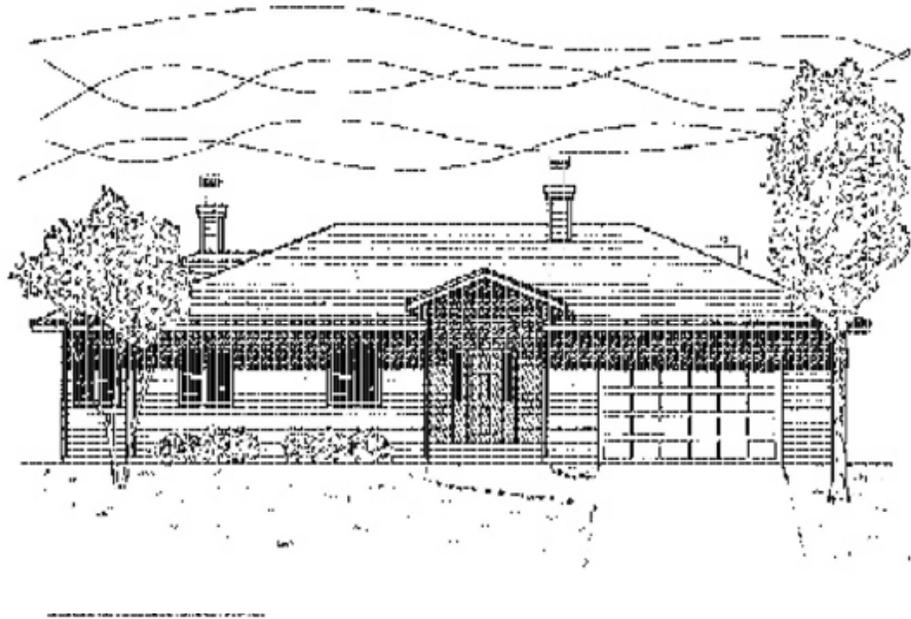
Shipping and Handling (Without Concrete, Rebar, Doors and Windows)
2009

Destination	Seattle
Ketchikan	\$2,221
Juneau	4,032
Sitka	5,872
Anchorage	6,375
Wasilla	7,187
Kenai	7,268
Fairbanks	8,133
Kodiak	9,506
Bethel	11,800
Nome	14,400
Barrow	22,551

Notes:

Weighted average using 2008 Q2 ODB202 or 2009 ALMIS Employer Database (1st Edition)

Artist Rendering of Model Home



Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Construction Cost Survey 2006
Note: 1/ Seattle prices include asphalt shingles. 2/ Rural areas include metal roofing instead of asphalt shingles.

Floor Plan of Model Home

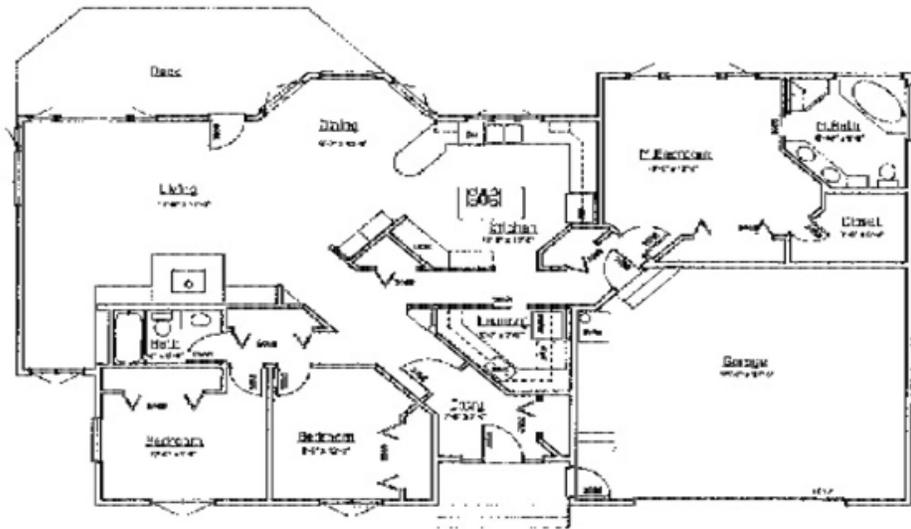


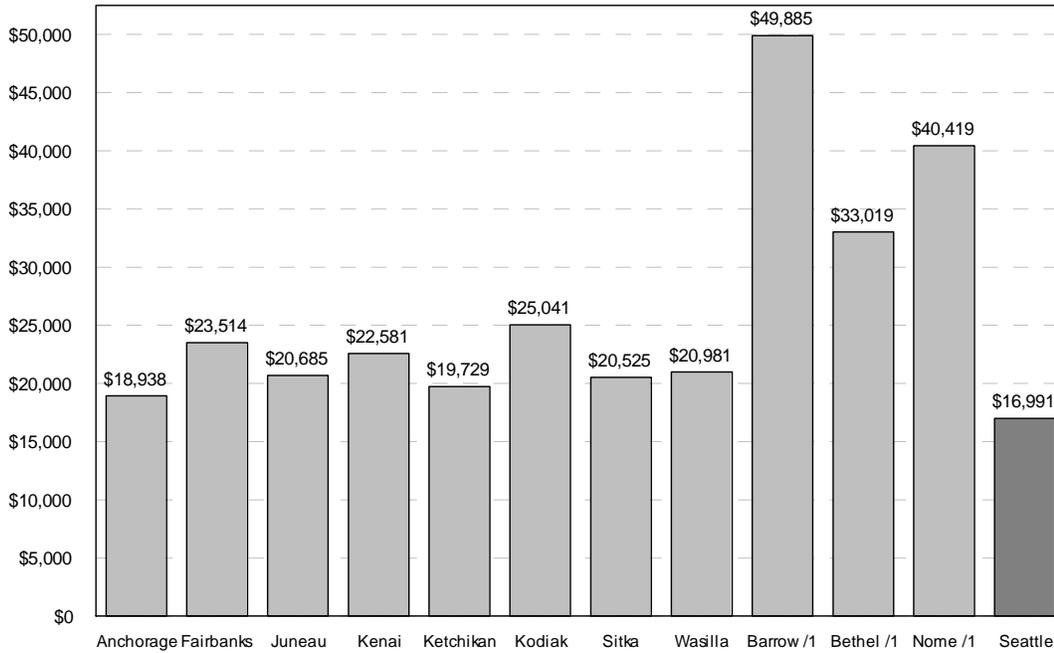
FIGURE 1
Model Home

Note: 1/ Seattle prices include asphalt shingles. 2/ Rural areas include metal roofing instead of asphalt shingles.

Average Cost of Market Basket 2009

Urban & Rural Residential Construction (Without Concrete, Rebar, Doors, & Windows)
Alaska and Seattle Suppliers

Graph 1

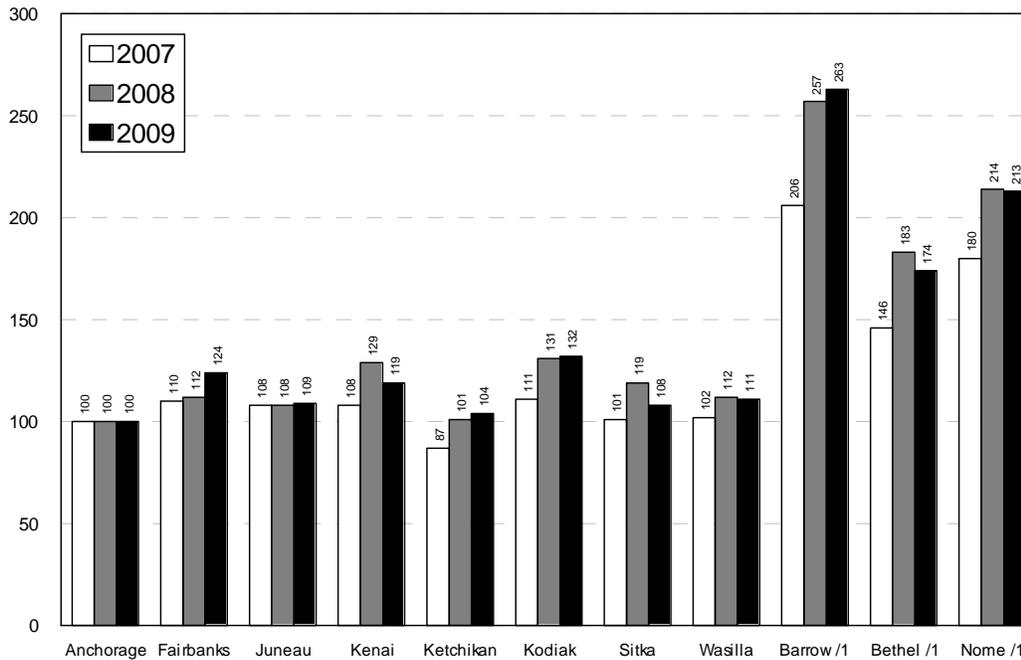


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Construction Cost Survey 2009
Note: /1 Rural areas include metal roofing instead of asphalt shingles.

Alaska Suppliers Comparison Index

Urban & Rural Residential Construction (Without Concrete, Rebar, Doors, & Windows)
Index by Community with Anchorage as Baseline

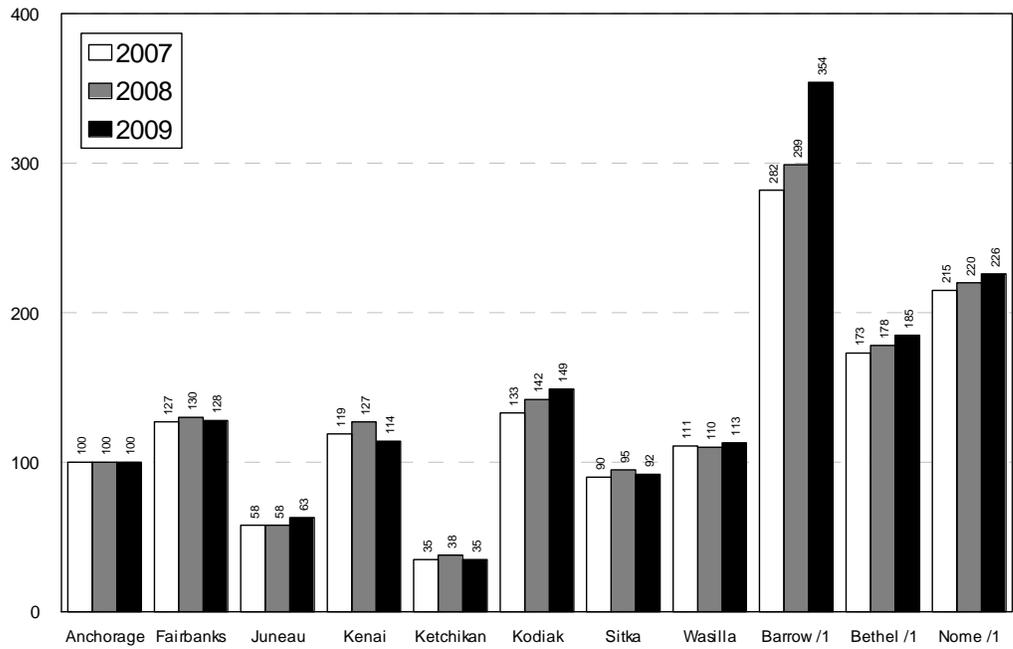
Graph 2



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Construction Cost Survey 2009
Note: /1 Rural areas include metal roofing instead of asphalt shingles.

Graph 3

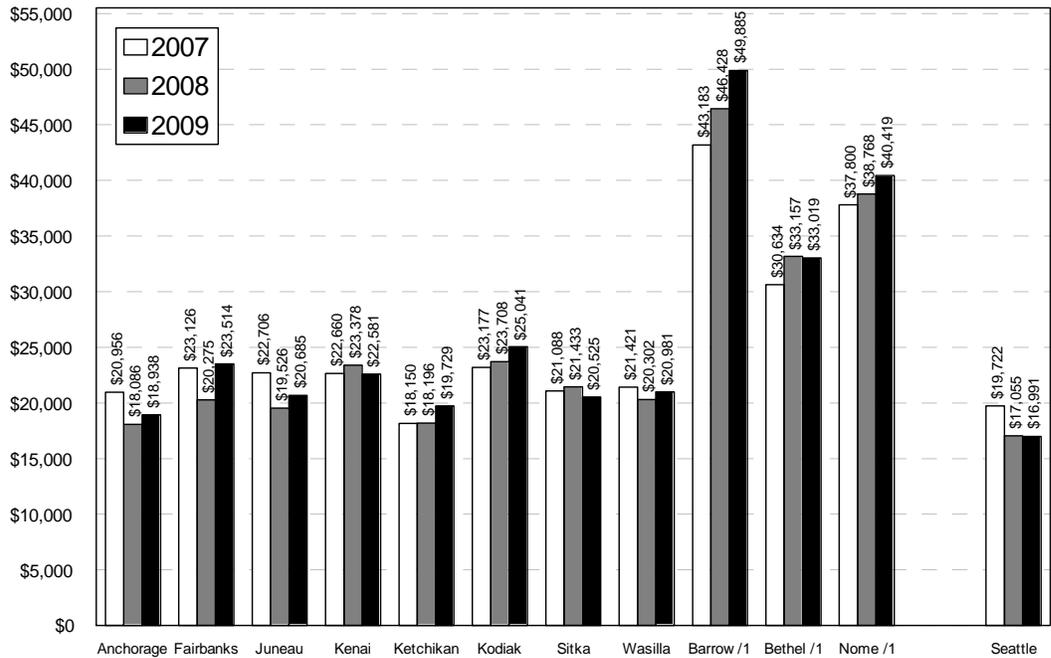
Transportation Index for Market Basket from Seattle
 Urban & Rural Residential Construction (Without Concrete, Rebar, Doors, & Windows)
 Index by Community with Anchorage as Baseline



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Construction Cost Survey 2009
 Note: /1 Rural areas include metal roofing instead of asphalt shingles.

Graph 4

Average Cost of Market Basket 2007-2009
 Urban & Rural Residential Construction (Without Concrete, Rebar, Doors, & Windows)
 Alaska and Seattle Suppliers

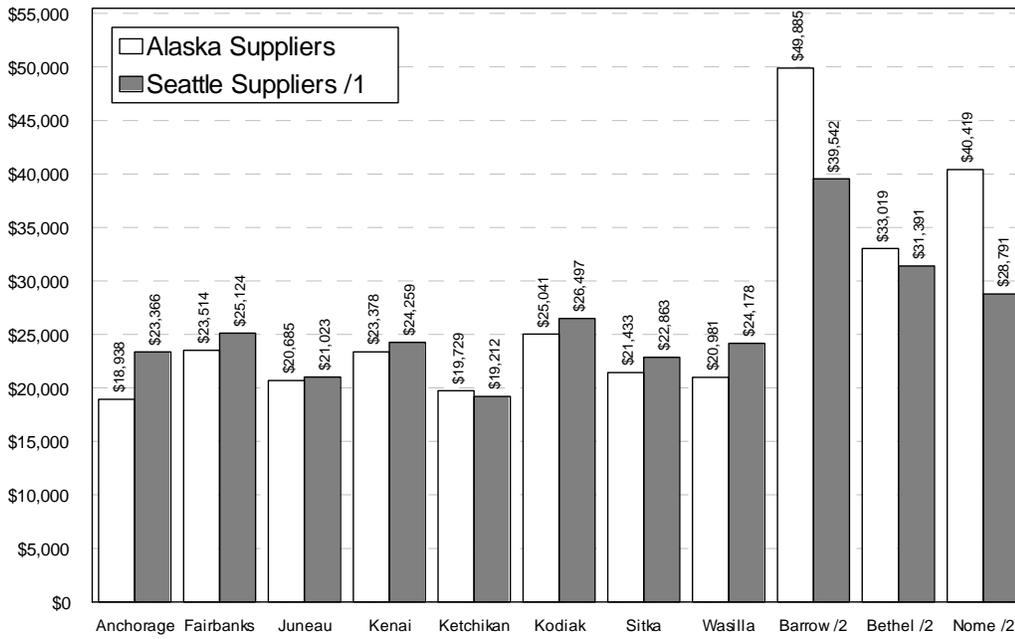


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Construction Cost Survey 2009
 Note: /1 Rural areas include metal roofing instead of asphalt shingles.

Average Cost of Market Basket 2009

Alaska & Seattle Suppliers (Without Concrete, Rebar, Doors, & Windows)

Graph 5



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Construction Cost Survey 2009
 Note: 1/ Seattle prices include asphalt shingles. 2/ Rural areas include metal roofing instead of asphalt shingles.