

ALASKA RESOURCE REVIEW



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

REFILLING TAPS: New Work on Slope Bodes Well for Future



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Introductory Issue: The New Alaska Resource Review

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“There is so much to be thankful for this year and for us at RDC. And now, we’re off for another busy, challenging, always interesting year. Thank you for all you do for Alaska!”

— *Leila Kimbrell, Executive Director, RDC*

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING RDC’S MISSION

DEAR RDC MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS:
There is so much to be thankful for this year and for us at RDC, it’s YOU!

As we begin a new year of challenges, we never waver from our mission of defending Alaska’s resource industry, it’s worth a moment to look back at 2023’s successes.

As you see in the many pages to follow, we recently celebrated RDC’s 44th Annual Alaska’s Resources Conference with a theme of Alaska’s Resources: Leading the Way. This conference was a huge success, with one of our highest attendance rates yet.

A very big thank you to all our attendees, sponsors and exhibitors for making this a true success! With nearly 60 speakers spread across two days of content, valuable updates and discussions were had as to where, how and why Alaska’s resources are leading the way to ensure a strong economic future for Alaska, our role in securing domestic energy security and independence, our mineral potential for supplying and supporting new energy technologies, and job creation our industries produce for Alaskans.

It was an information-packed two days of industry and policy updates across our tourism, timber and forest products, oil and gas, and mining industries.

This year’s conference also included a new event: a networking reception for emerging professionals with established professionals. Thank you to all our sponsors who made our inaugural young professional event a great success.

We were pleased to once again support fundraising for two very important nonprofit organizations that make Alaska a better place

to live: Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and Challenge Alaska. Congratulations to all of our raffle and centerpiece auction winners!

If you missed it, mark your calendar for next year! Beyond what you read here, our website includes presentations from the event. If you have not done so, please take our conference survey to share feedback from your experience.

And now, back to business ...

While the fun of conference continued in November, our federal regulatory and permitting challenges also continued. Thank you to everyone who commented on the ANWR lease cancellations and BLM’s SEIS for the ANWR leasing program last month. The battle continues despite Congress’s clear direction to allow oil and gas leases sales in the 1002 Area of ANWR.

BLM issued a proposed rulemaking that threatens to restrict future development in the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (NPR-A) on Alaska’s North Slope. This rulemaking suggests BLM is merely implementing current land management practices; however, it proposes new provisions for managing special use designated areas in a way that creates a presumption against permitting future development.

The public comment period for this action ended Dec. 7, and we’ll await a decision soon.

Roadblocks continue also for the Ambler Access Project.

BLM released its draft Supplemental EIS for the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project, the proposed 211-mile industrial access road to the state of Alaska’s Ambler Mining District. Despite this access

being guaranteed in federal law, the permitting process is still underway eight years after the application was first submitted. It’s time to move forward on this project and grant access that was promised by Congress in 1980.

Your commitment to supporting these projects through testimony is critical, and the reason we will always alert you to public comment opportunities. Your voices matter.

In your hands you’re holding the first issue of the new Alaska Resource Review magazine. We have published a newsletter since 1975, and this is a new bigger, redesigned version, now with national circulation. A digital version will also be available on our website, for you to share via social media and email.

We’ve teamed with Fireweed Strategies here in Anchorage, who has great expertise in publishing magazines like ours. We are looking for guest contributors, so if you have a topic of interest you would like to submit, please let me know! There are also advertising opportunities ... we hope you’ll support what we’re doing!

Our breakfast forum series for 2024 has begun. Please join us all year for these critical updates to what is happening in our state.

After many years in our current location, RDC is moving offices!

Our new address:

301 W. Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 406
Anchorage, AK 99503

Our telephone numbers will remain the same. Stop in and say hi if you’re in town!

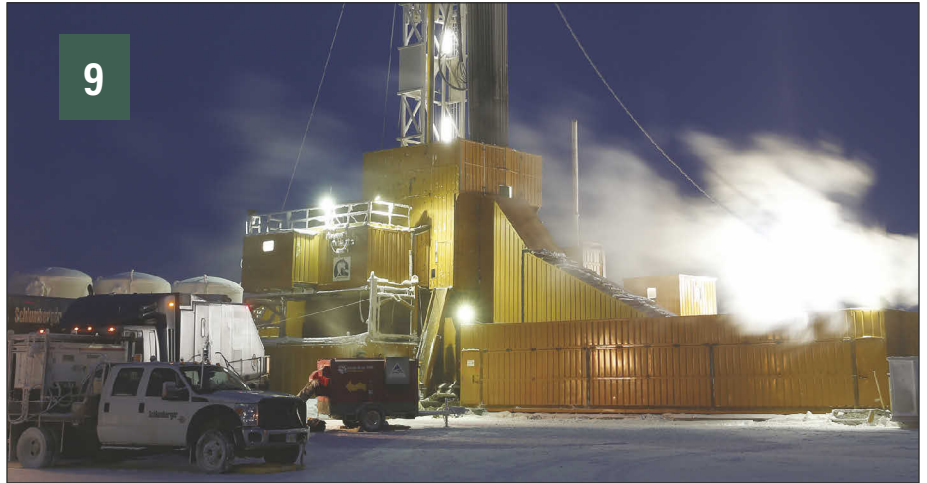
And now, we’re off for another busy, challenging, always interesting year. Thank you for all you do for Alaska!

FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE

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NORTH SLOPE REBOUND

A flurry of winter activity on Alaska's North Slope, plus the growing momentum in the Willow Project and Santos development lay foundation for major new oil in the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.



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BREAKING RECORDS, SETTING DIRECTION

Our 2023 conference in Anchorage broke records for attendance. It also set a direction for the challenges and opportunities before Alaska resource industries in 2024 and beyond.



PAGES 37-40

A LOOK BACK AT HISTORY

In our new magazine, we look back at some of the history of our organization, in the pages of our Resource Review over the decades!



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BECOME AN RDC MEMBER!

Join RDC as a member and join us throughout 2024 at our major events and forums.

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At Santos, we are proud to develop the world-class Pikka Project on the North Slope. Phase 1 will develop about 400 million barrels from a single drill site with first oil expected in 2026. And we are even prouder that our interest in Pikka will be net-zero on Scope 1 & 2 emissions!

Santos



“The leveraging of oil and gas, fishing, tourism, forest products and mining can help to diversify our Alaskan economy if we capitalize on threads common to all.”

— *Lance Miller, Board President, RDC*

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS VITAL TO THRIVING ALASKA FUTURE

THE FIRST CARIBOU DOWN WAS ALREADY BLENDING INTO THE LANDSCAPE AS THE BLOWING SNOW BEGAN TO COVER IT. A ground blizzard was developing, and it was getting dark.

One of our party cut a small piece of fresh, still warm backstrap for a snack and to share as we cut up the animals. I recall such experiences with fondness (despite fighting to keep my hands warm). I embrace my hunter and gatherer side, and mostly the hunter gene.

Sometimes I ask what is the drive? Perhaps it is the simplicity of a basic, hard wired connection humans have to the earth and the recognition that sustenance comes from the natural world. Maybe just the fact one never knows what the outcome will be of a hunt or adventure. The unknown and challenge is exciting. Regardless of one's self-reflection, our survival and thriving from the dawn of human history has been based on the natural resources of the earth.

Human population grew from utilization of natural resources and technological innovations. These improvements and adaptations occurred episodically. They were all rooted in the need for survival. After tens of thousands of years of human evolution, we have a technologically advanced society which still relies on our ability to utilize the resources that surround us. Even in this technological age, basic resources from the earth are critical. A fun resource fact is there are roughly 4.8 billion cell phones in the world. A phone contains over 25 metals and over 40 elements and rare earth elements. That is greater than 50 percent of the periodic table! With eight billion people on the planet just cell phone use alone drives the need for metals. Advances based upon natural resources have led to global population growth. If you are 30 the population has grown by 2.4 billion since you were born. If you are 60 it has grown by nearly four billion, a doubling of the world's population. These are staggering numbers, with every person needing resources.

Based upon these examples interestingly, yet not surprisingly, today some of the biggest issues facing society remain utilization of natural

resources for food and energy. The framework of climate change with the recognition that we will need more resources, has engendered interesting and often lively conversations around natural resource development.

Ambitious national and international goals to reduce Green House Gas emissions by 2030 are driving many of the projections for the need for renewable energy and electric vehicles. Presently wind and solar contribute only 12 percent of the domestic electricity generation. Climate change is now a common household and political theme. One of the solutions is to increase the power generation from renewables and switch to electric vehicles to reduce emissions. However, achieving such goals is not simple or straightforward.

A recent study by the Fraser Institute and the International Energy Agency reveals that to reach the international aspirational goals of electric vehicle and renewable energy integration by 2030 we will need over 388 new mines to supply renewable energy, electric vehicle, and battery technologies. Principal metals of concern are lithium, nickel, cobalt, copper, manganese, graphite and select-REE's (rare earth elements). Given current projections there is a clear supply-demand gap of minerals essential for an energy evolution.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has advanced an initiative called Securing Minerals for the Energy Transition. A December 2023 publication by the WEF in collaboration with McKinsey and Company has highlighted the risks of reaching these ambitious goals and has identified a key element of global collaboration required to reduce the risks.

We are truly at a crossroads where responsible resource development is critical to feed the world, provide energy and help reduce the impacts of climate change. For Alaskans, one question is how and where Alaska's abundant energy resources fit in with our global and national strategies and economies.

Another societal consideration is the growing pushback of renewable energy projects in one's backyard, whether wind turbine farms, acres of solar panels or hydroelectric power from rivers or

the oceans. Certainly, in the United States we need to grapple with these conflicting dynamics. The need for domestic metals in concert with mixed messaging on energy policies and permitting are effectively pushing development overseas.

The leveraging of oil and gas, fishing, tourism, forest products and mining can help to diversify our Alaskan economy if we capitalize on threads common to all. The synergies of innovation, common infrastructure builds, environmental stewardship, policy advocacy, community engagement and social license must be integrated and balanced.

From an Alaska perspective a strong base in the resource industries can support a growth in finance, transportation, and trade and marketing. While also ideally lowering our cost of living. Close to home, energy source availability and costs will be an issue for the rail belt of Alaska. This is not just an urban Alaska issue. The ripple effects of unaffordable energy in the urban areas will increase the cost of goods and services to rural Alaska.

At RDC, we strive for a strong economic base through a diversified private sector. Finally, the organization itself embodies the most significant resource, human resources. As we move into the exciting world to come, now is the time to think creatively about working together, locally, and globally. No one has a crystal ball for the future. Just like a hunt you can plan only so much, and the outcome is never guaranteed.

We had finally cut up the last caribou and the meat bags were secured in the sled. It was still an hour's ride out in the dark with the snow blowing across the beams of the snow machines' headlights making the ride mesmerizing. Other than an occasional ptarmigan flushing away in our lights we only had the blown in trail to follow. We were happy with our fortune from the land.

In closing, rather than offer a plan I would like to challenge us all to be creative to find solutions. We are tied to our earth resources, whether the minerals needed for cell phones and advanced technology, energy to keep the lights on or simply finding your next meal.

With these thoughts... best in 2024!

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“The future isn’t going to belong to those who plan based on the last 20 years or even the last year. It’s going to belong to those who plan on what’s going to happen in the next 50 years.”

— *Mike Dunleavy, Governor of Alaska*

ALASKA’S BIG CHALLENGES INCLUDE THE SAYERS OF ‘NO’

IN ALASKA WE HAVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE.

We’re not California, and we’re not Texas. We don’t have the luxury of ongoing projects, so we cannot afford to say “no” to any project that creates jobs and wealth.

You’ve heard how many times people have said “no” to oil and gas and “no” to mining, “no” to the Ambler Road, “no” to Pebble and “no” to Donlin.

Then there’s “no” to timber, “no” to fishing, and “no” to different ideas on energy. We simply can’t afford to say “no” anymore.

Look out your window tell me if you see any (construction) cranes. From the 17th floor of the Atwood Building, I don’t see any cranes. No matter where I go in this state, I don’t see any cranes of any consequence.

Alaska has room to grow. but where are the construction cranes? Here in Alaska, we don’t have any cranes because we say no to almost every project. The “nos,” lead to instability and chaos.

Investors don’t want to invest in chaos. They want stability. The culture of “no” also kills risk-taking. Who wants to take any risk if you know that somebody is going to try and stop you?

We need to get from “no” to “yes!” but

we also have to think about a couple other things: The future isn’t going to belong to those who plan based on the last 20 years or even the last year.

It’s going to belong to those who plan on what’s going to happen in the next 50 years.

We have to consider technology including AI. This is going to have to in any conversation in your business. If you don’t have an AI expert on staff now you better hurry and get one.

The future will belong to those who use technology to become efficient, to lower costs and deal with the shrinking labor force. Investments now in AI technology will pay dividends we can’t even calculate today.

Finally, I want to touch on population, or more specifically a shrinking population. We’ve seen what happens in Japan and Korea, as well as China, and the trouble that a shrinking population spells.

Here in the U.S., we’re heading in the same direction. It may even be more catastrophic. Without people you don’t have workers; without people you don’t have kids in schools and without kids in schools you can’t have a robust university system. Without people you can’t have an opportunity or have an economy.

Unfortunately for decades it’s been pounded into our heads that kids are a burden, that they suck up your money and your time, and it’s just not worth having a family.

With that thinking, it is no surprise that we’re having fewer and fewer children, and without children there is no future. I’m not suggesting that you all go out and have 10 or more children, but somebody should be having more kids.

We also need to revisit the whole concept of immigration.

We’ve got to find people from somewhere. We shouldn’t allow everybody into this country, and I am a proponent of a strong wall but also one with many doors that get people into this country who believe in our ideals.

Alaska is blessed that we have a large Native American population in the nation, but the fact remains that this state is made up to a large degree of descendants of immigrants.

Yes, we need to build a strong wall, but we also need to get as many people legally entering this country legally as soon as possible so that we have a labor force and a future.

EDITOR’S NOTE: GOV. DUNLEAVY’S REMARKS WERE GIVEN AT THE RDC CONFERENCE

NORTH SLOPE SEASON BUSY WITH WILLOW, PIKKA WORK

Exploration east of Prudhoe Bay could yield new discoveries

BY TIM BRADNER

IT'S SHAPING UP TO BE A BUSY WINTER ON ALASKA'S NORTH SLOPE.

ConocoPhillips is gearing up for its big Willow project, while Santos Ltd. has construction underway on its Pikka project.

In a third development, a major exploration program on the eastern North Slope led by Lagniappe Alaska LLC, an independent, will see three exploration wells this winter and three more next year.

For Willow, module fabrication has started on the U.S. Gulf Coast, a new gravel mine has been opened on the North Slope, ice roads are being built in preparation for road construction. Vertical Support Members, or VSMs, for pipelines will also be installed starting this season in preparation for pipeline construction next year.

Willow is expected to start producing in 2029 with a rate of 180,000 barrels per day at its peak. ConocoPhillips is also confident in its cost estimates to first production in 2029, Andy O'Brien, the company's Senior Vice President of Global Operations, told investment analysts Nov. 2.

Much of the construction for Willow is now under contract and three-quarters of this is on a 'lump-sum' basis or unit rate," he said.

"This is the kind of project that is right in our 'wheel-house.' We've got no first-of-a-kind risk here. It's three drill sites and one new processing facility," O'Brien said.

Because of that the company feels confident in its \$7 billion to \$7.5 billion projected cost, even with inflation. About 1,200 will be employed this winter on Willow.

Pikka is about 30 percent complete in its second year of construction, said Mark Ireland, Santos' Senior Vice President for Alaska, in a Nov. 22 presentation to inves-



Photo Courtesy ConocoPhillips

About 1,200 workers will be employed this winter on ConocoPhillips' Willow project.

tors.

The company will have about 1,200 at work this winter on the project, which projected to produce 80,000 barrels per day in its phase one starting in 2026. Pikka will ramp up to 120,000 barrels per day in a second phase.

Santos was able to lock in 60 percent of its phase one contracts and pricing for fabrication and drilling due to the company's long lead-times in planning. This will allow the company to keep the project on budget, Santos told investors.

Meanwhile, there are prospects for new discoveries in the exploration planned east of Prudhoe Bay, but it will take several years for any successful finds to be in construction and several more for new fields to be producing.

The parties involved have a good track

record.

Lagniappe Alaska, an independent, is owned by Armstrong Oil and Gas, of Denver, headed by geologist Bill Armstrong. Armstrong led the exploration and development for several North Slope discoveries including the Oooguruk and Nikaitchuq offshore fields near the Kuparuk River field and, most recently, the Pikka project now being developed by Santos and its partner, Repsol.

Oooguruk and Nikaitchuq are now owned and operated by Eni Oil and Gas.

Other work is underway. Pantheon Resources, a U.K. company, is continuing production tests on discoveries near the Dalton Highway south of Prudhoe Bay. 88 Energy, of Australia, will do production tests on a discovery made last year also near the Dalton Highway.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR A BETTER ALASKA

Manh Choh Project
brings opportunity for
responsible development

**BY: LEILA KIMBRELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
FOR ALASKA**

LIKE MANY IN ALASKA, RDC HAS BEEN FOLLOWING THE LOCAL MANH CHOH PROJECT WITH KEEN INTEREST.

In fall 2023, we were pleased to see the start of test runs of the new, state-of-the-art trucks that will be used for the project; however, we were disappointed to see a legal challenge seeking to stop this project – specifically to stop commercial haul trucks from using our public highway system.

There has been a healthy debate about the pros and cons of this project, as there should be with any development project; here is why RDC thinks this is a project that can positively shape the future of responsible resource development projects in Alaska and should move forward.

A PROJECT PROMISING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE TO REMOTE ALASKA

Manh Choh is an historic partnership between the Native Village of Tetlin (Tetlin) and Kinross Gold and Contango Ore, private industry leaders with exceptional environmental records, that promises to bring transformational economic change to this village.

One can't help but think of this much like the Red Dog Mine project between NANA and Teck in northwest Alaska, which is a great example of supporting local hire and respecting traditional and subsistence lifestyles allowing residents to remain in their home communities year-round. Or the discovery of oil on the North Slope prompting the resolution of land claims and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) that created the 7(i) and 7(j) revenue



Photo Courtesy Kinross Alaska

sharing provisions, and together with community revenue sharing provisions. This brought transformational change to the people and communities of the North Slope in ways that have been objectively measured to have improved and extended the lives of the people on the North Slope.

The Native Village of Tetlin was one of just a few Alaska Native villages who opted out of ANSCA. When Tetlin opted out of ANSCA, they received surface and subsurface rights to 743,000 acres of land; however, unlike the NANA and the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) and other Alaska Native corporations, Tetlin does not benefit from ANCSA's revenue-sharing provisions.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Tetlin is a community of approximately 125. It is located within the federal Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge between Tetlin Lake and the Tanana River. About 20 miles southeast of Tok, Tetlin Village connects to the Alaska Highway by a small gravel road.

The people of Tetlin are Upper Tanana Athabascans and the Village of Tetlin consists of 97.4% Alaska Native or part Native.

The village has no running water or sewer. The predominant lifestyle of Tetlin is traditional subsistence activities. Employment is limited to government and some seasonal mining jobs.

The average annual household income for Tetlin is just \$7,500 and approximately 41.82% of the population lives below the poverty level. By comparison, the local job opportunities that will be created by the Manh Choh project will support year-round salaries in the six-digits.

Manh Choh is more than just economic opportunity and the promise of jobs. It is a legacy project for the people of the Native Village of Tetlin and the surrounding region. This vision goes back to 2008 when then late Chief Danny Adams and the Village council members made it their priority to develop an economic future for their people. Chief Adams was a well-respected

Tanana Chiefs Conference Executive Board member and a visionary leader in the Upper Tanana region.

This mine project will make Tetlin financially self-sufficient while allowing its members to continue to live their cultural and traditional way of life.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO A REMOTE ALASKA REGION

A socioeconomic assessment conducted by McKinley Research in 2021 found that the development of the Manh Choh mine will have significant, positive impacts on Interior Alaska, including a combined total of 950 direct, indirect, and induced jobs between 2024 and 2028. Over the projected 5-year life of Manh Choh, these jobs will total more than \$120 million in payroll — with the average wage of direct jobs coming in at over \$128,000 per year.

The mine will be the second-largest employer in region, offering a wide variety of jobs and contracting opportunities — not to mention training skills that locals can use throughout their lifetime.

Already, Tetlin, Tok and the greater Fairbanks area have experienced significant economic benefit because of Manh Choh's construction phase, with ~\$75 million in payroll paid to date to bring the mine online. Year-round, this project estimates it will supply 400-600 year-round jobs for the region. It is estimated that \$425 million in the purchase of goods and services will be purchased from local businesses in Tok, Delta Junction, Fairbanks and other parts of Alaska.

Once the mining phase is completed, Manh Choh will continue to provide economic opportunity through the reclamation phase of the project. The Manh Choh reclamation will bring an additional estimated \$40 million to \$60 million to the region. In short, Manh Choh has been a complete game changer for this remote region of Alaska — with even greater benefits expected as production begins in earnest.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SAFETY PROTECTIONS MET

An interesting aspect of the Manh Choh project is that it will not have onsite milling of the extracted resource; therefore, it will not require an on-site tailings facility. The Manh Choh project plan includes small open pit mining near Tetlin from which rock will be trucked about 240 miles one-

way for processing at the existing Kinross Gold Fort Knox mine, located about 25 road miles northeast of Fairbanks.

Processing will occur within existing permitted facilities at Fort Knox, eliminating the need for a mill or tailings facilities at Manh Choh. Access road construction for the proposed mine, including a twin road and a site road, as well as site preparation, started in 2022 and completed earlier in 2023. The mine is estimated to start production in 2024 with an estimated mine life

of five years.

With a such a short mine lifetime, it makes little sense to permit and build a mill at the mine site when Tetlin's partner has a fully permitted, operational mill that is currently underutilized at the Fort Knox gold mine just north of Fairbanks.

Why permit, build and then monitor a new tailings disposal facility at Manh Choh when the tailings can be safely stored in an

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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ALASKA'S NEXT GOLD MINES

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existing facility at Fort Knox? Utilizing existing facilities means a much smaller environmental footprint at Manh Choh and, more broadly, perhaps a new model for future resource development projects in Alaska. This is a goal we all strive for: minimizing impact while maximizing use. This project offers a long-term economic benefit for the Tetlin without worry of long-term management needs a local tailings facility would require.

This is a win-win for all involved.

Once production at the mine begins, the ore will be transported to Fort Knox for processing. Transportation will occur via the state public highway system. There has been much speculation about the risk of hauling ore from Manh Choh to Fort Knox using Alaska's public highways. Indeed, those concerns have resulted in a local legal challenge to the project's transportation plan. Transportation safety and compliance is a critically important issue and Manh Choh's owners have worked closely with regulators to ensure they meet all highway safety standards before operations begin.

The State of Alaska, through its Department of Transportation (DOT), is charged with regulating the safety of our highways. The trucks and drivers to be used by the Manh Choh project are subject to the same safety standards as any other similar commercial truck operator. This means the drivers are subject to the same stringent safety and training standards required for commercial driver's license (CDL) and heavy equipment operator licenses. DOT is building additional pull out lanes, enhancing visibility in areas around bus stops, and has plans to add additional passing lanes, bridge replacement, and more.

Much of the funding to improve this highway will come from the federal Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act. The trucks will carry legal loads that do not require additional special permits or exemptions. Total vehicle length will be 95 feet, similar to the double fuel and double cargo trailers you currently see operating on all Alaska state public highways today, with a payload of about 50 tons and a total gross vehicle weight of 82.5 tons per vehicle.

The project owners have partnered with a trucking contractor who is long-term Alaskan company based in North Pole,

To quote the current Tetlin Village Chief, Michael Sam, "Our people and indigenous people in Alaska have been living off this land for thousands of years and we are owed the opportunity to secure our own future."



Photo Courtesy Kinross Alaska

Alaska and boasts an outstanding safety record. They have a comprehensive safety management system, with vehicle and driver monitoring, and an extensive, proven driver training program anchored by a rigorous behind-the-wheels training component.

It is important to distinguish that the trucks will transport only rocks, not metal ore concentrates, so there here will be minimal dust associated with the transportation.

Further, all loads must be fully covered and secured. Trucking the mine rocks with covered loads is not very different than

trucking other materials up and down our public highways, such a rock or gravel for construction projects. Comparatively, for years trucks have been hauling liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Port MacKenzie to Fairbanks and soon will start running daily along the Dalton Highway to deliver LNG to Fairbanks.

Yet, there is little opposition about the added influx of these trucks or questioning the safety of such operations. Every day, freight, fuel, and other commercial haul trucks run along all of Alaska's highways without incident. Though no one can eliminate all risk, we should not discriminate between commerce on our highways at the expense of responsible economic opportunity when that opportunity is properly licensed, insured, and all safety and operating measures are met.

Alaskans constantly point to our limited and aging highway transportation infrastructure as a hindrance to expanding economic opportunities throughout our great state. This project can help be a catalyst for a region that threatens to be forgotten.

In conclusion, the Manh Choh project is an example of a project that not only exceeds environmental and safety standards but goes further: It is a great example of industry partnering with our Alaska Native people and communities.

To quote the current Tetlin Village Chief, Michael Sam, "Our people and indigenous people in Alaska have been living off this land for thousands of years and we are owed the opportunity to secure our own future."

RDC looks forward to the success of this partnership between Tetlin and Kinross for the continued responsible development of our resources as well as for the future economic opportunity and social well-being of our Alaskan communities.

The Manh Choh project can become another successful model of how our resource industries continue to lead the way.

AMBLER ROAD DISCUSSION BRINGS VARYING OPINIONS

BY TIM BRADNER

THERE ARE VOICES UNHEARD IN MAIN-STREAM MEDIA REPORTS ON THE AMBLER ROAD. THOSE ARE THE RURAL ALASKANS IN NORTH-WEST ALASKA WHO SUPPORT THE ROAD.

Here is Second Chief Gordon Bergman of Allakaket, a community near the planned route of the road: “In Allakaket we have 67 adults without jobs; 17 households lack snow machines, and 14 householders don’t have four-wheelers, which are essential in fetching water, wood, and groceries. These households rely on others for their needs, especially when obtaining subsistence resources, sometimes requiring long journeys. The cost of gas is \$11.7 per gallon, Bergman said at the Nov. 14 Ambler Road public hearing in Allakaket.

“It takes cash. It takes jobs. Our community need these jobs,” he said.

Opponents to the road, mostly from Fairbanks, were also at the meeting. To them, Bergman said: “You don’t live here. For Allakaket to prosper, we need jobs. That is the path to wellness.

Allakaket is near the eastern end of the planned 211-mile industrial access road. Residents of Ambler and Shungnak, at the western end, said the road would bring good jobs and lower living costs.

“It is critical to move this project forward. Slowing it down would be a mistake,” said Fred Sun, Tribal Council president in Shungnak.

Although opponents to the road showed up at the Anchorage hearing so did a group of Alaska Native elders. All of the elders spoke in support of the project, saying the jobs it would lead to would help them support their families.

Opponents, however, said the road will destroy one of North America’s last great wilderness areas and threaten caribou and other subsistence resources.

The response: A mine and access road hasn’t harmed wildlife at the Red Dog lead-zinc mine further west or other places served by controlled-access industrial roads, like at the Pogo gold mine east of Fairbanks.

The occasions for this debate were pub-

lic hearings by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management on a revised Environmental Impact Statement for the road, which is planned to be built to the Ambler Mining District where companies are exploring major copper discoveries.

The road would extend west across federal and state lands from the Dalton Highway, the all-year road that links North Slope oil fields with Interior Alaska. A state agency, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, would finance and build the road with its construction cost repaid by tolls on shipping ore from mines built to the west.

AIDEA undertook a similar initiative with Red Dog Mine in the 1980s. Red Dog is now the world’s largest lead-zinc mine. Its road and shipping port, still owned by

AIDEA, has been a major money-maker for the state.

Hearings and public comments on the revised environmental impact statement for the Ambler Road are closed and BLM says it will issue a final document and a Record of Decision in the first part of 2024. BLM could select the no action alternative in the EIS or to choose “alternative C,” an option for a longer road introduced for the first time in the new environmental study.

“Alternative A” is the option preferred by AIDEA and is the shortest route, at 211 miles, with the least environmental impacts. Alternative B, at 228 miles, follows a somewhat different route. Alternative C would involve 332 miles of road.

If BLM selects Alternative C, it would make the project uneconomic.



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ALASKA'S RESOURCES: LEADING THE WAY



Convention Photos by Judy Patrick

Nearly 1,000 gathered in November for RDC's 44th annual Alaska Resources Conference in Anchorage with its theme of "Leading the Way." It was an upbeat, optimistic crowd that filled the meeting rooms at the Dena'ina Center. ConocoPhillips' Willow project was about to be approved and Santos, Ltd. was gearing up for a big season at Pikka, another new North Slope project. Both projects promise thousands of new jobs in Alaska. Tourism continued its rebound from the pandemic, with more to come.

But work on minerals discoveries continue to be threatened by federal policies, and the state's seafood industry, Alaska's largest manufacturing sector, is stressed by adverse markets. Our timber industry continues to face challenges on federal lands but new state programs creating opportunities for our forest products industry were highlighted.

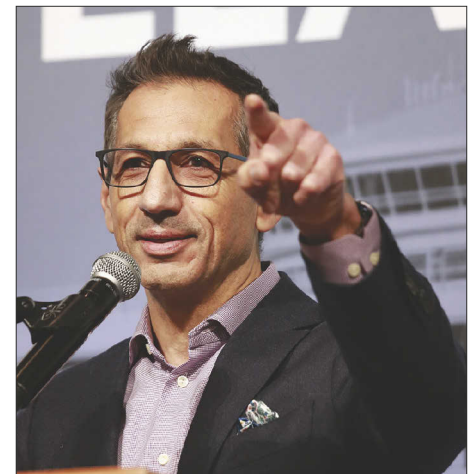
Our natural resources industries always have ups and downs, and Alaska business and community leaders tune in to RDC's annual convention to learn

the latest. It's the go-to place for networking, too. An important signal of business confidence this year: the convention's annual trade show was up 20 percent from 2022.

New in 2023, and a nod toward our future leaders, a "Young Professionals" event was held the day before the convention. Outstanding emerging professionals gathered with established leaders to share experiences. It was a success and promises to be a fixture at future conventions.

RDC has been a cornerstone of Alaska's policymaking arena since 1975. RDC fills a diverse and unique niche as a place where major industries, organized labor, Alaska Native corporations, local governments, policymakers and individuals come together to solve common problems to boost the state's economy.

There can be differences, but the RDC's events provide a platform to help find solutions to ensure our industries continue to "lead the way" for responsible resource development. See you next year!



HIGHLIGHTS: ALASKA'S NATURAL RESOURCE ENDOWMENT IS ITS STRENGTH, BUT A TRAINED WORKFORCE IS NEEDED AND STABLE GOVERNMENT POLICY. ALASKA HAS TO BE COMPETITIVE IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IN ATTRACTING SKILLED LABOR.

MODERATOR: BOB LOEFFLER, Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER)

PANEL:

- **KATIE BERRY, President, McKinley Research Group**
- **MARY KOPRIVA, ISER, University of Alaska Anchorage**
- **DAN ROBINSON, State Labor Economist**
- **ALLEN WALDROP, Director of Private Equity, Alaska Permanent Fund**

KEY POINTS:

- **Alaska a resource state, attracting investment**
- **Oil and gas a major employer; 16% of all jobs**
- **Workforce concern: Aging of population**
- **Education, childcare important in worker retention**

DISCUSSION:

Katie Berry, of McKinley Research, said oil and gas employs one in six Alaskans, or 16 percent of all workers, directly or indirectly through the spending of oil revenues for public services.

A new factor in the state economy is the pace of retirements and fast growth of the senior population, which means fewer working-age adults. In 2005, there were 52,000 Alaskans 62 years or older; today the number is 133,000. Transfer payments (pensions, social security, dividends) brought \$3 billion in the state's economy in 2005; \$8 billion in 2019 and \$10.7 billion in 2022.

Dan Robinson, director of the state's Research and Analysis Division, said the increasing retirement of "baby boomers" (born 1946 to 1964) means a lot of people are aging out of the workforce. "There's never been a better time to be a job applicant, but for employers, it's tough," he said. Alaska is seeing 0.4 applicant for every one job opening, he said.

This is a national trend, but the effects seem exacerbated in Alaska. The state has a traditional pattern of seasonal in-migration and out-migration but the out-migration of working-age adults with families has continued for several years now, and economists don't yet understand this, Robinson said. However, "if you're an employer, things aren't going to go back to the way they were anytime soon."

Mary Kopriva, at ISER, said health care costs and lack



of, and cost, of childcare are major factors in problems of worker retention and difficulties in recruiting from out-of-state. Alaska has the highest per-capita health care cost in the nation at \$13,000 yearly, up from \$9,500 per capita in 2019.

Through the 1990s Alaska per-capita costs were roughly the same as the nation's but the gap appeared in about 2000 and has been widening since, and the trend seems likely to continue.

The childcare problem is also national but is exacerbated in Alaska by a low pay and a shortage of childcare providers. The good news here, Kopriva said, is that there is a tremendous amount of effort now focused on childcare in Alaska. "The health care cost problem is complex and we're not sure we understand all of its dimensions. However, there are greater opportunities in solving childcare, "if we can be creative," she said.

Dan Robinson said addressing childcare and health costs will help with worker retention and recruitment. "Is we want to do something soon (with our workforce) we should address these problems," he said. However,



improved and stable funding for basic public institutions like K-12 education, the university and public safety are also important in sustaining a workforce. “Alaska has the ability to solve these problems,” Robinson said.

Despite these problems, Alaska’s resource endowment is its basic strength, ISER’s Bob Loeffler said in closing the session. “We have the resources. Our minerals are underexplored.

Tourism, based on Alaska’s natural beauty and wild places, is still underdeveloped. Alaska’s advantage, Loeffler said, “is that we’re prettier than other places. The same goes for seafood: “Our fish just tastes better.”

Allen Waldrop, the Alaska Permanent Fund’s Director of Private Equity, was asked about how private investors are viewing Alaska.

The Permanent Fund itself has \$16 billion invested in private equity, about 20 percent of the Fund invested in about 7,000 companies globally. While the Fund invests in energy and resources worldwide it cannot be a big player in Alaska projects.

“The Alaska projects we see are large-scale, in remote locations,” and have a long-term payback. Most of the (resource) investments we make have three to five year

turnaround,” Waldrop said. Infrastructure and workforce issues are also big factors in Alaska, but less so elsewhere.

While the Fund is not a big investor in Alaska projects its global activity gives its staff a unique perspective. Waldrop was asked if he sees Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria as influencing investors’ attitudes toward Alaska.

Not so much, he said. There are investment decisions people make based on principles like ESG but that can be double-edged. “It opens opportunities for others because there is less competition,” he said.

“People are primarily economic animals. We don’t see people avoiding Alaska,” over ESG issues, Waldrop said.

But Alaska has to be competitive and today, with tectonic shifts taking place in the nation’s workplace, being competitive means more than just dollars. “You have to have health care, education,” and other public services to attract a stable workforce and investors look at those things, he said.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER

HIGHLIGHTS: PRESIDENT BIDEN TALKS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION BUT HIS POLICIES DO NOT ENCOURAGE DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEEDED CRITICAL MINERALS. ISSUES AFFECTING MINERALS ARE NOW BECOMING GLOBALIZED.

MODERATOR: KAREN MATTHIAS, Executive Director, Alaska Metal Mines

PANEL:

- **LANCE MILLER, Vice President of Natural Resources, NANA**
- **JOHN SHIVELY, Chairman & CEO, Pebble Partnership**
- **BRETT WATSON, Economist, Institute of Economic & Social Research**
- **DEANTHA SKIBINSKI, Executive Director, Alaska Miners Association**

KEY POINTS:

- **Alaska needs to process minerals in-state**
- **Copper important: 20 percent supply deficit in 2035**
- **Gold not just for jewelry - wide uses in industry**
- **Biden Administration talks mineral supply chain issues but it's just that - talk**

DISCUSSION:

Brett Watson said there is sometimes confusion over which minerals are “critical,” but the designations are important because they influence agency decisions on research and support for infrastructure.

John Shively said while copper is not designated as “critical” it is crucial in technology applications, like cell phones, and the world is headed for a supply deficit as early as 2027 and estimated to reach 20% by 2025. The industry needs \$100 billion in investment to meet needs. “We have a problem,” Shively said.

Deantha Skibinski said the anti-mining narrative is: “We don’t need more gold,” or gold mines, to make more jewelry. Today gold important in many industries but it is often found in association with critical minerals like antimony. Often the gold becomes an “anchor” mineral in a mine that can also produce antimony, Skibinski said. “You often need a gold producer to make production of other metals economic,” she said. Many gold mines also produce zinc.

A major problem for the industry is being able to get federal permits. The Biden administration talks a lot about problems in the mineral supply chain but actions on permits by agencies are creating more problems, particular for domestic production. “The Biden Administration is now starting to ‘walk back’ the earlier approvals of the Ambler Road, as an example,”



Skibinski said. Another example, she said, is the recent removal of the minerals sector from the “FAST 41” act, a law that streamlines federal permitting on important projects.

Shively said the same permitting problems that affect the U.S. mining industry are now showing up in Canada. Part of this is because there are First Nation issues but also that things are just taking longer.

Lance Miller said many issues affecting mining are becoming globalized and cropping up in many countries. The industry’s response in many cases is to start earlier on permits to allow for delays, but this can sometimes work against a developer. “Sometimes we can start too early and before we know what a project will really look like,” he said. That could lead to concerns raised in local communities before the company or agencies have all the information.

Shively said opponents to mining often complain about it being an “extractive” industry. But many Alaska industries and activities are extractive, he said. Even subsistence. “We’ve become really good at stopping things,” through the federal permit system. “You have to wonder how we’ll ever get anything done?”

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER

HIGHLIGHTS: ALASKA'S FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY DOMINATED BY SMALL "MOM AND POP" MILLS, WITH THE STATE NOW THE KEY SOURCE OF WOOD SUPPLY. MILL OPERATORS ARE INNOVATIVE, DEVELOPING NEW NICHE PRODUCTS AIDED BY NEW TECHNOLOGY.

MODERATOR: TESSA AXELSON, Executive Director, Alaska Forest Association

PANEL:

- **JEREMY DOUSE, Forester, Alaska Division of Forestry**
- **RYAN TINSLEY, Partner, Alaska Adaptable Housing, LLC**

KEY POINTS:

- **Alaska wood products industry mostly small businesses**
- **State is major partner in wood supply**
- **Innovations in new product, local lumber grading**

DISCUSSION:

Tessa Axelson: The wood products industry continues although we face challenges in wood supply from the federal landowners, the U.S. Forest Service. Our major partner today is the state of Alaska, with wood supplied from the state forests.

“Almost all members in the forest products industry are small, locally-owned businesses, many of them family owned and multi-generational,” Axelson said.

“Innovation is alive and well in our industry as we adapt to changing conditions,” she said.

Two examples are in new products being developed by Joe Young, in Tok, and in new programs in the state Division of Forestry, mainly a new lumber grading program that will allow wood harvested in Alaska to be sold commercially in Alaska for home construction. This will allow operators to self-inspect and certify their products, after training, and eliminate having to fly in inspectors.

Jeremy Douse: “We import most of our wood used in construction. It seemed appropriate to see if we could find ways to use wood we harvest here,” he said. The problem is that lumber has to be inspected and graded for quality by licensed inspectors and we have no way to do that in Alaska without flying the inspectors in from out-of-state, which is very expensive. This means that, for all practical purposes, wood for homes financed by government programs must use lumber shipped in from the Lower 48.

“We became aware of a program in Wisconsin where local people are trained to do the inspections. We went there and attended some of the classes, and decided to try this in Alaska,” Douse said.

“At first, we looked at developing this as a program within the Department of Natural Resources. State Sen.



Jesse Bjorkman, of Soldotna, and Rep. Jesse Sumner, of Wasilla, were very supportive and helped us get bill through the Legislature putting it in statute, and the governor signed the bill.

We are now working to set up regulations and with the University of Alaska’s Cooperative Extension Service to do the training.

There’s a lot of potential. The Tongass National Forest in Southeast is now transitioning from old-growth to second-growth timber and a lot of small communities have sawmills. In western Alaska villages along the Kuskokwim River want to use local timber to build homes and cabins. Without grading by certified inspectors many types of financing are not available.

Axelson: Joe Young was unable to be here because of bad weather and road conditions, so I wanted to speak for him and of some his innovations at the Young Sawmill in Tok. He has developed new products like a fire log made from wood waste that sells for less than conventional firewood. He has also developed methods to remove moisture which improves the quality of the wood.

Alaska’s small forest products industry has potential for growth, state natural resources commissioner John Boyle has said. Alaskans can look to Sweden as an example of where managed forestry and sustained-yield harvesting is a major industry and big employer. Gov. Mike Dunleavy hopes this can be done in Alaska, Boyle said.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER

HIGHLIGHTS: ALASKA'S SEAFOOD INDUSTRY SHARES GOALS OF OTHER INDUSTRIES; STABLE AGENCY MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE LIKE TRANSPORTATION. CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS ON FISHERIES ATE MIXED. MARKETS IN TURMOIL DUE TO WAR IN UKRAINE.

MODERATOR: NICOLE KIMBALL, Vice President, Pacific Seafood Processors Association

PANEL:

- **ERIC DEAKIN, Exec. Director, Coastal Villages Regional Fund**
- **SHANNON MARTIN, Exec. Director, Kenai River Sport Fishing Assoc.**
- **DOUGLAS VINCENT-LANG, Commissioner Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

KEY POINTS:

- **Common interests, other industries**
- **Amid pandemic, still large a boost to economy**
- **Sustainability important; no fishery endangered**

DISCUSSION:

Nicole Kimball: Seafood has a lot in common with the state's other resource industries, including the need for infrastructure and stable, well-funded management by state and federal agencies. Even during the pandemic, fisheries contributed hugely to the state's economy.

Eric Deakin: Community Development Quota groups like Coastal Villages Regional Fund bring the benefits of the seafood industry to small coastal communities. "You can really see the difference. We own our own vessels, and we have local people working as captains and mates."

"We are in cod, crab, pollock and all the important (coastal) fisheries, and there are challenges. We had just invested in crab and had one great year and then the (snow) crab fishery shut down."

"The war in Russia has destabilized the industry," causing the prices for fillets to drop sharply and an even sharper drop for surimi. We also have recurring problems caused by the Jones Act," which requires shipping between U.S. ports in U.S.-built vessels, which raises costs.

Shannon Martin said the important goal for sports fisheries is sustainability and the way to accomplish this is through education. Events like and sports fish "classics" help do this and also introducing young people to fishing. Protecting habitat is also important, for example in educating people about how walking off-

trail along stream banks can damage the soil and vegetation root systems, increasing the danger of stream bank erosion.

"Our major challenge is that it's difficult to find a unified voice in fisheries because we are so diverse. But it's important that we put (protection of) the resource first," Martin said.

Commissioner Douglas Vincent-Lang said climate change is something to be concerned with, but it affects fisheries in different ways. "The Bristol Bay sockeye fishery is seen to benefit because of warmer water in lakes in the region. Chinook (king) salmon are doing poorly, however. "The important thing is that overall, the yield (harvest) has not gone down although the effects are mixed among the different fisheries. Overall, "our fisheries are far from facing extinction," the commissioner said.

As in many industries working at remote sites, housing for employees in fisheries is a challenge. "Unlike the federal government, which has most of its fisheries staff in larger communities, state Fish and Game workers are scattered across rural Alaska," Vincent-Lang said.

Other discussion: Scientists do blame climate-related warm waters for the cancellation of the winter snow crab fishery for the second year in a row. Improvements in stocks are allowing a small Bristol Bay red king crab harvest after two years of this fishery being closed. State biologists set a 2.15-million-pound quota for this year, just under the 2.6-million-pound harvest allowed in 2020 and 2021. In comparison, crab boats were able to catch 8.47 million pounds in the 2016-17 season.

Biologists are also predicting a smaller Bristol Bay sockeye run and harvest in 2024 after a string of record-breaking runs and catches that have swamped markets and depressed prices. The prediction is for 39 million fish returning to the Bay, down from 79 million in 2023 and 60 million in 2022.

Of the 79 million fish returning to Bristol Bay this year, 40.6 million were caught, resulting in an ex-vessel value paid to harvesters of \$117.4 million, 37 percent below the 20-year average because of lower prices. A flood of Russian salmon dumped on the market helped push down prices.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER



Photos by Judy Patrick



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HIGHLIGHTS: ENERGY ISSUES, EDUCATION FUNDING AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PENSION IMPROVEMENT TO RETAIN WORKERS LIKELY TO DOMINATE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION. FISCAL POLICY ON THE TABLE AGAIN BUT LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF NEW TAXES.

MODERATOR: JASON BRUNE

PANEL:

- **SEN. CATHY GIESSEL, Majority Leader**
- **REP. DAN SADDLER, Majority Leader**
- **REP. CALVIN SCHRAGE, Minority Leader**
- **SEN. CLICK BISHOP, Co-chair, Senate Resources Committee (Unable to attend because of weather/flights)**

KEY POINTS:

- **Funding of basic services important for economy**
- **Given revenue constraints, expectations must be managed**
- **Energy, transmission lines priorities in 2024 session**
- **Alaskans themselves can't be "NIMBYs" over projects**

DISCUSSION:

Jason Brune asked each panelist to describe an expectation of the legislative session in one word.

"Energy," said Giessel;

"Education," said Schrage, and

"Interesting," said Saddler.

Rep. Schrage said a crisis in funding schools is lowering the quality of education and making it more difficult to attract workers to Alaska. It is also a factor in the continued migration of working age adults, many with families, out of state. To retain and attract workers Alaska needs high quality schools including pre-Kindergarten for young children, a good university and functioning state agencies and public services like troopers.

Rep. Saddler said it is important to put needs in the context of available revenues, and that a primary challenge for legislators in the 2024 session will be to manage public expectations. It's important to continue support for natural resource development because in the long run this will result in new revenues to the state. The governor's efforts to encourage growth of the state's small forest industry is an example of an underdeveloped natural resource that could grow, Saddler said.

Rep. Schrage said there could be an undetermined budget surplus due to higher oil prices but there may be a lot of demands on this including for a supple-

mental Permanent Fund Dividend. Meanwhile, the Legislature must find \$200 million or more for the required state match to new federal infrastructure funds such as the \$206 million grant to upgrade the Southcentral-Interior Alaska "Railbelt" electrical grid. State agencies are also underbudgeted to deal with administrative tasks like processing state payroll, Medicaid eligibility determinations and eligibility for low-income Alaskans to qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, formerly known as food stamps.

Sen. Giessel said one of her goals is to see the surplus not spent on a supplemental PFD, but to use it to, among other things, strengthen the energy infrastructure to help the economy grow. New mines will need power, for example. Giessel also said she doubts any legislation raising oil and gas taxes will pass in 2024, although there will be discussion. Two bills are pending in the Senate, SB 114 and SB 122, Jason Brune pointed out.

In terms of what the Legislature can do to help resource development, Rep. Schrage said developing more efficient delivery of permits and fiscal stability will help. "We shouldn't 'grow' government but do a better job with what we're already doing. We see department after department being unable to fully care out their tasks," because of underfunding and workforce shortages, he said.

Sen. Giessel said stable and predictable permitting and budgeting for roads is needed, and to support transmission lines including natural gas pipelines such as the proposed Donlin Gold gas line from Cook Inlet to Southwest Alaska. She would also support one of the new-technology microreactors being built in Dillingham to provide energy to fisheries processors located there.

Rep. Saddler said Alaskans themselves can be an obstacle to orderly development. "Alaska is blessed with resources but there's too much 'NIMBY' (Not in My Back Yard). He cited the Mahn Choh gold project at Tetlin as an example, a project that will put a lot of people to work on lands owned by the Tetlin tribe east of Fairbanks. Objections are now being raised about a plan by Kinross Gold, the company developing the project in partnership with the Tetlin tribe, to truck ore over public roads to the ore mill at the Fort Knox Mine near Fairbanks, which is owned by Kinross.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER



Photos by Judy Patrick



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HIGHLIGHTS: VISITORS BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS WITH MORE GROWTH EXPECTED IN 2024. INDEPENDENT TRAVEL HELPED BRIDGE PANDEMIC CANCELLATION OF CRUISE SHIPS AND INCREASED IN 2021 AND 2022. WINTER TOURISM GROWING, PARTICULARLY IN INTERIOR ALASKA.

MODERATOR: JILLIAN SIMPSON, President/CEO, Alaska Travel Industry Association

PANEL:

- JOSHUA HOWES, Premier Alaska Tours
- RENEE REEVE, Vice President, CLIA - Alaska
- SCOTT MCCREA, President & CEO, Explore Fairbanks
- DAVID ALBERT, Deputy Regional Director, National Park Service

KEY POINTS:

- Visitors returned to 2019 levels, and higher
- Spending reached \$3.9 billion
- Concerns over cruise ship ballot propositions
- Winter tourism now a staple in Interior

DISCUSSION:

Renee Reeve, Cruise Lines International Association-Alaska:

“We’re back to where we were three years ago, but there has been a big jump in 2023,” because the 2020 cruise season was cancelled and 2021 and 2022 were gradual recovery years. Had COVID not happened the community support services would have grown to comfortably handle the increase in 2023.

There have been some bumps. “You can’t bring 1.67 million visitors back without some impacts,” Reeve said. This has created a push for ballot initiatives in coastal communities to limit cruise ships. This could cause ripple effects all through coastal communities because limits in one community will affect scheduled stops further along. “This could be devastating,” she said. For 2024, the cruise industry will be working with the communities on ways to mitigate impacts.

Joshua Howes, of Premier Alaska Tours, said his firm accommodates independent travelers and conducts also land tours for itself and other operators. There was a boom of independent travel to Alaska during the COVID years when cruises were shut down, Howes said.

During the lockdown, “the American public wanted to get out of the house,” and with international travel restricted domestic destinations like Hawaii and Alaska benefitted.

In 2023 returned to normal and the surge in in-



dependents has somewhat abated with more destinations reopening and cruise ships operating again.

Premier’s small tours operate in many parts of the state, so housing is less a problem in communities where employees live but is still a problem in Interior Alaska, Howes said. Still, he hopes to secure the use of student dormitories at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, less used in the summer, for visitor industry employees.

Scott McCrea, Explore Fairbanks:

The 2023 season was good, not quite back to 2019. “We still have another month to count for 2023,” he said. September was a record-breaking month for passenger arrivals at Fairbanks International Airport. There were weeks during summer when hotels were fully booked but other weeks when rooms were available.



Photos by Judy Patrick

Winter tourism continued to build, and Fairbanks saw charter flights from Asia again for aurora-watching. “We’ve always had visitors to see the aurora but until recently we did not have a strategic marketing effort around it,” with development of the services to support it.

There’s more than the aurora, with snow machine and dog sled tours. “March has become incredibly busy. March is the new June,” the month that traditionally kicked off the visitor season, McCrea said.

David Albert, National Park Service: Denali is a key destination for land tours and the visitor count was up in 2023 although final figures will not be

available until next year. Meanwhile, bridge construction over a slide area mid-way on the 99-mile Denali Park Road continues and will be completed in time for the 2026 season, Albert said. For 2024 and 2025 the Park Service is working to enhance the visitor experience on trails and at campgrounds on the first half of the road which remains open.

Housing continues to be a problem for seasonal workers in the Denali area and the explosion of Bed and Breakfast establishments has taken rooms and apartments out of the market that would have accommodated workers.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER

HIGHLIGHTS: STATE AGENCIES HAVE INITIATIVES UNDERWAY TO STIMULATE GROWTH AND REVERSE OUT-MIGRATION OF WORKING-AGE ALASKAN ADULTS. STATE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT FOCUSES ON "TELLING ALASKA'S STORY" TO THE NATION; ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT WORKS TO ENSURE CLEAR PATH FOR INDUSTRY PERMITS.

MODERATOR: CASEY SULLIVAN, Government and Public Affairs, Marathon Petroleum

PANEL:

■ **JOHN BOYLE, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources**

■ **JULIE SANDE, Commissioner Department of Community, Commerce & Economic Development**

■ **ADAM CRUM, Commissioner, Department of Revenue**

■ **EMMA POKON, Commissioner-designee, Department of Environmental Conservation**

■ **RYAN ANDERSON, Commissioner, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities**

KEY POINTS:

- **Efficient transportation key to economy**
- **Marketing Alaska, and telling our own story**
- **Environmental permits must be legally defensible**

DISCUSSION:

Adam Crum: We are the taxing department. We collect the revenues for the state, and we have relationships when it comes to credit ratings, agencies, and banks. What's exciting is to take this in a new direction. How do we connect with interested parties and investors to make sure we get projects going?

Emma Pokon: At DEC, our mission is to protect human health and the environment and the economic and social well-being of Alaskans. We do the air permitting, water permitting and the solid waste permitting. Our agency ensures that responsible resource development can happen.

Julie Sande: Our mission at the Department of Commerce, is to promote a healthy economy and strong communities. Sometimes when you have limited resources it's a challenge, so we try to keep it simple.

We have seven divisions: The division of Insurance, Banking and Securities; our Division of Investments, which has a large portfolio of loans, and we have our



Division of Community and Regional Affairs. We've added the Alaska Broadband Office. Among other things is international trade.

We also have the eight corporate agencies: The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, AIDEA, AEA, the railroad, AGDC, (the gas line) and quasi-judicial regulatory agencies like the RCA and AOGCC.

Ryan Anderson: The transportation history of Alaska is so interesting, and it goes back to the 1800s, and further, with how Native Alaskans and the Russians travelled and then the Gold Rush era roads and trails. Looking at transportation holistically helps us think in new ways.

The 237 airports that DOTPF operates is more than any other state, and we have the international airports in Fairbanks and Anchorage. On the highway system, we have around 11,000 to 12,000 centerline miles of roads and about 35 maintenance stations. We have people and equipment all over the state that are taking care of all that infrastructure. We are a big organization with over 3,000 people. Trans-



portation is fundamental in attracting new business as well as technology so folks can move their goods and supplies safely and efficiently.

Julie Sande: We first tried to figure out where's the greatest needs were. There were things we identified right away, particularly in licensing where, post COVID, we had challenges. We also tried to evaluate where we are affecting economic development. We found that there's not really an economic development arm that is specific to marketing.

This is important. Somebody is telling Alaska's story, but it's not us. This evolved into the \$5 million appropriation to get marketing initiatives underway. We're so excited about the ability to tell Alaska's story ourselves.

Emma Pokon: For DEC, the key component is to ensure projects have a clear path towards compliance with state and federal requirements. We are working with companies to develop good, sound permits

that will withstand scrutiny. It's not just getting the permits out but in having permits that are legally defensible. It's also working with small businesses and individual Alaskans to ensure that they don't get lost in the regulatory maze.

John Boyle: DNR has been pushing carbon. We were successful in working with the Legislature to get carbon offsets passed this last session. We're going back next session with carbon capture utilization and storage. I see that as a potential sea change for the opportunities associated with carbon utilization and storage.

With forestry, my vision is to have a billion-dollar forest products industry. We can get there through better management of our forests, and working with producers to ensure they have adequate timber supply.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER

HIGHLIGHTS: HIGH COST OF ENERGY A BARRIER TO EXPANSION OF MINING OPERATIONS, BUT WHILE CHALLENGING IN REMOTE AREAS RENEWABLE ENERGY LIKE SOLAR AND WIND HOLD PROMISE. CONOCOPHILLIPS EXPERIMENTING WITH ELECTRIC VEHICLES ON NORTH SLOPE.

MODERATOR: JOE JACOBSEN, U.S. Dept. of Energy Loan Programs

PANEL:

- **LOREN HILL, Manager of Innovation, Teck Alaska**
- **SUNIL KUMAR, Principal Advisor, Energy Strategy, Kinross**
- **JOHN LYONS, Operations Support Supervisor, ConocoPhillips Alaska**

KEY POINTS:

- **Mining operations are energy intensive**
- **Renewable power can be challenging in remote locations**
- **ConocoPhillips is testing electric vehicles on North Slope**

DISCUSSION:

Loren Hill: Teck’s Red Dog Mine in Northwest Alaska is in a remote location, which makes substituting diesel power with renewable energy a challenge. Power is generated with diesel using about 15 million gallons a year. To date Teck has been able to reduce emissions from its power plant through waste heat utilization and by improvements in the efficiency of the ore processing mill, which reduces power consumption, Hill said. The company is exploring local wind and solar potential that could include a battery storage system with a micro-grid. “We’re excited about this. The pre-feasibility early results show that this could be competitive,” Hill said.

“The solar resource is very seasonal up in the Arctic, but the wind resource is seasonal as well and the two end of being very complimentary, as the wind speeds are much higher in winter,” Hill said in a report by Nat Herz in his Northern Journal. However, “the Arctic, with permafrost, is also an expensive place to build the power lines and cables needed to connect wind and solar installations at their most productive locations back to the mine’s processing plant.”

The integration of renewable power into Red Dog’s current system is made more complicated because power plant also provides heat to buildings at the mine, Hill said. It could be difficult to supply more than 20 percent to 30 percent of Red Dog’s energy



needs with renewable energy.

This isn’t Teck’s first experiments with a less-polluting alternative energy source at Red Dog. Several years ago, the company experimented with shale gas, or methane produced from shale formations in the area. Test drilling was even done. While shale gas with methane is not renewable like wind and solar it has a lower carbon intensity compared with burning diesel. Teck has a corporate goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Sunil Kumar said that Teck, Kinross Gold wants to reach net zero emissions at a corporate level by 2050 but the company has limited options at its Fort Knox gold mine near Fairbanks because the mine is supplied by Golden Valley Electric Assoc., or GVEA, the local electric cooperative. Kinross is working closely with Golden Valley on its expansion of renewable power in its portfolio, which would indirectly reduce emissions from Fort Knox operations. As a large electric consumer, and GVEA’s biggest customer, Kinross



Photos by Judy Patrick

is also active with the regional utilities on the new Railbelt Reliability Council, a group formed to coordinate improvements in power transmission that will allow for efficient transmission as more wind, solar and hydro power are developed. “There are quite a lot of federal dollars now available to help with this and it could be transformative in reducing the dependence on fossil fuels for power generation,” Kumar said.

The high cost of power has now become a barrier for mining projects in Alaska. “As our company and other mining companies look at opportunities for growth, this (the cost of power) becomes a barrier. Having a high electricity price makes it challenging for more growth, and more production to be added,” at existing mines like Fort Knox. “Also, if the green-

house gas emission factor is high, that becomes a concern as well,” Kumar said.

John Lyons said ConocoPhillips is testing the performance of electric-powered light trucks at its North Slope operations. Pilot tests are under way to assess performance in cold winter temperatures. “So far we’re pleased,” Lyons said. “If we can reduce maintenance on vehicles such as with oil changes,” we’re pleased, he said. There’s also the benefit of reduces emissions.

“However, operational safety is a high priority. We can’t have people stranded in a vehicle with no heat,” he said.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER

HIGHLIGHTS: STARTING YOUNG IN SCHOOLS WITH CAREER AWARENESS IS IMPORTANT IN STIMULATING INTEREST AMONG CHILDREN; ALASKA SHOULD BUILD ON NATIONAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO ATTRACT SKILLED WORKERS, BUT CHALLENGES SEEN IN WAGE COMPETITIVENESS WITH OTHER STATES.

MODERATOR: SHAREEN CROSBY, Office of Infrastructure, State of Alaska

PANEL:

- **CATHY MUNOZ, Acting Commissioner, Alaska Dept. Labor & Workforce Development**
- **CARI-ANN CARTY, Executive Director, Alaska Safety Alliance**
- **JOCELYN FENTON, Director of Programs, Denali Commission**
- **LORI DAVEY, Manager - Alaska, Bedrock Petroleum Consultants**

KEY POINTS:

- **Targeting youth is a priority**
- **Education loan forgiveness, assistance**
- **Travel stipend for rural training**

DISCUSSION:

Shareen Crosby: Our workforce challenges are real, so this panel is going to focus on solutions, how can Alaska attract and develop our workforce as we add jobs for infrastructure also understanding that we're competing for many of the same folks as the Lower 48.

Cathy Munoz: We need a multi-pronged approach. One of our greatest resources is our youth, so targeting career awareness at the secondary levels in 11th and 12th grade, and before that, is very beneficial.

But we need to do more. I think we need to be more aggressive in getting information to our schools to secondary students about career opportunities and the paths to get there. I think we need to aggressively market to our youth. I think we also need to market outside of the state.

The governor, in the last year, inserted \$5 million for a marketing Alaska campaign. I believe it needs to include a marketing to attract workers to our state. Targeting our youth is important as well as strengthening partnerships with our military. We're also working at the Department of Labor on citizenship assistance, to welcome immigrant and refugees coming to Alaska.

Cari-Ann Carti: We definitely need to start with career awareness for our youth, to be exposed to careers. The more we can do that in an experiential way where they do job shadowing or a hands-on component, all of that is critical.

There were some great programs (in the past) with loan forgiveness for students, whether they went in-state or out-of-state. As long as they then maintained residency in the state those loans were forgiven.

When we're looking at the generation coming up, entering the workforce debt free is important. With an employer it's important to make an investment, so if there are ways that we can either help people start debt free or help them become debt free that's going to be really a great way for employers to incentivize keeping our youth here and bringing other workers from out of state.

Lori Davey: I would agree on retaining and attracting.

Our company is working on an initiative on the attract side of it. I have a database of over two million technical and engineers and surprisingly over 10,000 have Alaska experience. Those are the folks who have left Alaska and we're trying to get them back.

A lot of people do want to come back, but one of the challenges is we have to be competitive with wages. I hear that our wages are maybe 10 percent higher than the Lower 48 but our cost of living is about 25 percent higher. We need to be a little more competitive.

A lot of workers are rotational so being able to help them with airfare is an important as well as, if they're going to live up here, having some kind of per diem that will help them with the extra cost of living. Basically, we've got to bring our workforce back, or bring in new people.

Jocelyn Fenton: We need to identify the jobs and identify the training programs, or the gaps in the training or the challenges to access that training. Sometimes that requires some travel. A supplement to get students to a training facility could help. The Denali Commission has innovative projects where we're doing virtual reality training in communities so that folks don't have to leave to be job ready.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER



Photos by Judy Patrick

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HIGHLIGHTS: FUNDING SEEN FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION ON TOP OF INVESTMENTS BY STATE'S TELECOM OPERATORS. PERMITTING FOR NEW PROJECTS MAINTENANCE SEEN AS CHALLENGES, ALONG WITH WORKFORCE. NEW FIBER AND MICROWAVE WILL STIMULATE RESOURCE PROJECTS.

MODERATOR: CHRISTINE O'CONNOR, CEO, Alaska Telecom Association

PANEL:

- **MICHAEL BURKE, CEO, Matanuska Telecom Association**
- **HEATHER CAVANAUGH, VP External Affairs, Alaska Communications**
- **HEATHER HANDYSIDE, Chief Communications Officer, GCI**
- **KELLY WILLIAMS, CEO, OTZ Telephone Cooperative**

KEY POINTS:

- **Microwave in Northwest will aid resource exploration**
- **\$2 billion invested prior to federal infrastructure act**
- **Workforce, permitting are key challenges**

DISCUSSION:

Christine O'Connor: I'm sure you're all aware that broadband is not everywhere, and we have some real deficits and connectivity problems in Alaska, and that was in 2010. This is changing quickly.

We fast forward to 2023. This was through a lot of company investment. ATM's member companies have invested about \$2 billion in capital since 2017. We've gotten a lot of federal grants and we plowed that into building network. There has been a lot of build-out and the bulk of this has happened even before the federal infrastructure bill funding hit.

Kelly Williams: At OTZ Telephone, we serve Kotzebue in the Northwest Arctic Borough and 10 villages across 40,000 square miles. We are the local telephone company and the cell company for that region. We are building fiber to connect places, but our biggest challenge is getting Internet at a competitive price from the more urban areas of Alaska.

We're building a microwave network from Kotzebue to the Dalton Highway. This will bring our pricing down, and speeds up for our customers. There are strategic reasons we went with microwave. That long haul to the Dalton that gives us access to competitive fiber. We will have communications towers about every 30 miles. We're getting communications out where a lot of natural resources are, which with fiber probably wouldn't happen.

Heather Handyside: GCI is Alaska's largest telecom provider. About 97 percent of Alaskans live in

our service area. We have six major fiber projects we're working on that are partially federally funded and partially private. The value of those is \$267 million. We'll be completing them over the next two to three years with more coming. This is in addition to \$80 million in wireless investment in 2024.

Our Aleutians fiber project is an 800-mile subsea fiber connecting six communities. We turned on service in Unalaska at the end of last year and we're on track to turn on King Cove and Sand Point at the end of this year. We'll be following with other communities in the coming year.

This is important for the maritime and fisheries industries. They were struggling with payroll, cyber security, and supply chain issues when they had slow download and upload speeds. Now they're on par with the rest of the nation.

Michael Burke: Matanuska Telecom Association serves an area of about 10,000 square miles. We have fiber in Fairbanks and a couple of years ago we completed the first fiber connection down the Alcan Highway through Canada. Now we connect to networks throughout Canada as well as the Lower 48.

From a resource development standpoint, this opens opportunities. There are companies in Canada that do business in Alaska. This is a path for them to provide connectivity directly rather than having to go down to the Lower 48 and then back up again.

Heather Cavanaugh: We are working on our Alaska FiberOptic Project with Doyon Ltd., Calista Corporation, and the Tanana Chiefs Conference. We're building fiber across the Doyon and Calista regions that will start in Fairbanks, go up the Yukon and then down to Holy Cross. It will go overland to the Kuskokwim. We'll have fiber in the Doyon region by the end of 2025 and in the Calista region by the end of 2026.

Heather Handyside: A challenge for us is being strategic about building. These investments need to be maintained. We have to make sure we have the workforce and the maintenance dollars for every tower and earth station and for all the upgrades that are going to be needed for networks.

Michael Burke: Workforce is a challenge, but another critical area are the easements and permits that are going to be required. The infrastructure act wants these projects done within five years. It may take five years to just get the permits.

ALASKA'S RESOURCES: LEADING THE WAY

1975  2023



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HIGHLIGHTS: CONOCOPHILLIPS SEES 2,500 EMPLOYED AT WILLOW NEXT TWO YEARS; NEW MANAGEMENT RULE ON NPR-A LANDS NO IMMEDIATE EFFECT BUT IT COULD AFFECT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT. REQUIRED BLM CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES ON NEW RULES LACKING TO DATE.

MODERATOR: KARA MORIARTY, Alaska Oil & Gas Association

PANEL:

- **MAYOR JOSIAH PATKOTAK, North Slope Borough**
- **NAGRUK HARCHAREK, Voice of the Inupiat Arctic**
- **JOHN HELLEN, VP, Santos Ltd.**
- **CHRIS WROBEL, Supervisor, Environmental Permitting, ConocoPhillips**

DISCUSSION:

Josiah Patkotak: RDC's commitment to responsible development aligns with our principles. I've always believed that the Inupiat were the original environmentalists. We understand the balance between progress and preservation.

John Hellen: I grew up mostly in Anchorage and spent time working in the oil fields in California, where I got an appreciation for one way to develop oil and gas resources. It was pretty eye-opening, with pipes running everywhere and shallow "straight hole" wells that are just spread over the landscape. Not like we do it here. It gave me a passion to refocus my career to an environmental track from what would have been a more traditional engineering education.

Chris Wrobel: I supervise the permitting for Willow and Alpine and Kuparuk Fields. I've worked in Alaska for over 20 years. I started as an environmental consultant, working in oil and gas, mining, transportation, and village projects.

Nagruk Harcharek: I started my career with our local village corporation as a project manager for UIC Science. I was able to observe collaboration between researchers and Indigenous communities. I looked at it as not just a job enhancing the Arctic science done for our country. Voice of the Inupiat is often labeled as being pro-development. I would say we are pro-people, pro-self-determination. It just happens that we are doing that through resource development.

Chris Wrobel: At ConocoPhillips we have a role for well-planned, responsible developments. They take time and they require stability — fiscal and regulatory. When we have that we provide stable production for energy security and public benefits that flow



from it. This winter will be our second construction season at Willow. We will have 1,800 people working.

John Hellen: Just over a year ago we sanctioned \$2.6 billion to bring the Pikka project online. There will be 2,500 working over the next couple of winters. We've got busy years ahead of us. My team is making sure we get buy-in from the agencies and the local community. Our project is located on village corporation land, and we take that responsibility very seriously.

Nagruk Harcharek: The Voice was created in 2015. We have a 24-member board, so when our messaging goes out that carries weight. The leaders on the North Slope created the North Slope Borough to provide services and improve living conditions. About 95% of its budget is funded through oil and gas taxation. Between 1980 and 2014 life expectancy increased 13 years. There's no greater measurement of success than that.

Kara Moriarty: Chris, what does the new NPR-A rule mean to Willow?

Chris Wrobel: The NPR-A rule doesn't appear to impact Willow but as it's proposed it is concerning. It appears quite a significant shift for management of the NPR-A. I spoke of the importance to us of long-term stability with regulations. So, it's a problem. The proposed rule appears to miss the benefits of projects



Photos by Judy Patrick

for Alaskans.

Kara Moriarty: Nagruk, it's our understanding that BLM has not followed its own consultation rules with tribal entities with the NPR-A rule.

Nagruk Harcharek: Correct. We have yet to see formal consultation with any of tribal members. We were told formal consultation can take place after the public comment period closes, so it doesn't mean that it's not going to happen. But how far along in the decision-making are you when you get to consultation? Even if there is consultation after the comment periods ends will our concerns, as the only communities within the NPR-A, be incorporated?

John Hellen: We wouldn't have been able to successfully get all the authorizations we need if we didn't have a commitment to working with local communities and really taking on the concerns they have. We made numerous changes to the project design in response to those conversations. As part of the wetlands mitigation, we looked for projects that could benefit the community. There are ways that we could work within the regulatory system to benefit the community beyond what was connected to a permit.

— COMPILED BY TIM BRADNER

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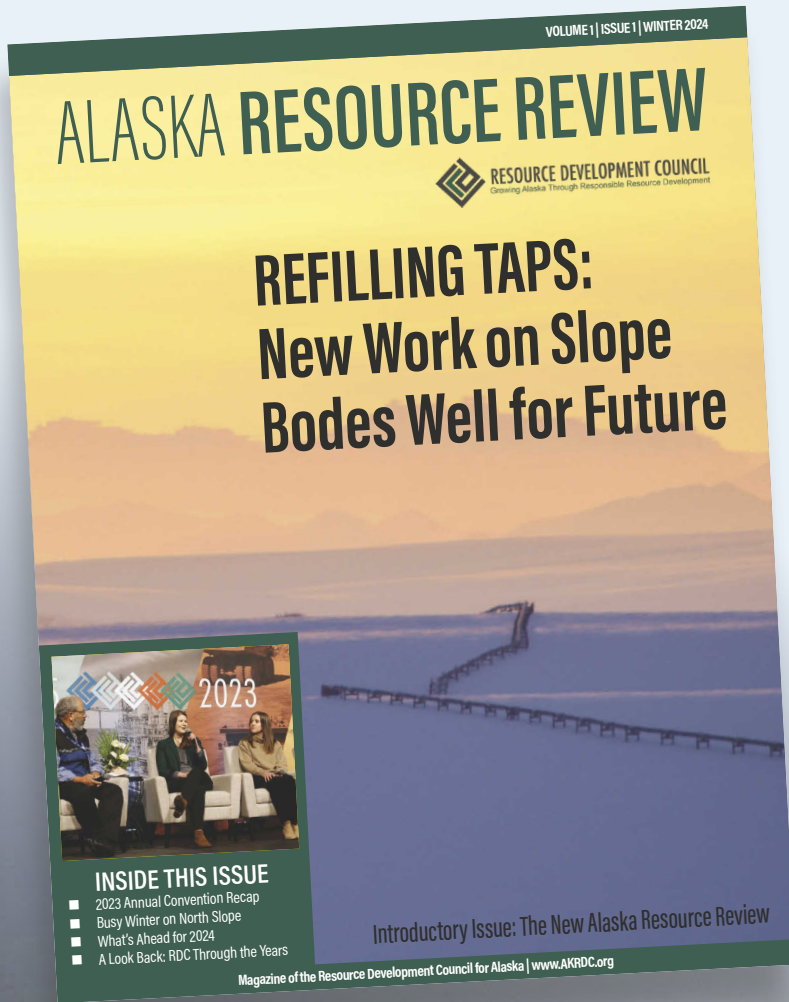
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Welcome to the new Alaska Resource Review! This magazine in both print and online editions is the new official publication of the Resource Development Council for Alaska. This publication is our newest tool to help the RDC in advocating for all five of Alaska's key resource industries—oil and gas, mining, fisheries, forestry, and tourism.

When the first issue of Resource Review was published in 1978, our organization was named the Organization for Management of Alaska's Resources Inc. (OMAR), and we were focused on building and maintaining the Trans Alaska Pipeline. We became the RDC three years later and our mission grew to represent all our resource industries.

On the following pages you will see just a few snapshots of Resource Reviews from the our first 40 years! It's both amazing and humbling how much the faces have changed, but the stories and the challenges remain the same!

In future issues of Alaska Resource Review, we will keep you abreast of key issues we need to address, what's happening inside the RDC and with our members, as well as putting a very human, Alaskan face on the people who get it done right in Alaska!

Our readership is now worldwide. Our goal is reaching key leaders with correct, current, compelling information on the importance of developing Alaska's resources for the good of both our state and our country.

We hope you enjoy our work here and support what we do. We encourage you to join this effort with suggestions, stories, or story ideas, and to share this publication both with others in your team but especially those beyond our borders and industries who need to hear these stories.

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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Tom Kelly's weekly column (*Anchorage Times*, 1-15-78) suggested 1978 resolutions for legislators. Two we particularly liked: "Do something positive to encourage job opportunities other than in government by enacting or reenacting laws or policies that are an incentive to business and industry." The other would have the legislature uphold Article VIII

of the State Constitution: "IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE TO ENCOURAGE THE SETTLEMENT OF ITS LAND AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS RESOURCES BY MAKING THEM AVAILABLE FOR MAXIMUM USE CONSISTENT WITH THE PUBLIC INTEREST."

ALASKA—ENERGY CENTER OF THE WORLD

"The combination of Alaska's energy resources—oil, gas, coal, uranium, wood, hydro and geothermal power—and energy operations—such as TAPS, Cook Inlet, the Kenai and North Pole refineries, the Usibelli Coal Mine—makes Alaska the energy center of the world," said Dr. Gene Rutledge at OMAR's January 5 meeting. Rutledge is Project Leader of the Alaska Regional Energy Resource Planning Project.

With this combination Dr. Rutledge hopes to see Alaska become the "energy

education center" of the world. Rutledge is working with Alaska Methodist University to assess interest in developing a "Pacific-Polar Rims Energy Institute." Rutledge sees the Institute as a center for research and planning projects related to Pacific-Polar Rims' energy resources.

A new course on Alaska's energy resources is being offered by Dr. Rutledge at AMU this semester. OMAR staff members Judy Rolle and Donna Dent are enrolled.

OMAR FORMS NEW DIVISIONS

Five divisions have been established in the statewide operation of the Organization for the Management of Alaska's Resources. In a January 19 release, Robert Fleming, OMAR President, announced formation of the divisions "to more effectively deal with the vast complexity of resource development issues facing Alaska."

The five divisions are: (1) Land, Minerals and Energy, (2) Forestry and Agriculture, (3) Fisheries, (4) Transportation and (5) Recreation and Tourism. Technical advisors are being selected for each division. Management of division activities will be the responsibility of five division directors.

Fleming stated the new management plan would enable statewide members to concentrate their activities in specific areas of interest and to develop information for the entire organization and public.

Fleming also announced that individuals, businesses and governments will now be able to earmark contributions to any of the five divisions.

OMAR was incorporated in April 1975 "to insure the wise management of Alaska's natural resources for the benefit to all Americans" and has a membership of over 6,000. Persons wishing to work for specific divisions are urged to contact OMAR headquarters in Anchorage.

In 1978, the Organization for the Management of Alaska's Resources (OMAR) was expanded to include five new divisions: Land, Minerals and Energy; Forestry and Agriculture; Fisheries; Transportation; and Recreation and Tourism.



This edition sponsored by

Arctic Slope Regional Corp.

Resource Review

April 2001 A periodic publication of the Resource Development Council, Inc.

Alaskans overwhelmingly support opening fraction of ANWR for oil

A new poll of Alaska residents shows overwhelming support across the state for oil and gas development in the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Dittman Research Corporation conducted a statewide telephone poll in January to ask the same question posed over the past eleven years. "Do you

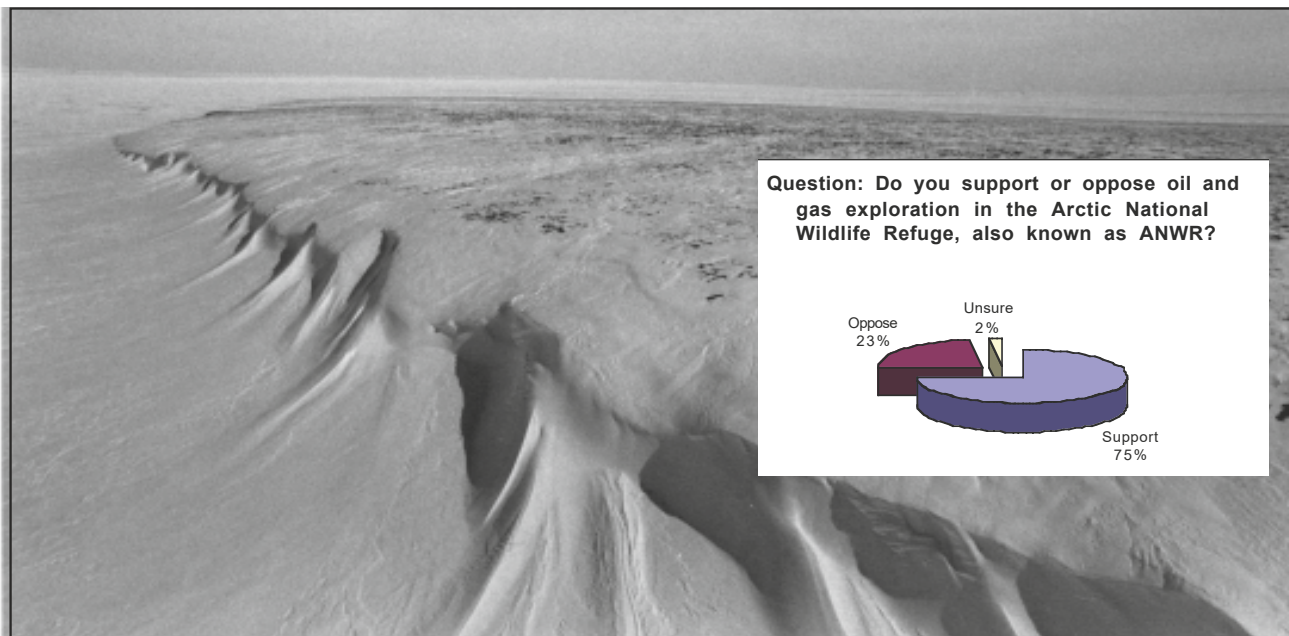
support oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, also known as ANWR?"

"Public support has consistently exceeded opposition by wide margins over ten years," states the Dittman Research report. With 75 percent favoring development, the 2001 results show the highest approval since the

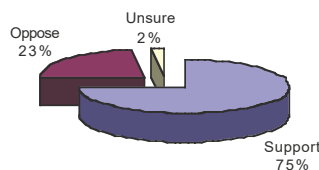
polling question was first posed to Alaskans.

"Oddly enough, our fellow Alaskans don't believe that Alaskans support development in ANWR," said Jerome Selby, Co-Chair of Arctic Power. "The long-term, consistent polling data presented today should end that belief."

(Continued to page 7)



Question: Do you support or oppose oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, also known as ANWR?



The area within ANWR proposed for oil and gas development is the flat and treeless Coastal Plain which represents eight percent of the 19.6-million acre refuge. Congress specifically excluded this area from ANWR's Wilderness designation in 1980.

INSIDE

Murkowski's new energy package

- ANWR on its own merits: A case for oil development

- Myths of ANWR
- The truth about Arctic caribou

We've been championing work in ANWR since long before this 2001 issue.

RESOURCE REVIEW

MAY - JUNE 2017 \ AKRDC.ORG

40 YEARS at PRUDHOE BAY

It was a gray, chilly morning at Prudhoe Bay on the eve of the summer solstice 40 years ago when the first oil from North America's largest oil field flowed into the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) for its 800-mile journey to Valdez, where it would be transported by ocean tanker to West coast refineries.

For BP and ARCO, the event on June 20, 1977 at Milepost 0 of the pipeline was the first fruits of a major move into the Arctic that began in 1968 with the discovery of the giant Prudhoe Bay oil field. That discovery has since led to the development of 24 separate North Slope oil fields, established Alaska as a world-class oil and gas province, and transformed Alaska's small economy.

At the time construction began in 1974, TAPS was the largest private construction



Crew insulates a joint on the pipeline north of the Yukon River in the summer of 1976.

TAPS: "We didn't know it couldn't be done."



TAPS construction near the southern foothills of the Brooks Range in 1976. Oil from the North Slope and the pipeline that carried it brought great wealth to Alaska. (Photos by Carl Portman)

project in the world with an estimated price tag of \$900 million. When completed in 1977, final costs exceeded \$8 billion. Approximately 70,000 worked on the pipeline, including a peak workforce of 28,072 in 1975.

Alaska's North Slope has now produced more than 17 billion barrels of oil since TAPS came on line 40 years ago. Through last year, the oil industry has invested more than \$55 billion in Alaska and has become the undisputed foundation of the economy. Oil has funded up to 90 percent of the state's unrestricted General Fund revenues in most years and has generated more than \$180 billion in total state revenue. Even at today's low oil prices, oil revenues account for approximately 67 percent of unrestricted General Fund revenues.

Furthermore, the oil industry has generated approximately one-third of Alaska jobs and accounts for about one-half of the overall economy when the spending of state revenues from oil production is factored into the equation. In other words, without

oil and TAPS, Alaska's economy would be half its size or smaller. As the oil industry expanded so did Alaska's economy and basic infrastructure throughout the state.

TAPS and the oil flowing through it also led to the creation of the Permanent Fund. The fund has grown to over \$59 billion and has paid out more than \$18 billion in dividends to Alaskans.

While the economic impact of oil and gas activity and production in Alaska is profound, throughput in TAPS has been in a long-term decline trend since peaking at 2.1 million barrels per day in 1988 when the state accounted for more than 20 percent of domestic production.

Yet because of Prudhoe Bay and TAPS, Alaska is poised over the long term to reap a new bounty with an estimated 40 to 50 billion barrels of conventional oil remaining to be developed in onshore and offshore areas of the Arctic. However, the majority of the remaining resource is located in federal

TAPS transforms Alaska's economy
continued on page 2

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As 2020 ends, things may not be as bad as they seem



North Slope drilling is expected to resume this winter after the defeat of Ballot Measure One.

It is often darkest right before the dawn. As COVID-19 continues and Alaskans hunker down for the holidays, light is appearing at the end of the tunnel.

A sustainable economic recovery in a state heavily dependent on the development of its natural resources to fund public services may be right around the corner.

Rising oil prices and more certainty around Alaska's oil tax system has already improved the outlook on North Slope production. The mining industry is moving forward and the tourism and fishing sectors are looking at improving markets in 2021.

ConocoPhillips announced at RDC's Alaska Resources Conference in November that it will begin gearing up four rigs at North Slope drilling projects this month. Going from zero to four active rigs will boost production by thousands of barrels per day and put up to 1,000 Alaskans back to work.

Major development prospects, like Willow and Pikka, are back on track to get positive final investment decisions in 2021.

Speaking at RDC's virtual conference, ConocoPhillips Alaska president Joe Marushack cited the defeat of Ballot Measure One as a primary factor for resumption of drilling, providing some hope that the North Slope renaissance will continue.

2020 was supposed to be the company's largest exploration and winter construction season ever. However, as the pandemic spread across the world, the demand for oil crashed, followed by a collapse of oil prices. The company was forced to suspend development and cut production. Thousands of workers were frown off the North Slope. A third of all industry jobs were lost.

Another glimmer of light is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is moving forward with the first lease sale in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on January 6th. The BLM is currently taking nominations for which leases to offer in the sale. However, forward movement in ANWR could face

Continued to page 2

Alaska Industry Outlook for 2021

By Kari Nore

Despite the many challenges that all resource development industries faced this year, industry panelists speaking at the Alaska Resources Conference in November found plenty of common ground in looking forward to 2021, in addition to identifying positive aspects of 2020.

One important highlight for 2020 was the full exemption of the Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Rule, which John Sturgeon, President of Koncor Forest Products, noted would open up more lands to timber sales, however he cautioned that the exemption could be reversed with the incoming federal administration.

Stephanie Madsen, Executive Director, At-Sea Processors Association, echoed similar concerns with the new incoming federal administration and how drastic changes to the fishing industry could be executed through executive orders. For example, implementing the 30 by 30 plan, which could severely hamper the ability to operate fisheries in Alaska, and would largely hinge on who is in the regulatory seat for fisheries.

There was plenty of good news in 2020 for the mining sector as Karen Matthias, Executive Director of the Council of Alaska Producers, reported that mining started off very strong in 2020 with great prices and high demand for minerals. She also noted that despite the challenges and costs with managing COVID-19 at mining sites across the state, there has been a surprising amount of goods news – the strong commodity prices helped to encourage additional investment and exploration.

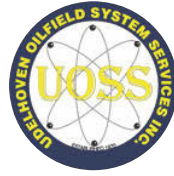
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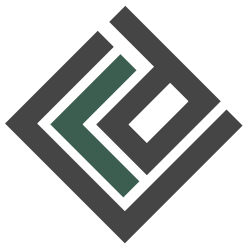
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2024 State Legislative Priorities

Advocate and provide support for policies and legislation that encourage responsible resource development.

Stable, long-term fiscal plan

- Advocate to limit unrestricted general fund (UGF)* spending to a sustainable level and implement a meaningful limit to spending.
- Encourage the legislature to allocate a percentage of the Permanent Fund earnings to the UGF to support essential services first.
- Advocate to diversify and expand the economy in Alaska, by reducing the budget deficit to encourage long-term investment in the private sector.
- Advocate for the utilization of federal funds to efficiently advance key statewide infrastructure projects to support resource development.

*UGF includes: Operating budget, capital budget, statewide obligations, but not the deferral of liabilities.

A robust private sector and a stable permitting process

- Advocate for tax policy and regulatory stability that enhance the State of Alaska’s competitiveness for all industries to attract new investment and grow the economy.
- Encourage elected officials and state agencies to defend and promote Alaska’s effective and rigorous regulatory process.
- Support state assumption of primacy over federal permitting programs to bring stability, efficiency and certainty to support resource development.

Initiative reform

- Advocate for changes to the initiative process that would nullify a ballot initiative if a court finds any segment of the initiative to be unconstitutional.
- Advocate for changes to the initiative process that create more transparency and better public policy in a comprehensive and balanced manner, to equally benefit both the voters and the legislative process.

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“I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you at our events in 2023 and I’m looking forward to getting to know more of you in 2024!”

— *Jennifer Kuhlmann,*
Membership & Events Manager, RDC

PLEASE JOIN AS A MEMBER; WE’RE STRONGER TOGETHER

FIRST AND FOREMOST, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF OUR CURRENT CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS WHO ARE EITHER NEW MEMBERS OR HAVE SUPPORTED OUR ORGANIZATION FOR YEARS!

Your support and participation have helped us continue our mission of Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development! Not a member? Check out what becoming an RDC member can do for your organization and community:

CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBER BENEFITS

You and your employees (or you, as an Individual Member) will receive:

- A commitment from RDC to advocate for the responsible development of Alaska’s natural resources
- Regular email notifications of important issues facing our industries.
- Invitations to RDC’s public forums highlighting those issues. These forums include our Thursday breakfast series, Annual Membership Luncheon, and other special luncheons, as well as our Annual Alaska Resources Conference, which was attended by nearly 1,000 working professionals in 2023!
- Excellent opportunities to learn more about ongoing development projects in the state and valuable networking opportunities at all our events throughout the year.
- Members will receive RDC’s informative issue-based magazine, the Alaska Resource Review, published several times per year.
- Member discounts on our Breakfast Forum series, luncheon registrations, and conference exhibitor booths and registration.
- As a Corporate Member, we will list your organization on the RDC website with a link directed to your organization’s website. As an Individual Member, we will list your name on our Individual Members page.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

We are often asked about the differences between our levels of membership. RDC leaves that choice with the prospective member, and you may decide which level you think is most appropriate for you as an individual or an organization. Many companies consider their size and budget, and their expected participation in RDC.

Membership is a one-year term with an annual fee:

INDIVIDUAL

- Basic: \$75
- Silver: \$150
- Gold: \$300
- Platinum: \$500 and up

CORPORATE

- Basic: \$500
- Silver: \$750
- Gold: \$1,500
- Platinum: \$3,000 and up

CURRENT MEMBERS

Already a member but need to update your profile? Please email me at jennifer@akrdc.org for any address and corporate contact updates, and contact me at 907-276-0700 option 2 with any questions.

We want to make sure you continue to receive our correspondence throughout the year!

I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you at our events in 2023 and I’m looking forward to getting to know more of you in 2024! Please don’t hesitate to give me a call or send me an email with any questions or suggestions.

Cheers to 2024!

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Join us throughout the spring for our 7 a.m. forums, for breakfast with friends and updates on the critical issues facing Alaska resource industries!

Back by popular demand, our RDC Member Breakfast Season Pass is now available! Purchase online.

This pass includes a discounted rate for each breakfast and automatic registration to each breakfast forum, (8 forums) for the 2024 winter/spring season (January-May). Cost of the

pass is \$200 and you may transfer to another attendee at any time if you are unable to attend. (You must be a current RDC member to purchase the pass).

The RDC Breakfast Forums are held on the first and third Thursday of the month, doors open at 7 a.m., presentation begins at 7:30 a.m. Unless otherwise noted, breakfasts are held at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage.

Current Winter/Spring Breakfast Forum Series dates: January 11, February 1, February 15, March 7, March 21, April 4, April 18, and May 2.



49TH ANNUAL SUMMER MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON, JUNE 2024, ANCHORAGE



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