



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

P.O. Box 110800
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0800
Main: 907.465.2500
Programs fax: 907.465.5442

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By Commissioner Susan Bell

Strengthening and diversifying Alaska's economy is a priority of the Parnell administration — especially in Interior Alaska. State development efforts in mining, manufacturing and other industries are creating jobs and attracting investment, and major investments in transportation and energy projects are creating opportunities for Interior Alaskans.

Thanks to the Alaska Industrial Development Authority's (AIDEA) lead role on Gov. Parnell's Interior Energy Project, lower energy costs are in sight. Working closely with the Alaska Energy Authority and local utilities to develop North Slope gas, AIDEA's efforts will significantly increase access to lower cost natural gas in the near future. Expansion of the Fairbanks distribution system and construction of the North Slope pad are significant and visible project milestones. In addition to energy, the AIDEA board's approval of up to \$60 million in conduit bonds for the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital expansion will generate 150 construction jobs for three years. This investment further supports Fairbanks' role as a regional hub. The Alaska Gasline Development Corporation and many other state officials are working hard to make the long-held dream of constructing an Alaska gasline a reality, and the distribution system will be crucial when the pipeline is complete.

Increased transportation infrastructure is necessary to support the Interior's natural resource and military economy and maintain the Interior's strategic importance. The Alaska Railroad recently celebrated completion of the first phase of the Northern Rail Extension near Eielson Air Force Base. In the near term, the \$180 million project provides efficient access to military training grounds. We are increasing access to minerals and resources for Alaskans now and into the future.

This summer, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities also began extending the road to Tanana, reducing the cost of goods, increasing access to mineral resources, and enhancing connections with Interior neighbors. Importantly, it is the first new road connecting a rural community to the state highway system in two decades.

In support of the minerals sector, Division of Economic Development (DED) staff partnered with Doyon, International Tower Hill, and other junior mining companies to showcase Alaska at major mining conferences in Toronto and Vancouver. In support of UAF's Alaska Center for Unmanned Aircraft System Integration and the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB), state development staff is working to promote Alaska's unique advantages to the unmanned aerial systems industry and assist Fairbanks in its efforts to develop this industry. DED and FNSB recently hosted a site selection visit by a global leader in aviation, mining and healthcare training.

Commerce staff recently provided workshops in Fairbanks and Anchorage for Alaska businesses seeking to grow in the oil and gas support industry. Presentations included information about state financing, workforce development, tax incentives and other business development tools.

Other initiatives to grow Alaska manufacturing include the Made in Alaska Home project, which showcased Alaska's growing building industry in the Anchorage Parade of Homes and in spring home shows. Our Alaska-made Building Products Directory is a great resource if you are looking at remodeling or building a home, and highlights many Fairbanks businesses who manufacture everything from energy star rated windows to recycled countertops.

I am proud of the work DCCED and our corporate agencies are doing in the Interior and excited about the future of the region. AIDEA will be opening a downtown Fairbanks office in the coming weeks for staff and contractors working on the Interior Energy Project and the Ambler Mining District Road. We invite you to stop by and share in our enthusiasm about Fairbanks and the many opportunities ahead.