



**NEWS**

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**ALASKA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION**

Senator Ted Stevens  
Senator Frank Murkowski  
Congressman Don Young

For Immediate Release: Contact: Chuck Kleeschulte or Connie Godwin  
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**ALASKA SENATORS WELCOME OPENING OF ALASKA  
APPRENTICE TRAINING PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON -- Alaska Sens. Ted Stevens and Frank Murkowski today welcomed a decision by the Seafarers International Union to open an unlicensed apprentice training program/Alaska office targeted at providing employment opportunities for Alaskans.

The union, which provides personnel for U.S.-flag cargo freighters and tankers that serve in the Jones Act trades, which include Alaska ports, has announced that it will open a new union hall in Anchorage in early March -- partially to service its existing fish and cannery workers in Alaska -- and also will open a program to recruit young Alaskans as future merchant mariners.

Under the program the union is proposing to recruit Alaskans, ages 18-25, to the joint union-management maritime school where they will spend three months in training at Piney Point, Md., followed by three months of on-the-job apprenticeship aboard one of the contracted vessels serving Alaska. Recruits will then return to Piney Point for final course work leading to Coast Guard certification as merchant mariners. The union is then committed to finding the workers jobs aboard company contract merchant vessels worldwide.

"This program fills a void and offers young Alaskans the prospect of serving aboard U.S. Flag-Jones Act vessels when their training is complete. The schooling they'll receive in technical skills and academic subjects will be tough, but it will open doors to help them enter and continue careers in our merchant marine," Senator Stevens said. "It's great that the Seafarers' Union is providing this opportunity for our young men and women."