



The Best City For Hands-On Jobs: Anchorage, Alaska

From the oil and gas industry to park maintenance, the largest city in Alaska is a mecca for blue-collar jobs—and there's lots of new construction for workers to inhabit, too.

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When it comes to hands-on jobs, Alaska is the place to find 'em—from petroleum to cargo transport to construction.

The oil and gas industry is easily the most well-known economic driver in the state. In fact, petroleum supports one-third of all Alaskan jobs. Yowza.

And Alaska is not just all oil and gas. Anchorage—the largest city in the state and where around half of all Alaskans reside—is home to the biggest cargo airport on the continent, the fifth busiest in the world. A 2014 study even stated that one in 10 of all jobs in the area were connected to Anchorage International Airport.

Additionally, multiple military bases are located around the state and in Anchorage itself, creating a major presence of military families and the industries that support them.

Ready to get your hands dirty by putting down roots up north? We caught up with Matthew Lindsay, the founder of [Precision Home Group](#), to get the deets on the housing market of Anchorage.

“I’ve heard that every seven or eight years, Anchorage’s population goes through a cycle. Enough people are leaving and coming in that we see a lot of movement,” said Lindsay. “Because of that, real estate trades stay pretty consistent even in a recession or the reverse of that. That’s a lot different than some other markets I’ve either been in or heard about.”

Lindsay said that there has been an influx of new [single-family home](#) and condo construction in the last several years. “The housing market was really overbuilt in the oil heydays of the late 1970s to early 1990s,” he said. “As more people have moved in, they’ve wanted newer and better homes than the typical shag carpets and popcorn ceilings. That’s what has been driving our new construction market the most.”

As the local economy is quite reliant on the ebbs and flows of the oil and gas industry, the housing market is inextricably linked as well. “There have been a lot of stagnant prices across the board, but there are deals to be had, you just have to look for them,” said Lindsay. He noted that oil prices have been dropping the last three years, which has led to a slight recession.

That said, Lindsay is optimistic. “As a whole, I think we will start climbing out of this recession and see positive population growth,” he said. “A lot of companies in Anchorage are starting new initiatives to bring in talented people across different industries. We also will start seeing that affect the housing market in the next couple of years.”

That may mean more competition for housing—this is where we’d normally link to Redfin’s housing competition score, but sadly, Anchorage is unlisted—but that’s not necessarily bad news. “Competition is what makes a city grow and gets people out of their old ways,” said Lindsay. “I’m excited to see what it does for the city.”

While Anchorage is a hub for hands-on workers, it’s also a hub for all the sectors that support them. “People always talk about the oil and gas of Alaska, but we also have many subsidiary industries that employ welders, plumbers and contractors,” said Lindsay. “The state employs quite a number of people as well, from firefighters to burn acres of forestland every summer to park maintenance workers.”

As far as how residents spend their time off the clock, Anchorage is home to breathtaking sights and plenty of things to do. “We have a couple of great locations for hiking and biking, as well as places close to water if that’s your thing,” said Lindsay. “We also have a lively downtown with lots of dining and entertainment if you’re interested in big-city life. When I speak to clients, I make recommendations specific to who they are and what they want access to outside of work. Anchorage really has a lot to offer.”

Indeed, Alaska is a far-away gem unsullied by hordes of tourists. “Other states get a lot more attention because of their easier accessibility and higher populations, but the recreation here is top-notch,” said Lindsay. “You’d be hard-pressed to find anywhere better.”