



BUSINESS to BUSINESS

ALASKA CHAMBER

MARCH  
2015

## Legislative Fly-In: New session, new priorities

### Alaska Chamber Staff

At the start of the 29th Legislature, a delegation of 100 Alaska Chamber members from across the state gathered in Juneau for the Chamber's annual Legislative Fly-In to educate Alaska's policymakers on issues of importance to the business community. The two-day, annual event gave participating Chamber members the chance to learn more about the legislative process and directly influence public policy by meeting with legislators and the administration.

Chamber members focused their meetings with elected officials and their staff on the Chamber's two state priorities: support for comprehensive workers' compensation reform and support for reduction of spending to sustainable levels. The policy priorities were selected by the Board of Directors following the annual Policy Forum last fall.

Each fall, Chamber members gather at our annual Policy Forum to propose positions for the upcoming year. The Chamber's Board of Directors selects the top state and federal priorities for the year. A complete list of the 2015 policy priorities are available on the Alaska Chamber website under "Advocacy."

Fly-In itinerary highlights include a reception with Governor Walker, the First Lady and Walker's administration at Governor's residence, a presen-



ALL PHOTOS BY FRANK FLAVIN  
Governor Walker addresses Alaska Chamber members at a reception held at the Governor's residence during the Legislative Fly-In in January.

tation on addressing Alaska's spending problem by Cheryl Frasca of Commonwealth and a meet and greet luncheon with new legislators.

This year's Fly-in was sponsored by ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips Alaska, Helca Greens Creek Mining Co., The Alaska Committee, Juneau Chamber of Commerce, BP, State Farm, TOTE, CLIA Alaska, Alaska Cruise Association, Holland America, TSS, Inc., Alaska Airlines, Avis Alaska, Capital Office, Design Alaska and Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. See the Chamber's website for more information about the legislative fly-in and the Chamber's policy priorities.



Chuck Brady, Alaska Chamber member and Workers' Compensation Manager for the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, briefs Fly-In participants on worker's compensation reform, one of two priorities in 2015 for the Chamber.



Alaska Chamber members meet with Representative Neal Foster to discuss the 2015 policy positions and priorities.

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### 2015 Community Outreach Trip\*

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October 14, 2015  
Westmark Fairbanks Hotel  
Fairbanks, Alaska

\*Registration is open now for the 2015 Community Outreach Trip. Space is limited. Our outreach trips always sell out early – so grab your spot today!  
Register at [alaskachamber.com](http://alaskachamber.com).



# Sustainable spending, workers' comp reform top priorities

By Rachael Petro  
President/CEO, Alaska Chamber

We are deep into year one of the 29th Alaska State Legislature, and much work remains to be completed before the scheduled adjournment on April 17.

Both the Legislature and the Governor welcomed Alaska Chamber members to the Capitol in January. We ran out of seats for Alaska Chamber members to participate in our 2015 Legislative Fly-In and are exploring ideas to expand future member opportunities in Juneau. During the Fly-In, members communicated our collective priorities for the year, including reigning in State spending and reforming Alaska's workers' compensation system.

The Chamber has been discussing the need for comprehensive workers' compensation reform for several years. Persistence pays off, and interest within the Legislature to address the issue is increasing. The Walker administration has yet to articulate its thoughts on reform or, for that matter, on the current system.

Workers' compensation is a cost that all employers share and is a cost of doing business that is currently failing both workers and employers. How is the system failing?

It fails because Alaska is an increasingly healthy place for workers, yet costs are still climbing. At the same time workers' compensation incidents are decreasing, the cost per incident is on the rise.

Comprehensive workers' reform will take time, effort and compromise. The Chamber is committed to supporting comprehensive reform that reduces costs and gets Alaskans back to work. In the 2015 Legislative session we expect to support some legislation that tweaks the current workers' compensation system. Meanwhile we continue to work on a holistic approach that will get Alaskans back on the job and reduce the cost of doing business in Alaska.

The Chamber has long supported a reduction in State spending to sustainable levels, and we're not alone. A public opinion survey conducted earlier this year shows that Alaskans want the State to do the same thing we all do with our own budgets — that is, to live within our means. This has been a real challenge given that the State's unrestricted general fund budget has grown 230 percent in 10 short years.

The State currently faces a \$3.8 billion deficit — a significant fiscal situation. The primary drivers are excessive spending and lower-than-anticipated oil prices.

Just like in our businesses, a sustainable budget should match spending levels to long-term revenues. There is little we can do about the volatile nature of oil prices, which means we

must focus on what we can control — spending.

Every State service deserves our attention. Is it necessary? Does it achieve its goal? Is it as efficient as it could be? These discussions are important, and they are happening in the Capitol right now. All of these discussions are meaningful, but several truly demand the attention of Alaska's business community.

Medicaid is a key State budget cost driver and presents a serious challenge to reigning in spending as Medicaid expansion is explored. The Chamber supports Medicaid expansion, and let me be clear: under the new federal health care law, Alaska businesses will pay for uninsured Alaskans, either through the proposed Medicaid expansion or by continuing to pay through increased health care costs.

The Chamber's support for Medicaid expansion ends when the federal funding ends, falls below its initial promise or if expansion exacerbates the State's fiscal situation.

Medicaid expansion must go hand in hand with Medicaid reform, limiting the State's fiscal liability today and for future generations. This contrasts with the Walker/Mallott Transition Team goal of using Medicaid expansion as a catalyst for Medicaid reform. As a key driver of State spending, Alaska's

Medicaid program is currently on an unsustainable path. We shouldn't need to create a too-big-too-fail Medicaid system before enacting sustainable reforms.

Medicaid is a meaningful example when discussing State spending, but all spending must be surgically trimmed to ensure that services allowing businesses to generate revenue to the State continue. Alaska businesses can't simply survive. They must grow. If not — funding for State government will continue to wane.

State government cannot "service" Alaska to fiscal security. The private sector bears that responsibility, and State spending must support these efforts.

Alaska businesses have a great story to share. Alaska businesses create jobs and wealth and fund over 95 percent of the State's budget. As the final weeks of the Legislative session move along, the Chamber will continue to encourage elected officials to do the right thing for Alaska today and in the future.

Make the tough decisions today to ensure a bright future for tomorrow.

Elected officials need to know that each of us supports a sustainable State budget. The Chamber's weekly Capitol Notes and Action Alerts are designed to keep you up to date on the latest happenings in Juneau (and D.C.) and make it easy for you to weigh in directly. Together we can make Alaska the best place to do business.



PETRO

## Alaska Business Week 2015

July 18 - 25, 2015  
Alaska Pacific University  
Anchorage, AK



Alaska Business Week is a one-week summer program teaching the basic principles of business and leadership to Alaskan high school students. Participants live on a college campus, where they compete as teams, mentored by Alaskan business leaders. The program is open to students finishing 9-12 grades.

Register online at  
[alaskachamber.com/ABW](http://alaskachamber.com/ABW)



**BusinessWeek**  
ALASKA CHAMBER

For More Information Contact:  
Nicole Schuh, Program Director  
(907) 278-2744 or [nschuh@alaskachamber.com](mailto:nschuh@alaskachamber.com)

## Short-term cost shifting not answer to budget gap

By Brad Osborne  
Chair, Alaska Chamber

The 2014 election is over; the incessant polling has ceased, as have the radio and TV ads. "Thankful" fails to adequately describe my gratefulness. Alas, my relief is temporary as reality sets in.

Alaska elections never disappoint, and 2014 was no exception. This year Alaska voters sent many pro-business candidates to Juneau while adopting laws that may cause lasting, harmful consequences for Alaska businesses. By narrow margins Alaskans sent new leadership to the U.S. Senate and to the Governor's office. What this really means is that the work of the Alaska Chamber representing its diverse members has never been more important.

Making Alaska the best place to do business is a full time job and your Alaska Chamber team works 24-7-365 to do just that. We care not who is in office. Business

is bigger than any one individual, yet vital to the health of all Alaskans. The Alaska Chamber has a long history of putting Alaskans first — no election changes that. With the election behind us, we remain focused on helping elected officials make policy decisions that enhance business opportunities.

Alaska's future depends on a healthy economy. A healthy economy requires a good business climate. As the price of oil drops, it is more critical than ever to ensure the policies, regulations, and processes are geared at growing Alaska's economy.

We've spent the last few years figuring out the best way to fund the services of the State of Alaska — schools, roads, Medicaid, and troopers, to name a few. A real challenge given that the State's budget — unlike mine or probably yours — has doubled in a decade.



OSBORNE



# Olgoonik/Fairweather to receive award for contribution to Chukchi Sea program

Olgoonik/Fairweather, LLC is being honored by the 2015 Arctic Technology Conference (ATC) with a Distinguished Achievement Award for its contribution to the Chukchi Sea Environmental Science Program (CSESP).

The award, shared by ConocoPhillips, Shell and Statoil, recognizes the co-design and safe operation of one of the largest multidisciplinary science programs in the world. Having just completed its seventh year, the CSESP is operated by Olgoonik/Fairweather and is supported by ConocoPhillips, Shell and Statoil.

The CSESP is focused on characterizing pre-exploration baseline information on the ecology of the northeastern Chukchi Sea. Despite numerous logistical and natural hazards, the program has operated with zero recordable injuries, accumulating over 395,000 man-exposure hours and 13,000 vessel miles.

The CSESP covers a 37,000 square-kilometer area of the northeastern Chukchi Sea. Disciplines of the program include: seabirds, marine mammals, plankton, physical oceanography, sediments, benthic studies, acoustic monitoring, chemical oceanography and fisheries.

To date, over 200 hundred presentations, documents and papers have been presented using data collected from the CSESP. The program features an unprecedented data sharing agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Signed by the three sponsoring companies, this agreement enables all CSESP environmental data to be shared freely with the public through the NOAA and the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) websites.

The ATC Distinguished Achievement Awards honor individuals and organizations for their important technological, humanitarian, environmental and leadership contributions to the Arctic industry.

The 2015 Arctic Technology Conference will be held on March 23-25, 2015 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

A joint venture with Olgoonik Oilfield Services, Olgoonik/Fairweather, LLC is a subsidiary of Olgoonik Corporation, the Alaska Native Corporation for the Village of Wainwright and Fairweather Science, a leading provider of scientific research, remote sensing and logistics services to the Arctic offshore oil and gas industry.

The company operates a number of scientific research vessels in the Arctic offering economy to its customers through cost sharing.

## *Chair: Continued from Page 2*

One of the Chamber's top priorities for 2015 is supporting the reduction in State spending to sustainable levels.

It was encouraging to see the Walker/Mallott Administration begin its Transition Conference with a panel presentation regarding Alaska's fiscal situation. As oil prices look to stabilize well below \$100 a barrel for the foreseeable future, necessitating lower unrestricted general fund spending, this position may be modified to conform to the fiscal realities of the day.

The primary drivers of the State's fiscal situation lie with formula-based programs, including Medicaid, education, and public and teacher retirement funds. Even with oil prices at the \$100 mark, these programs were on an unsustainable path.

Keeping fiscal realities in mind, expansion of Alaska's Medicaid program must be carefully crafted so as not to exacerbate the State's fiscal situation today or in the future.

Even though Alaska businesses have prioritized safety resulting in fewer cases of on-the-job accidents, Alaska's workers' compensation costs are still among the highest in the nation. Another of the Chamber's top priorities for 2015 is reforming Alaska's workers' compensation system to help Alaska businesses compete.

Sorting out how the State can live within its means and reforming Alaska's workers' compensation system while getting injured workers' back to work are key ingredients to improving Alaska's business climate.

So too are forward momentum of an Alaska gasline project, gaining access to our resources, and becoming the first State in the union to successfully regulate marijuana like alcohol.

The real work of governing begins now, and you can be part of the solution. Join the Alaska Chamber as we continue our work making Alaska the envy of the nation.

On Jan. 28 and 29, a group of 100 Alaska Chamber business leaders will be in Juneau for our annual Legislative Fly-In. During the Fly-In we will meet with new and re-elected policy makers, Legislative leadership, and members of the Walker/Mallott Administration to discuss our adopted positions and to let them know how decisions made in Juneau affect business statewide.



COURTESY PHOTO BY OLGOONIK/FAIRWEATHER

**Olgoonik/Fairweather, LLC is being honored** by the 2015 Arctic Technology Conference with a Distinguished Achievement Award for its contribution to the Chukchi Sea Environmental Science Program.


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Jenny Mahlen  
Vice President

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## We Believe in Alaska



# FNBA branch serving U-Med campus opens, highlighted by \$89,000 donation to universities

On February 18, long-standing Alaska Chamber member, First National Bank of Alaska (FNBA), cut the ceremonial ribbon and donated \$89,000 to five university programs at its new U-Med Branch in Anchorage, kicking off a month-long celebration of the opening of the first commercial bank located adjacent to the campuses of the University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University and Providence Alaska Medical Center.

“Medical business owners and employees, university faculty, staff and students in this U-Med district now have, right next door, convenient access to full-service banking and on-site financial experts,” said FNBA Executive Vice President Doug Longacre. “This convenience is backed by first-hand, local knowledge and experience of our friendly, Alaskan staff, headed by Branch Manager Kippy Mena.”

The two-story, 6,300-square foot branch at 3650 Piper Street begins to fill the gap in amenities on the U-Med campus by offering three drive-up lanes including a drive-up ATM, a night drop and a full function kiosk in the lobby for fast, secure online banking.

To further demonstrate its commitment to the future of Alaska, the bank’s Senior Vice President Cheri Gillian presented \$89,000 to university programs. The donations included \$45,000 to Alaska Pacific University and \$44,000 to the University of Alaska Anchorage.



**First National Bank Alaska cut the ribbon Feb. 18** at the first commercial bank located adjacent to the campuses of the University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University and Providence Alaska Medical Center. Pictured left to right: Board Member Margy Johnson, Senior Vice President John Hoyt, Branch Manager Kippy Mena, Executive Vice President Doug Longacre, Senior Vice President Cheri Gillian, Capital Projects Manager Karen Fink and Board Member Loren Lounsbury.

Each year First National sets aside about one-third of its annual \$1 million in donations for institutions of higher learning in our state. We believe there is no better investment in our state than in the education of students who are Alaska’s future community and business leaders,” Gillian

said. “Today’s donations are a portion of the bank’s gift to higher education in our state.”

Continuing the celebration of the new branch opening, the bank is holding an “enter to win” random drawing starting today and running through March 18, 2015. Visitors to the new branch may enter to

win one of several valuable prizes.

Visitors who open the bank’s new College Checking Account at any FNBA Branch in the state are also entered to win in a separate drawing for a coupon to their university or college bookstore.

Alaskan-owned and op-

erated since 1922, FNBA proudly meets the financial needs of Alaskans with ATMs and branches in 18 communities throughout the state. Visit [FNBAAlaska.com](http://FNBAAlaska.com) for more information about Alaska’s largest locally-owned bank and access to efficient and secure online banking services.

## Millennium Alaskan Hotel undergoes renovations

As part of brand-wide investments in its U.S. properties, Millennium Hotels and Resorts has announced an \$8.3 million renovation plan for Millennium Alaskan Hotel Anchorage.

Ideally situated for exploring Alaska, the hotel is perched on the scenic shores of Lake Spenard just ten minutes from downtown Anchorage. The upgrades encompass a total overhaul of the hotel’s 248 guest rooms along with the exterior.

As part of the changes, rooms will undergo a top-to-bottom transformation that evokes a high-end Alaskan lodge feel featuring natural earth tones and a warm color scheme. These refurbishments follow recent upgrades to the hotel’s public spaces including the lobby, meeting spaces, Fancy Moose Bar, Flying Machine Restaurant and the outdoor Deck at Lake Hood, which overlooks Lake Spenard, the world’s busiest floatplane lake.

This lakeside hotel – the only one in Anchorage – will unveil its upgrades by the spring, marking the completion of Millennium Alaskan Hotel Anchorage’s phased renovations.

Millennium & Copthorne Hotels plc (M&C), listed on the London Stock Exchange since

1996, is a dynamic, global hotel company, which owns, asset manages and/or operates a worldwide portfolio of over 100 hotels across seven distinct global brands – Grand Millennium, Millennium, Grand Copthorne, Copthorne, M Hotel, Studio M and Kingsgate – throughout Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East, and North America. Established in the United States in 2000, the North American arm of MHR includes a portfolio 14 hotels in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Anchorage, Boulder, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Durham, Minneapolis, Nashville and Scottsdale.





# Welcome New Members

## ALASKA CHADUX CORPORATION

Headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska Chadux Corporation (Chadux) is a not-for-profit oil spill response organization that provides resources to contain, control, and clean up petroleum spills. In addition to response equipment, Chadux offers incident management personnel, emergency response laborers, and wildlife hazing and capture personnel. Chadux also assists its members with providing planning and training services. Learn more at [www.chadux.com](http://www.chadux.com).

## ALLEN & PETERSEN COOKING AND APPLIANCE CENTER

Alaska's premier cooking solutions provider, Allen & Petersen Cooking and Appliance Center offer's cooking classes to inspire the chef in you. Their fine cooking tools will help you prepare the finest meals easily. In business since the 60's, their quality appliances provide the firepower needed to bring dinner to the table quicker and with better results. Learn more at [www.aphome.com](http://www.aphome.com).

## ALEUT CORPORATION

One of 13 Alaska Native Regional Corporations, the Aleut Corporation (TAC) is a for-profit corporation with approximately 3,410 Alaska Native shareholders. Headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska, TAC's businesses provide professional services and products in several key areas: government contracting; telecommunications; environmental remediation; real estate management; trust management; sales of sand, gravel, mineral, and rock aggregates; and investments in oil and gas producing properties and marketable securities. Learn more at [www.aleutcorp.com](http://www.aleutcorp.com).

## AMS COURIERS

Founded in 1964, AMS serves clients all over Alaska and across various industries, from telecommunications to engineering to medical. AMS also serves numerous out-of-state customers and has a dedicated team of STA certified couriers available for interstate shipping. AMS also offers warehousing and logistics management for all business models. Learn more at [www.amscouriers.com](http://www.amscouriers.com).

## BRADISON MANAGEMENT GROUP, LLC

Bradison Management Group (BMG) works with Alaskan-based businesses to establish long term sustainability and success. They offer each of their clients a customized approach to change management including: strategic planning, business growth and development, process engineering, project management and board facilitation. Learn more at [www.bmgak.com](http://www.bmgak.com).

## CHEVROLET OF SOUTH ANCHORAGE

Part of the Lithia Alaska's family of auto dealers, Chevrolet of South Anchorage provides customers with an honest and simple buying, and service experience. They give customers straightforward information so that they can make confident decisions. Learn more at [www.anchoragechevrolet.com](http://www.anchoragechevrolet.com).

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## NORTHERN INDUSTRIAL TRAINING, LLC

Northern Industrial Training, LLC's (NIT) is a vocational school that provides training for heavy equipment, truck driving, building trades, and oil and gas pipeline programs. Open to the public, NIT's mission is to be the company of choice in delivering effective and efficient training, safety and corporate services. NIT recognizes that a highly trained, critical thinking workforce is in demand and paramount to our economy and future. To meet this demand they have office locations in Alaska and North Dakota, and will travel on site to fulfill client's needs. Learn more at [www.nitalaska.com](http://www.nitalaska.com).

## PAC RIM COAL, LP/CHUITNA COAL PROJECT

The Chuitna Coal Project is being designed by PacRim Coal, LP, as a surface coal mine with contemporaneous reclamation to recover an estimated 300 million tons of sub-bituminous ultra low sulfur coal. It is located on the west side of Cook Inlet in the Chuit River Watershed in the Kenai Peninsula Borough of Alaska, approximately 12 miles northwest of the Native Village of Tyonek and 45 miles west of Anchorage. Permitting for the project began in 2006 and is currently in the advanced permitting phase. Learn more [www.chuitnacoalproject.com](http://www.chuitnacoalproject.com).

## PACIFIC STAR ENERGY

Pacific Star Energy is a private energy investment firm with partial ownership in the Alaska Venture Capital Group and Brooks Range Petroleum, an Alaska oil exploration firm.

## THREE MILE CREEK SERVICES, INC.

Three Mile Creek Services, Inc. provides gas field support, road maintenance, loading and unloading of barges at Grant's Landing 24-bed camp, plus two office/room buildings on camp property, grocery store with gas station. They also provide a wide variety of equipment and vehicles used for building and maintaining the various facilities in Beluga.



## ALASKA CHAMBER COMMUNITY OUTREACH TRIP

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### Trip highlights

A member-exclusive event, this year's trip boasts multiple networking events, a catamaran cruise to explore Ketchikan's maritime heritage, dinner in the homes hosted by local Ketchikanites and more!

### How to register

Our outreach trips always sell out early — seize your spot today. Register at [alaskachamber.com](http://alaskachamber.com).





# US releases ‘One Arctic’ theme as it readies for chair

By DJ Summers  
Alaska Journal of Commerce

The Arctic Council wants to make sure citizens and politicians start looking northward as trade routes, natural resource development and national security issues emerge.

The United States will enter into the chair position of the Arctic Council in April 2015, taking over for Canada, which held the position since 2013. The chair position is held for two years before being taken by another of the eight member countries.

The U.S. is a member thanks to Alaska, along with the Russian Federation, Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The politicians working on the council, many of whom are Alaskans, say

they plan to use the country’s position to bring more public, private, and political attention to an Arctic that’s rapidly becoming a focal point for everything from environmental concerns to international trade.

The council is an international study group of the eight countries that touch the Arctic Circle, founded by the Ottawa Declaration of 1996 to provide a means for its members to work on mutual Arctic-centric issues.

It makes no grants and builds no projects, focusing its efforts mostly on information gathering, sharing, and disseminating, both through collaborations among government bodies and working relationships with private advocacy groups, academic organizations, or any other organization who wants to contribute to Arctic study.

Alaska organizations like the Aleutians International Association partner with the council to work on projects involving climate change, ocean acidification, geophysical mapping, search and rescue, renewable energy studies, and social concerns like suicide prevention for rural Alaska communities.

The U.S. will serve as council chair under the administration of Secretary of State John Kerry, who will host a yearly summit of Arctic nations and maintain diplomacy but cede operations to the senior Arctic official, Julia Gourley.

Senior Arctic officials representing each member nation meet on regular basis to manage the council’s operations under an Arctic senior official chair held by the Arctic Council chair nation, in this case the U.S.

The U.S. Arctic senior official chair position has not been officially announced, but the name most frequently brought up as hopeful is David Balton. Balton has served since 2009 as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs within the U.S. Department of State.

Under the senior official body are several task forces, each concerned with marine oil pollution prevention, circumpolar business development, scientific cooperation, and black carbon and methane study.

Former Alaska Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer will inform Kerry as a special adviser on Arctic science and policy. The last time the U.S. chaired the council was from 1998-2000, at which time then-Lt. Gov. Ulmer served as the state representative to interact with the council. Ulmer, who cur-



PHOTO/CHARLES DHARAPAK/AP

**U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, right, shakes hands** with Michael Stickman, Chief International Chair of the Arctic Athabaskan Council, while meeting with Arctic Council Alaskan Indigenous Permanent Representatives in Kiruna, Sweden, on May 14, 2013, on the sidelines of the Arctic Council Ministerial Summit. Also pictured from left to right are: Inuit Circumpolar Council chair James Stotts; Aleut International Association interim executive director James Gambell; Special Assistant in the Office of the Alaskan Governor Stefanie Moreland; Deputy Assistant Secretary David Balton; U.S. Ambassador to Sweden Mark Brzezinski; and Alaska U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski.

rently serves as chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, said the U.S. has chosen a message of cooperation and stewardship as its mission statement.

“The U.S. has chosen for its broad theme for the chairmanship, ‘One Arctic, shared opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities,’” said Ulmer at an Arctic Council presentation at the Dena’ina Center on Feb. 11. “And under all three of those there’s a lot that we can talk about.”

Under the “One Arctic” mission statement, Ulmer says the U.S. has three focus points for the next two years: security and stewardship of the Arctic Ocean, climate change and improving the economic conditions of Arctic peoples.

Specific projects within that scope are being planned, Ulmer says, but the council process operates under a consensus rule, and any plans or proposals must have the ma-

jority support of Arctic nations before implementation.

The council will focus on getting the attention of citizens and lawmakers who otherwise might not have a reason to pay attention to the region.

“We’re trying to make brochures that tease out some info to get people interested,” Ulmer said. “We’re trying to explain to the Lower 48 and the rest of the world how important this place is and that we should treat it with respect. We need infrastructure that’s capable of responding. How do we get that? By getting those people and people in the U.S. congress to say ‘yes.’”

Craig Fleener has been appointed by Gov. Bill Walker as special Arctic advisor. Fleener echoes Fulmer’s call for greater attention to Arctic issues, especially for Alaskans.

“If it wasn’t for Alaska, the U.S. wouldn’t be an Arctic nation,” Fleener said. “We cannot treat this as a two-year slice of time. This will continue to be our home when Finland or Russian takes the chair.”

Fleener says that the state’s focus in its involvement with the Arctic Council will be on bolstering “community sustainability.” Emphasizing proper fish and game management and finding solutions for energy cost reduction, he says, are key to state survival, and developing regional and academic partnerships will be instrumental in furthering those goals.

Admiral Bob Papp was appointed in 2014 to serve as special representative to the Arctic. In this role, Papp serves as a kind of ambassador between Arctic nations beyond just the scope of the council.

DJ Summers can be reached at [daniel.summers@alaskajournal.com](mailto:daniel.summers@alaskajournal.com).

## Alaska Chamber Staff

### President/CEO

Rachael Petro  
[rpetro@alaskachamber.com](mailto:rpetro@alaskachamber.com)

### Deputy Director

Andy Rogers  
[arogers@alaskachamber.com](mailto:arogers@alaskachamber.com)

### Alaska Business Week

#### Program Director

Nicole Schuh  
[nschuh@alaskachamber.com](mailto:nschuh@alaskachamber.com)

### Communications & Events Director

Brandy Dixon  
[bdixon@alaskachamber.com](mailto:bdixon@alaskachamber.com)

### Membership Representative

Pete Nolan  
[pnolan@alaskachamber.com](mailto:pnolan@alaskachamber.com)

### Anchorage:

471 W 36th Ave, Suite 201  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
P. 907.278.2722  
F. 907.278.6643

### Juneau:

9301 Glacier Hwy, Suite 110  
Juneau, AK 99801  
P. 907.586.2323

### Email:

[info@alaskachamber.com](mailto:info@alaskachamber.com)  
[www.alaskachamber.com](http://www.alaskachamber.com)

Business to Business is a quarterly publication of the Alaska Chamber.

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