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“Ties That Bind” Puget Sound To Alaska Stronger Than Ever

By: Terri Hiroshima Posted: 02/06/2015

New report finds business with Alaska accounts for 113,000 jobs in our region and generates \$6.2 billion in wages



The Seattle Metro Chamber today released a new study that finds Alaska’s economic impact on the Puget Sound region continues to grow. *Ties that Bind: The Enduring Economic Impact of Alaska on the Puget Sound Region*, with research conducted by the McDowell Group, found that Alaska accounted for approximately 113,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs in the six-county region in 2013, and that these jobs generated \$6.2 billion in wages.

The **report** includes findings from King, Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap, Whatcom and Skagit Counties. The increase of Alaska’s impact is visible in a number of sectors, including:

- **Freight/cargo:** Interstate trade with Alaska accounted for over 80 percent of domestic containerized shipments through the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma, and 20 percent of total containerized shipments—roughly 10 percent of all marine cargo-related economic activity in Puget Sound
- **Seafood:** Just under 24,000 Puget Sound jobs and \$1.3 billion in wages are tied to Alaska’s seafood industry
- **Passenger transportation and tourism:** Nearly half the Alaska cruise market comes through Seattle, resulting in 434,600 people embarking and/or disembarking in the city
- **Maritime Support:** Roughly 25 percent of all maritime industrial support services in our area are connected to Alaska-related business, which equates to 5,300 jobs and \$390 million in wages.
- **Refining:** Alaska supplies nearly half of all crude oil refined in the Puget Sound region.
- **Health Care:** The Seattle metro area is home to several specialized medical centers that provide life-saving care for many Alaskans. The economic impact of Alaskan patients using Puget Sound medical facilities is 1,200 jobs and \$87 million
- **Education:** Washington is the top state, outside of Alaska, for postsecondary enrollment among Alaska residents, who attend over 30 postsecondary institutions in the six-county Puget Sound area

“This report confirms that Seattle receives significant economic benefit from its ties to the state of Alaska,” said Joe Sprague, senior vice president of communications and external relations for Alaska Airlines. “This includes serving as a vital access point to Alaska, with over 1 million air passengers traveling between Alaska communities and Sea-Tac Airport annually. Alaska Airlines is proud to provide reliable, top-notch service that carried nearly two-thirds of all passengers flying out of Alaska last year.”

“Puget Sound and Alaska benefit from a dynamic and diverse economic relationship that serves residents here and in Alaska,” said Maud Daudon, president and CEO of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. “Our shared connection is a win-win: Puget Sound businesses provide more than \$5.3 billion in essential goods and services to Alaskans.”

“Ties that Bind” is the fourth commissioned report to measure the economic impacts of Alaska on the Puget Sound region. The first report was issued in 1985 with updates in 1994 and 2003. This 2015 report is commissioned by the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce for the Alaska Business Forum, and is made possible through the generous support of its presenting sponsor, Alaska Airlines, as well as Lynden Transport, Port of Seattle, Port of Tacoma, Shell Oil Company, Totem Ocean Trailer Express (TOTE), and the At-Sea Processors Association. Other *Ties That Bind* supporters include the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and the Alaska Chamber of Commerce.

“The transport of goods and supplies throughout Alaska is an important part of our economy. Nearly everything you can buy in Alaska is shipped through Puget Sound, and these businesses in both states rely upon us to deliver. It’s a great relationship we want to see strong and growing.” – *Don Johnson, Tacoma Port Commission President*

“Washington and Alaska have been closely linked business partners for more than two centuries. Though challenges are present, the potential for future growth is stronger than ever. This report provides insight and information allowing us to more properly prepare and align ourselves for future opportunities. We find the report invaluable as we look to the future, plan our strategies and make large capital investments. We have been serving

Alaskans since 1954 and we look forward to doing so well into the future. As a freight carrier servicing the Alaska market, our business is trade between Washington and Alaska.” – *Eric Wilson, Lynden Transport, Inc.*

“The heritage between Washington and Alaska is rich and growing. When Alaska’s economy does well, so does Washington’s economy. Future opportunities are enormous but are challenged by poor policies. By working together, we can strengthen our economies for future generations.” – *Rachael Petro, President and CEO, Alaska State Chamber of Commerce*

The study measures economic impacts from the calendar year 2013 and incorporates findings from a voluntary survey of organizations that conduct business in Alaska, executive interviews, and secondary data from several state and federal agencies. The *Ties That Bind* report can be found [here](#).

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