By Rachael Petro
President/CEO, Alaska Chamber

Our business, our story

Although tempting, there’s little time to savor our recent victory. We must re-focus and plan for future successes. Alaska businesses come under fire from those who don’t understand what we do and those who simply don’t want us to do it.

What does this really mean? It means we need to go on the offensive — as individual Alaskans, business owners, and collectively as the Alaska Chamber. We need to understand what we’re up against. We need to share our story. We need to be heard and understood.

The Alaska Chamber’s Fall events are geared to equip and focus us on this task. Alaska Chamber members will gather on Oct. 21 for our Policy Forum and on Oct. 22 for our Annual Conference and Awards Gala at The Hotel Alyeska in Girdwood.

Forum participants will review and add to the Alaska Chamber’s advocacy platform for 2015, as well as learn how to respond when business is attacked from the left and the right.

Conference participants will benefit from a session geared to demystifying the domestic and international politics of the Arctic, a session on workers’ compensation reform next steps, and industry updates from a variety of the Alaska Chamber’s partner organizations.

Be Part of the Solution!

Why I value Chamber membership

By Brad Osborne
Chair, Alaska Chamber

There has never been a better time to engage with the Alaska Chamber. As we’re so fond of saying, “If you don’t have a seat at the table, you’re probably on the menu.” And right now you really want a seat at the table, because right now people are showing up and they’re showing up hungry.

Here at home, the Chamber is our seat at the table. Luckily for us, the Chamber is strong and is doing good work. But we don’t succeed in business by becoming complacent. We don’t let the “other guy” do our work. We show up, we do our part, and we witness success firsthand.

The same should be true of our advocacy efforts because the Chamber can be stronger and there is more good work to be done.

Advocacy Success

In this past legislative session, the Chamber achieved a 70 percent success rate on advocacy issues. Seventy percent! So why join? Why pitch in if the Chamber has already succeeding on pro-business issues on behalf of every business in every community of the state?

Because seventy percent isn’t 80. Seventy percent is a far cry from 90. How much could we have accomplished if we truly stood together for the betterment of the Alaska economy?

Plan to Attend!

2014 Policy Forum*
October 21, 2014
The Hotel Alyeska
Girdwood

2014 Annual Conference*
October 22, 2014
The Hotel Alyeska
Girdwood

2015 Legislative Fly In
January 28-29, 2015
Westmark Baranof Hotel
Juneau

Ballot Measure 2, 3 and 4 Hearing Schedules

**Ballot Measure 2: Marijuana Initiative**
- **Tuesday, Sept. 9, 3-5 p.m.**
  - Nome
  - Nome City Council Chambers
  - 102 Division Street
- **Friday, Sept. 12, Noon-2 p.m.**
  - Barrow
  - Inupiat Heritage Center
  - 5421 N. Star Street
- **Monday, Sept. 15, Noon-2 p.m.**
  - Juneau
  - Thomas Stewart Building
  - Beltz Room 105
  - 206 4th Street
- **Thursday, Sept. 18, 1-3 p.m.**
  - Ketchikan
  - Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers
  - Whitecliff Building
  - 1901 1st Avenue, Suite 144

**Ballot Measure 3: Raising Alaska’s Minimum Wage**
- **Tuesday, Sept. 9, Noon-2 p.m.**
  - Nome
  - Nome City Council Chambers
  - 102 Division Street
- **Thursday, Sept. 11, Noon-2 p.m.**
  - Juneau
  - Legislative Information Office
  - 301 Willow Street
- **Tuesday, Sept. 16, Noon-2 p.m.**
  - Barrow
  - Inupiat Heritage Center
  - 5421 N. Star Street
- **Tuesday, Sept. 30, 1-3 p.m.**
  - Fairbanks
  - Assembly Chambers, Borough Administration Center
  - 809 Pioneer Road

**Ballot Measure 4: Bristol Bay Forever**
- **Monday, Sept. 8, Noon-2 p.m.**
  - Kotzebue
  - Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers
  - 163 Lagoon Street
- **Thursday, Sept. 11, 5:30-7:30 p.m.**
  - Anchorage
  - Legislative Information Office
  - 301 Willow Street
- **Tuesday, Sept. 16, Noon-2 p.m.**
  - Juneau
  - Thomas Stewart Building
  - Beltz Room 105
  - 206 4th Street
- **Thursday, Sept. 18, 1-4 p.m.**
  - Ketchikan
  - Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers
  - Whitecliff Building
  - 1901 1st Avenue, Suite 144

**Just say ‘no’ this November**

The primary is behind us, and with it goes the first ballot measure of the year. Alaskans everywhere can heave a collective and well-deserved sigh.

But don’t throw out those No On One signs right away. We’ll be facing a triple dose of ballot measure-mania this fall in the general election. It might be wise to invest in a handful of sharps for a juicer’s bout of recycling.

Ballot measures are the product of a citizens’ initiative process. A relatively small percentage of voters* (10 percent of previous election turn-out) may place issues of significant social and economic weight on the ballot.

It is then our job as Alaskans to become educated and knowledgeable about what it is that we are voting on. As Thomas Jefferson said, “Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.” That is certainly an ideal we’d wish for every Alaskan, as well as ourselves. For while the intent and presentation of proposed measures may appear benign, the actual social and business consequences are not always defined, discussed and understood.

This November we cast our ballots on three measures, each threatening harmful and lasting consequences to Alaska workers and employers.

**Ballot Measure 2: Taking Marijuana to the Masses**

While this may appear to be a reprise of the legalization initiative that Alaskans voted down by a whopping 20 percentage points back in 2000, it’s not. This initiative is part of a nationwide campaign to push commercial, industrialized cannabis products into markets across the U.S. It may seem counterintuitive for a Chamber of Commerce to oppose the commercialization of a suite of products. However, Colorado and Washington are already wrestling with their own choices on this issue. The consequences for businesses are tangible and real. They include increased costs and exposure to liability.

Drug testing methods are inadequate to the task of gauging an employer’s level of impairment. The initiative leaves no opportunity for Alaskan villages and dry communities to opt out of the law. It will, in fact, be illegal for them to do so.

A red state like Alaska is an appealing target for the hersies of this national campaign. Yet there is no reason for Alaska to rush cannabis edibles, candies and concentrates into our economy. There is no immediacy to the issue.

Better that we wait and observe the resolution to the business and legal struggles that Colorado and Washington are wrestling with before we sign up for some of our own.

**Ballot Measure 3: Raising Alaska’s Minimum Wage**

Alaska’s workers are engaged in commerce.

*The Initiative Petition Process is defined online at: www.elections.alaska.gov.
2014 Alaska Business Week a Success

By Nicole Schuh
Alaska Business Week Program Director
Alaska Chamber

For one week this summer (July 27- August 2) 37 participants from across Alaska joined together to learn about business and leadership at Alaska Business Week (ABW). The week was a whirlwind of activities for participants, with each moment of their day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. filled.

At the beginning of the week, participants were split into companies (teams). Each company was lead by a Company Advisor (CA), a business leader from Alaska’s business community who volunteered their week to be a mentor. Companies competed against each other during the week on two main projects, a business simulation and the creation of a product or service.

The business simulation (BizSim) required the companies to make decisions for eight quarters on how to best run their company. Companies worked together to make business decisions such as, what price point to sell their product at, how much to produce, if they need to expand their plant size, and how much they need to spend advertising.

The second items teams focused on was the creation of a product or service that would benefit Alaskans. These products did not have to be something that could be put on the market today but rather let the teams come up with an innovative idea for the future. Products ranged from a jacket that regulates body temperature no matter the weather, a more efficient way to collect oil from drilling sites, and window coverings that in dark winter months make it feel like summer inside your house. Participants also attended general assemblies where they heard from nine different speakers on topics such as how to become successful in the future, what it takes to become a leader, and not to fear rejection.

The week empowered Alaska high school students to become the leaders of tomorrow. Participants of ABW are now more excited about their future career opportunities.
Become a part of 2015

Alaska businesses need qualified, educated employees poised to assume leadership positions in the future. ABW is one way businesses can take an active role in grooming future Alaska business leaders. Help us mold the next generation by actively getting involved in ABW.

Program Sponsorship
ABW program sponsorship at any level benefits Alaska’s future business leaders. ABW is fortunate to have many generous benefactors to keep the program running, and hope you will consider becoming a sponsor.

Provide a Company Advisor
CA’s mentor a team of high school students during the program. Each team works in a simulated environment to learn real life business principles. A CA’s role is to help motivate the team to get involved in the week’s activities by asking engaging questions, empowering the students to make decisions and sharing their own real world experiences. CA’s are key to the ABW program as the mentorship they give to their team is irreplaceable.

Speak or Judge
ABW relies on volunteer support from professionals at every level of business to deliver keynote addresses, and role-play shareholders and investors during the week. These are both great opportunities for businesses that are interested in helping ABW but unable to commit for a week as a CA. Judges serve as members of the board of directors each team of students report to at the end of the week. Throughout the week, business leader speakers are needed.

For more information on how to get involved with ABW, contact Program Director Nicole Schuh at nschuh@alaskachamber.com or (907) 278-2744.

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2014 Sponsors!

[Logos of sponsors]
More than three dozen Alaska Chamber members traveled to Nome, Alaska for the 2014 Community Outreach Trip. Located on the edge of the Bering Sea on the southwest side of the Seward Peninsula, Nome is a vital hub for Northwest Alaska.

Chamber members kicked off the trip with a welcome lunch with Nome Mayor Denise Michels, Nome Chamber of Commerce President Robert Hafner, and Nome Chamber Executive Director Barb Nickels. Following lunch, the Chamber held a quarterly Board of Directors meeting with special presentations from Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell, Bering Straits Native Corporation President and CEO Gail Schubert and Representative Neal Foster.

The following day and a half continued with a packed agenda. From presentations on the new gold mining rush and the Arctic port expansion to tours of the new Norton Sound Regional Hospital and the Norton Sound Seafood Plant, Chamber members gained a solid understanding of Nome’s (and the region’s) business climate and economy as they directly influence the advocacy work of the Chamber.

“As a statewide organization, I believe getting out of urban Alaska provides a better understanding of the economic opportunities and challenges around Alaska, and is key to our successful advocacy on behalf of all Alaska businesses in Juneau,” Petro added.

The Chamber thanks the following sponsors for this year’s outreach trip, without whom such an event would not be possible: ConocoPhillips Alaska, Bering Straits Native Corporation, NANA Development Corporation, Nome Chamber of Commerce, Salchuck, Totem Ocean Trailer Express, Inc., Holland America, Kinross Fort Knox, Lynden and Alaska Airlines.

The Alaska Chamber’s Community Outreach Trips offer Chamber members the opportunity to interact with communities across the state and meet other members and new business partners in a fun, educational and productive environment.

If you’re a member, make sure to join us next summer and if you are not, join today!

By Brandy Dixon
Communications and Events Director
Alaska Chamber
Build your success on a proven record with The Wilson Agency

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Make History With Us

Policy Forum, October 21

A member-exclusive event, the Alaska Chamber Policy Forum offers members access to review and shape the Chamber’s advocacy program. Come learn how to deal with attacks on business from the left and the right with popular speaker David Azerrad. Join us for this statewide forum, connect with world-renowned speakers and exceptional thought leaders, and lend your voice to the important conversations that occur at our Forum.

Annual Conference, October 22

Open to the public, the Alaska Chamber’s Annual Conference is the state’s premier business conference. Participants will profit from first-hand knowledge on issues of statewide importance to Alaska business. Gain insight on how sharing your story can boost your business with internationally recognized speaker Thaler Pekar. Concluding the conference is the Awards Gala to acknowledge the accomplishments of individuals, leading businesses, and chambers of commerce, and the contributions they make to our statewide economy.

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Thank you Alaska!

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