Alaska's Economic Priorities

Excitement about RDC's February 1985 International Conference is building at a rate even we did not foresee. While the public will not have conference details for some time, people involved with the program are generating high enthusiasm in their communities for the program concept.

Entitled "Alaska's Economic Priorities: A Five-year Strategy," the program format was designed with the assumption that petroleum revenues will decline later in this decade, that a different approach is needed for directing state appropriations, and that Alaska's communities must develop strategies for generating revenues to sustain their own economies and contingency plans for the day of steep state revenue declines. Each representative has been charged with the task of gathering local input so that this question can be answered at the conference: "What is the single most important action or project that would allow your economy to strengthen or diversify in the next five years?" If applicable, "What will it cost?" and "Do you expect public or private funding?"

For the first time, an All-Alaska Community Expo will be held at the Anchorage Convention Center in conjunction with the Conference. Few Rendezvous will never be the same!

Printed the second week of each month, Resource Review is the official monthly publication of the Resource Development Council Box 100516, Anchorage, Alaska 99510 — (907) 276-0700.

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Surimi Grant Is Awarded  

Alaska's growing imitation food industry received a big boost in October when the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation targeted a $1.47 million grant to Kodiak seafood processor Alaska Pacific Seafoods to produce nearly a million pounds of surimi by early next year.

The new highly popular surimi is a high-protein boned, minced and frozen food base of bottomfish such as pollock, found in abundance off the Alaska Coast. 

The effort is targeted toward the Japanese-dominated market. Pacific Seafoods, is hoping the surimi program has the potential for year-round production. Brian Kelly, general manager of Alaska Pacific, is hoping the surimi program has long-term potential for year-round production. His plan is to tailor the surimi to better suit the needs of American food makers.

Burford Claims She Was Set Up  

The former head of the Environmental Protection Agency blamed top Justice Department officials in Washington, D.C., for putting her up to lead the dubious claim of presidential executive privilege, then deserting her just as she was to defend the issue before Congress.

Speaking to the Resource Development Council in Anchorage October 5, Anne Burford said lawyers within the Justice Department convinced President Reagan certain documents should be kept secret, thus precipitating her resignation in 1983.

Although Reagan understood the "big picture," concerning the goals of the EPA, he used his executive privilege in ordering Burford to keep some records confidential. Some of those records pertained to the $1.6 billion Superfund used by the EPA to clean up hazardous waste sites throughout the nation.

"I was put out in front on an issue that I didn't have faith in, that I didn't believe in, that I didn't go to that town to serve for, that I thought was politically disastrous," Burford said.

She warned the President twice that his approach would lead to trouble. She said "it was no doubt one of the greatest fiascos ever organized by the government against itself."

Burford defended her record as chief of the EPA, disputing claims that she was lax in enforcing laws to protect the environment. She said Congress went "into an uproar" when she began to enforce laws requiring automobile inspections to control exhaust fumes.

Regarding Southeast Alaska pulp mills, Burford said no one has looked at new EPA demands to determine if new standards would indeed improve water quality.

Committee Formulates Knik Response  

In an ongoing analysis of the Knik Arm Crossing Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the Resource Development Council is studying in detail what it believes to be shortcomings in the document.

The Resource Development Council's Executive Committee is examining a number of recommendations aimed at overcoming inadequacies in the draft document. The council's response to the document and its recommendations to the authors of the final environmental impact statement will be released by the Executive Committee within the next two weeks.

Despite shortfalls in the DEIS, the Resource Development Council supports the concept of a Knik Arm crossing. It believes a crossing would bring valuable developable land within close proximity to Anchorage, resulting in new economic and resource development opportunities.

In its statewide Transportation Policy Statement, the Council states that resource development is dependent upon the existence of transportation systems that will allow for the movement of materials, equipment, supplies, people and products. The establishment of major transportation facilities and networks such as the Knik Arm Crossing will support growth and encourage development by creating new business opportunities.

The Transportation Policy Statement was adopted by the Council's statewide Board of Directors last spring.

The DEIS examines two crossing and three no-crossing alternatives. The crossing alternatives are the $742 million Elmendorf Project and the $547 million Knik Arm Crossing. The no-crossing alternatives are the No-Action, Glen/Parks Improvements and Hovercraft.

Call Us At Our New Number!

276-0700  

In an effort to better serve our membership, the Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc., has changed its telephone number to 276-0700. The old number of 276-8615 was discontinued as of October 15.

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25 Years of Statehood

The first 25 years of statehood have been exciting and bountiful for Alaska. The years since 1959 have given Alaska a new perspective in the eyes of our nation and perhaps in the eyes of the world. We can applaud and feel fortunate in this.

On the other hand, good fortunes of Alaska have caused state government to grow beyond expectations and a sense of reason. Perhaps in the next 25 years we will provide leadership that can reduce the size of government and allow the private sector to regain its historical, rightful position of contributing to the welfare of Alaska and the nation.
Celebrate Alaska!

Celebrate with Silver!

One Troy Oz .999 Pure Silver!  

The Alaska 250th Anniversary Oxford Silver Bar – the official Silver Anniversary issue of Alaska’s Celebration! Priced to sell at cost – only $2.50 per bar plus $1.00 postage and handling. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery. (Continued from Page 4)

RDC Responds to Quartz Hill DEIS

After lengthy examination of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Quartz Hill Antimony Mine Development, the RDC Minerals Division of the Resource Development Council concluded that public benefits of the Quartz Hill operation greatly exceed temporary disturbance that might occur.

Depending on metal prices, the mine could add between $257 million and $457 million to the nation’s annual balance of foreign trade. Locally, the mine would add $67 million to annual personal incomes, thus furnishing approximately 25 percent of all personal income in the Ketchikan area.

Minerals Division chairperson Anita Williams pointed out that the national balance of payments in foreign trade and its positive effect on the cyclical, narrowly-based Ketchikan economy greatly overshadowed the short-lived, temporary, largely hypothetical, adverse environmental problems of the operation. Williams stressed that no permanent environmental damage is foreseen from developing Quartz Hill under the U.S. Borax plan.

The RDC Minerals Division found the DEIS to be a thorough, factual and well-documented document. However, during the Division’s review process, several philosophical and practical considerations were observed within the document which merited further discussion, Williams said.

Williams said the impact statement should have been directed more to the specific mine development plan with less focus on alternative concepts, which were more appropriately addressed in the site selection and planning stages. She said the DEIS should deal with the mine development plan that U.S. Borax has submitted and not give such extensive coverage to possible alternatives unless a significant one were discovered during the collection of data.

RDC specialists generally felt the DEIS gave too much attention to the “worst possible case” scenario, which is least likely to occur. Since worst case scenarios are purely statistical, Williams suggested the Final EIS present a chart listing predicted worst case frequency or percent chance of occurrence.

Regarding environmental impacts, RDC agreed with the DEIS in that air quality would not be significantly impacted by the project, except at the site of excavation where particulates could exceed air quality standards. Maintenance of minimum stream flows and construction of sedimentation ponds would enable the project to avoid damage to the fishery and to meet Alaska State Receiving Water Quality Standards. The RDC specialists also found that sedimentation during construction would have minor, short-lived effects on benthic life. Marine impacts would be minimal since toxic components would be diluted to non-toxic levels within 100 feet from the discharge.

U.S. Borax has spent over $100 million on the Quartz Hill project with nearly a quarter of those costs going toward studies and preliminary work. The U.S. Forest Service praised the company’s construction of a 10-mile access road to the site from saltwater in an “environmentally sound manner under extremely difficult conditions.”

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We’re Energizing Alaska!

Teso

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