

**MARINE TRANSPORTATION
ADVISORY BOARD PRESENTATION
TO THE JOINT SESSION OF THE
HOUSE AND
SENATE TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEES**

FEBRUARY 18, 2010



Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to present today. My name is Mike Korsmo and I am the Chair for the Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB). Our board appreciates the opportunity to stand before you today and give an overview of its efforts. MTAB was established in 2003 by Administrative Order and put into Alaska State Statute in 2008 under AS 01.10.070(c). Our board has been focused on meeting the many challenges of our unique marine transportation system. With AMHS staff we have worked to identify tools in order to improve scheduling, system efficiency and mobility in Southeast, Prince William Sound, and Southwest Alaska.

It is proven that dependable and sustainable transportation systems are vital to economic growth and stability in rural Alaska. We strongly support the mission of the Alaska Marine Highway System to provide safe, reliable, and cost effective marine transportation throughout the coast regions of our state. The economic, cultural, educational and health benefits to our communities served by AMHS are extremely important to our quality of life. MTAB worked closely with AMHS staff in to establish long range scheduling and the past two years have proven that this approach is working as the anticipated increase in ridership by Alaska users became a reality.

The first section of the MTAB statute establishes that DOT&PF, shall in consultation with MTAB, prepare a long range plan for the development and improvement of the Alaska Marine Highway System. Each region encompassing AMHS routes has its own long range plan for transportation and so we have been attempting to work with DOT&PF planners on these regional plans. Currently the Southeast Transportation Plan (SATP) is up for its 5-year review. Correspondence with the commissioner and DOT&PF planners have been ongoing; however, to this date an established day to sit down and work with DOT&PF on a draft SATP has not been determined. As per statute (and our understanding of legislative intent), we expect to be part of DOT's work effort concerning the goals of marine transportation regional plans, prior to the final drafts being sent out to the public.

Under statute the board may issue reports and recommendations in consultation with DOT&PF and submit to the department and the governor a strategic plan which includes the mission, core values, objectives, initiatives, and performance goals of the Alaska Marine Highway System. Strong and consistent public input from multiple teleconferences from organizations such as Southeast Conference, the Southwest Municipal Conference, the Alaska Municipal League as well as several Native organizations have helped give our board a clear direction

to follow. From this input and MTAB meetings the past three years we have established short term and long term goals. These recommendations have been presented to Commissioner von Scheben and Governor Parnell.

SHORT TERM GOALS

1) Operating the M/V *Kennicott* on full schedule May through September. The current schedule has the M/V *Kennicott* operating Cross Gulf 2-weeks-on-2-weeks-off in the summer. This only allows for one trip a month out the Aleutian Chain by the M/V *Tustumena*. There has been a public outcry from the seven Aleutian Island communities that the current schedule does not come close to serving their needs (see attached letters). Additional service to the Chain has been a top priority for MTAB for the past 3 years. Following are the costs associated with this recommendation both for FY 2011 and what would be a FY2010 Supplemental. The administration has committed to an additional spring run for the *Kennicott* and the following costs do not take that run into account.

FY 10 MTAB Requested Supplemental for Kennicott Service

\$1,385,000-Total Supplemental Authority

\$800,000-General Fund

\$585,000-Alaska Marine Highway Fund

FY 11 MTAB Requested Service Enhancements to Governor Budget

\$2,122,500-TOTAL Additional Authority

\$1,600,000-Marine Highway Fund

\$522,500-General Fund

2) Additional funding allowing the fast vehicle ferry (FVF) *Fairweather* to operate on a full seven day a week schedule during the spring (May/June) of 2010.

Unforeseen mechanical issues with the *Fairweather* have caused funding shortfalls to allow for this much-needed service. This service was established with a commitment to long-range scheduling 3 years ago and is very important to the Northern Panhandle (including Sitka and outlying villages). There is a major concern about the engines problems on both the *Fairweather* and the FVF *Chenega*. At its December meeting the Board voted to request that the legislature and commissioner of the Department of Transportation consider a vehicle for the state to order replacement engines for the *Fairweather* and the *Chenega*. The engine problems are being worked on by AMHS, the Administration and the Department of Law. The fast ferries are an integral part of the current and future operations of AMHS. The public, especially in Prince William Sound and the Northern Panhandle, has a unique and strong appreciation for these vessels and their ability to transport cars and people over a long

distance in a short period of time. It looks like costs associated with operating the *Fairweather* in 2010 for May/June are being resolved by AMHS and the Administration.

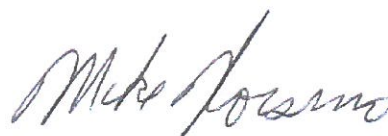
3) MTAB has requested that an additional \$60M be added to the AMHS Vessel Replacement Fund. AMHS has embarked on a much-needed vessel replacement project (Alaska Class Ferry Project) that has very strong public support. The project is critical to insure long range operations of AMHS and to fulfill the mission of AMHS itself. This process can be easily followed by looking it up on the Alaska Class Ferry information on the AMHS website. The vessel replacement fund currently has \$60 million in it - thanks to your efforts, and it is extremely important that we continue to put additional money into this fund as we replace our aging marine highway fleet. The administration has taken steps through the STIP process to insure that adequate funding will be available to begin the process of building new vessels.

LONG TERM GOALS

- 1) Forward funding of AMHS operations to allow for continued schedule consistency and successful marketing strategy.
- 2) A long term strategy to mitigate high fuel prices that negatively affect the system's ability to provide reliable service.
- 3) Maintenance and operational costs continue to increase system wide, and need addressed in order to meet the mission of AMHS, now and in the future.
- 4) The vessel replacement fund should be funded at a level that allows for DOT&PF to move forward with the design and construction of new, fuel efficient vessels. As an added value these vessels should be designed to require less crew to operate which could bring future labor costs down.

In closing, Marine Transportation Advisory Board members acknowledge the complexities of providing a safe, reliable and efficient marine transportation system and we cannot expect to be able to satisfy each coastal community's wants and needs. We thank you for your leadership and guidance, and believe that with your continued direction and the expertise of the AMHS management, MTAB can continue to help guide improvements that will benefit Alaskans.

Thank you again, on behalf of the Marine Transportation Advisory Board,
for this opportunity to be here today.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Korsmo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Korsmo, Chair

FY11 MTAB REQUESTED SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY
FY 2011 MTAB Requested Service Enhancements to Governor Budget

<u>Description</u>	<u>FY 11 Gov Budget</u>	<u>Serv Adj Kenilcott</u>	<u>Roll Forward FY 11 Gov Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Fleet Status -Weeks				
Revenue Service	402.0	9.1	411.1	
Overhauls	68.0	-	68.0	
Capital Projects	52.0	-	52.0	Taku & LeConte have 2011 C/P's
Lay Ups	52.0	(9.1)	42.9	Columbia 29 wks, Frw 9 wks, Kenn 14 wks
Total All	574.0	-	574.0	
Marine Vessel Operations				
Personel Services	\$ 83,891.1	\$ 1,481.1	\$ 85,372.2	
Travel	1,921.1	(34.6)	1,886.5	
Services	13,050.2	44.6	13,094.8	
Fuel- Budget rate (\$.95/gall)	10,266.3	431.2	10,697.5	
Commodities	7,071.1	200.2	7,271.3	
Subtotal Marine Operations	\$ 116,199.8	\$ 2,122.5	\$ 118,322.3	
Shoreside Costs				
Marine Shore Operations	\$ 7,300.9	\$ -	\$ 7,300.9	
Vessel Ops Management	3,856.7	-	3,856.7	
Reservations & Marketing	3,138.3	-	3,138.3	
Marine Engineering	3,115.2	-	3,115.2	
Overhaul	1,698.4	-	1,698.4	
Subtotal	\$ 19,109.5	\$ -	\$ 19,109.5	
Subtotal AMHS	\$ 135,309.3	\$ 2,122.5	\$ 137,431.8	
Operations Financing				
Marine Highway Fund	\$ 52,010.8	\$ 1,600.0	\$ 53,610.8	Adj = revenues earned on add service
Veh Rent Tax	700.0	-	700.0	
Gen Fund Allocation-AMHS	80,954.9	522.5	81,477.4	
Restricted Funds	1,643.6	-	1,643.6	
Total Funding	\$ 135,309.3	\$ 2,122.5	\$ 137,431.8	
Ending Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

SCS CSSH294(FIN)

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR SS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 294(FIN) am S

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Amended: 4/12/08

Offered: 4/11/08

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES WILSON, LEDOUX AND SEATON, Buch, Thomas, Edgmon, Doll, Kerttula, Hawker

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act establishing the Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board and setting out**
2 **its powers and duties; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective**
3 **date."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 * **Section 1.** AS 19.65.011 is amended to read:

6 **Sec. 19.65.011. Comprehensive long-range plan.** The Department of
7 Transportation and Public Facilities, in consultation with the Alaska Marine
8 Transportation Advisory Board, shall prepare a comprehensive long-range plan for
9 the development and improvement of the Alaska marine highway system and shall, in
10 consultation with the Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board, revise and
11 update the plan at least every five years. The department shall submit the
12 comprehensive long-range plan and revisions and updates of the plan to the
13 legislature.

14 * **Sec. 2.** AS 19.65 is amended by adding new sections to read:

Article 3. Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board.

Sec. 19.65.110. Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board. There is established in the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities the Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board.

Sec. 19.65.120. Board composition. (a) The board consists of 11 members appointed by the governor. Each member must be a resident of the state. The board shall be composed of the following members:

(1) one member who has a significant level of experience in the private sector or local government, specializing in financing or economic development or marketing, from each of the following districts:

(A) northern southeast Alaska, representing Haines, Juneau, and Skagway;

(B) central southeast Alaska, representing Petersburg, Sitka, and Wrangell;

(C) southeast Alaska, representing the cities of Angoon, Hoonah, Kake, Pelican, and Tenakee Springs;

(D) the Prince William Sound and Kenai Peninsula areas, representing the cities of Cordova, Valdez, and Whittier, the City and Borough of Yakutat, and the communities of Chenega Bay and Tatitlek; and

(E) southwest Alaska, representing the cities of Akutan, Chignik, Cold Bay, False Pass, Homer, King Cove, Kodiak, Port Lions, Sand Point, Seldovia, and Unalaska, including Dutch Harbor;

(2) one retired marine captain or marine engineer who is not affiliated with the Alaska marine highway system;

(3) one representative, who may be retired, of a recognized union that represents employees of the Alaska marine highway system;

(4) one business owner who has experience interacting with the Alaska marine highway system;

(5) one travel agent or tourism specialist familiar with various Alaska marine highway reservation systems available to the public; and

(6) two members of the public at large.

1 (b) For members being appointed under (a)(2) - (6) of this section, there shall
 2 be at least one resident of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and at least two members
 3 who are residents of areas not directly served by the Alaska marine highway system.

4 (c) The members of the board shall serve staggered three-year terms. If a
 5 vacancy arises on the board, the governor shall, within 30 days after the vacancy
 6 arises, appoint a person to serve the balance of the unexpired term. A person appointed
 7 to fill the balance of an unexpired term shall serve on the board from the date of
 8 appointment until the expiration of the term.

9 (d) Board members serve at the pleasure of the governor. In addition, a
 10 majority of the membership of the board may remove a member if that member misses
 11 more than two meetings in a calendar year and has not been previously excused.

12 **Sec. 19.65.130. Officers and quorum.** The members of the board shall select
 13 a chair and a vice-chair from among the members of the board each year. The vice-
 14 chair presides over meetings in the absence of the chair. A majority of the members of
 15 the board constitutes a quorum. A vacancy in the board does not impair the right of a
 16 quorum to exercise all the powers and perform all the duties of the board.

17 **Sec. 19.65.140. Meetings.** The board shall meet at least four times each year.
 18 Meetings may be called by the chair or by a majority of the members of the board. At
 19 least one meeting each year must be attended by the board members in person, but all
 20 other meetings may be conducted by teleconference. All meetings are open to the
 21 public unless an executive session is called based on the criteria in AS 44.62.310(b).

22 **Sec. 19.65.150. Per diem and expenses.** Members of the board do not receive
 23 a salary, but are entitled to per diem and travel expenses authorized for boards and
 24 commissions under AS 39.20.180.

25 **Sec. 19.65.160. Records.** Records of the board are subject to inspection and
 26 copying under AS 40.25.110.

27 **Sec. 19.65.170. Legal assistance.** The Department of Law shall provide all
 28 legal services for the board.

29 **Sec. 19.65.180. Powers, duties, and functions.** (a) After the commissioner of
 30 transportation and public facilities has considered one or more candidates for the
 31 position of director or deputy commissioner of the Alaska marine highway system, the

1 commissioner shall confer with the board regarding that candidate or those candidates
 2 before making an appointment to that position. The selection of those candidates shall
 3 be without regard to political affiliation.

4 (b) The board may establish volunteer regional advisory committees. The
 5 purpose of the advisory committees is to provide recommendations to the board
 6 regarding concerns from the region whose members constitute the advisory
 7 committee.

8 (c) The board may issue reports and recommendations and shall, in
 9 cooperation with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, prepare and
 10 submit to the department and the governor for review a strategic plan that includes the
 11 mission, core values, objectives, initiatives, and performance goals of the Alaska
 12 marine highway system.

13 (d) The board may receive information from the department as the board
 14 considers necessary to carry out its duties.

15 **Sec. 19.65.190. Staff.** The department shall provide staff for the board.

16 **Sec. 19.65.195. Definition.** In AS 19.65.100 - 19.65.195, "board" means the
 17 Alaska Marine Transportation Advisory Board.

18 * **Sec. 3.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
 19 read:

20 INITIAL APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE ALASKA MARINE
 21 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD. (a) Notwithstanding AS 19.65.120(c), added by
 22 sec. 2 of this Act, and AS 39.05.055, the initially appointed members of the Alaska Marine
 23 Transportation Advisory Board shall be appointed by the governor to terms as follows:

24 (1) three members shall serve one-year terms;

25 (2) four members shall serve two-year terms; and

26 (3) four members shall serve three-year terms.

27 (b) The governor may designate a member of the Marine Transportation Advisory
 28 Board, created by Administrative Order No. 233, who is serving as an advisory board member
 29 on the day before the effective date of this Act, as a member of the initial Alaska Marine
 30 Transportation Advisory Board under (a) of this section, if the member meets the
 31 requirements set by AS 19.65.120, added by sec. 2 of this Act. Nothing in this subsection

- 1 prevents the governor from appointing members to the board that do not serve on the Marine
- 2 Transportation Advisory Board as authorized by this subsection.
- 3 * **Sec. 4.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

USCG AMHS CASES/VESSEL RESCUES

2004-2009

USCG AMHS CASES/VESSEL RESCUES

2004-2009

299473 - TAKU: On 08JUL06 the P/C STELLA reported that they were taking on water in the vicinity of Gull Island. All 3 POB abandoned ship; M/V TAKU diverted to assist and was the first asset on scene, recovering all three POB from the life raft.

305663 - AURORA: On 03AUG06 while transiting in the vicinity of Cochran Bay, AURORA received a report of missing kayakers and diverted to assist. Search was conducted with negative results.

344513 - LECONTE - 10APR07 LECONTE reported the vessel IRISH SPRING aground in

North Lynn Canal near Eldred Rock. LECONTE reported the vessel hard aground and sent one of their deckhand's on board the vessel. The deckhand reported that there was a gentleman on board who is injured and the vessel had approx 200 gallons of gas on board the vessel. The La Conte crewman closed the fuel valve.

349045 - COLUMBIA: On 14MAY07 the EMPRESS OF THE NORTH ran aground on Rocky

Island. Columbia immediately diverted to assist and took on passengers from other assets in the area. In total 206 passengers and 46 crew were transported onboard COLUMBIA.

352302 - KENNICOTT: On 31MAY07 while in the vicinity of Granite Island

KENNICOTT conducted search for vessel for a disabled S/V that had lost communications. Search was conducted with negative results.

418180 - LECONTE: On 04AUG08 LECONTE overheard a Mayday call and LECONTE conducted search while continuing its transit for any signs of distress. No sings of distress noted.

418180 - FAIRWEATHER: On 04AUG08: Mayday call overheard on CH 16, the FAIRWEATHER conducted search while continuing its transit for any signs of distress. No sings of distress noted.

432250 - LECONTE: On 08NOV08, Sector Juneau command Center received a MAYDAY call from the S/V BEREAN, who ran aground in Hawk Inlet and was requesting assistance. Station Juneau MLB was launched by SCC. The M/V LECONTE was in the vicinity and diverted to assist. The situation resolved itself prior to LECONTE arrival onscene.

462247 - TAKU: On 12JUL09, M/V TAKU reported a single red meteor flare that was sighted on the west side of Woronokofski Island, Stikine Strait. The TAKU transited and searched south along the shoreline of Woronokofski Island with their spotlight and came upon the P/C KALEY J, a 20' vessel anchored in a small cove. The TAKU spotlighted the vessel and the KALEY J contacted the TAKU via radio whom stated that they inadvertently fired off a single red flare, and was in no distress.

478215 - TAKU: On 13OCT09 F/V Alaska Pride at position just south of Funter Bay with a report of an engine room fire. F/V Alaska Pride is a 55ft FRP

Commercial fishing VSL. 02 POB evacuated the F/V into the life raft. The M/V TAKU safety recovered the POB from the water.

AMHS PRESS RELEASES

State of Alaska Department of
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 25, 2007

No. 07-2534

AMHS ferry Malaspina crew transports ailing infant

(JUNEAU, Alaska) — The crew aboard the 408-foot Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry Malaspina diverted course Monday morning and returned here after an infant passenger aboard the ship suffered medical complications.

"Malaspina was transiting north from Juneau to Haines, but returned to Juneau to transfer the child to awaiting medical personnel in Auke Bay at the AMHS ferry terminal," said Capt. John Falvey, AMHS' General Manager.

Malaspina crewmembers and a nurse passenger rendered medical assistance to the child while at sea. A Capital City Fire/Rescue ambulance crew took the patient to Bartlett Regional Hospital for treatment after the Malaspina's arrival at 12:15 p.m.

Malaspina continued on its scheduled route to Haines and Skagway following the transfer. The crew adjusted port times in both cities to return the ship to its on-time schedule.

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For more information contact DOT&PF Chief Communications Officer Roger Wetherell at 465-8994.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

07-123

State Ferry Helps Rescue Tourists from Sinking Cruise Ship

May 14, 2007, Juneau, Alaska – Just after midnight this morning, the Empress of the North, a 360-foot sternwheeler cruise ship ran aground at Hanus Reef in Icy Straits about 50 nautical miles west of Juneau. The ship, which holds fewer than 300 passengers, immediately called for help.

The State Emergency Coordination Center immediately began working with the United States Coast Guard to facilitate a smooth and efficient rescue. Local fishing boats, a Coast Guard cutter, and the state ferry Columbia moved passengers to dry land at the capital city of Juneau.

"I'm very proud of our residents who, on their own accord, moved into action to help those in need at a critical time," said Governor Sarah Palin. "Alaskans did a fantastic and professional job making this rescue happen swiftly, and I am very happy to know all of our visitors are safe and secure this morning."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 14, 2007

No. 07-2512

M/V Columbia Responds to Stricken Vessel
Delivers 252 Empress of the North Travelers to Safety

(Juneau) — The M/V Columbia on Monday came to the aid of a cruise ship that has apparently run aground in Icy Strait overnight, bringing rescued passengers and crewmembers from the Empress of the North to Juneau. The Columbia transported 252 passengers and crewmembers from the Empress of the North to Juneau where they were assisted further by a Unified Command team established in Juneau.

Columbia Master Phil Taylor said he was informed of the stricken vessel by AMHS crews on the bridge that were monitoring radio traffic at about 3:30 a.m.. The Columbia was at about Point Hilda and traveling toward Auke Bay with 234 passengers when Taylor ordered the Columbia to proceed to the location of the stricken vessel. The Columbia then contacted the Coast Guard and asked if their assistance was needed. They were informed that they would be needed.

Responding as a "good Samaritan" vessel, the Columbia arrived on station at about 5:45 a.m. and began taking Empress of the North passengers on board. The Coast Guard Cutter Liberty came alongside the Columbia and transferred passengers through a makeshift gangplank between the two vessels. Other vessels also transferred their rescued personnel to the Liberty to be put aboard the Columbia, Taylor said.

The Columbia crew gave the rescued parties blankets, hot drinks and food and made them as comfortable as possible, Taylor said. The Empress of the North made it back to Juneau and tied up at the Auke Bay terminal. The Columbia arrived back in Juneau at 11 a.m. and has resumed its regularly scheduled run to Haines and Skagway. The Columbia is expected to be back on schedule when it leaves Auke Bay Tuesday morning.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 10, 2007

No. 07-2510

LeConte Assists in Mariner Rescue

(Juneau) – The M/V LeConte came to the assistance of a mariner who has run aground in Upper Lynn Canal on Tuesday, according to Capt. Ron Bressette, master of the LeConte.

This is from Capt. Bressette:

The LeConte was traveling north in Upper Lynn Canal when a Mate on watch noticed a boat on the beach at about 10 a.m. at the base of an avalanche chute. Bressette made the decision to launch a fast rescue boat to investigate the boat after determining the boat was not likely abandoned and that no one responded to a whistle from the LeConte.

Responding crew members found a man on board the boat who said he had fallen and was unable to get up. He told the crew members that he had run aground early that morning. The man was in need of medical attention and it was discovered that one of the passengers on the LeConte was a doctor who agreed to go over on the fast rescue boat and examine the man further.

The LeConte had notified the Coast Guard of the grounding and a helicopter and small boat responded. The Coast Guard determined the man should be hoisted into the helicopter to be taken for further medical treatment.

The LeConte was on scene for about two hours during the rescue.

Pictures from the scene show what appears to be a 34-foot pleasure craft on the beach.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 8, 2006

No. 06-2517

M/V Malaspina Aids Stranded Fishing Vessel

(Juneau) — Four stranded fishermen were aided by the M/V Malaspina Sunday night after their fishing vessel ran aground southwest of Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

The M/V Malaspina responded to a mayday call from the F/V Alaska Queen at about 10:10 p.m. Sunday. The F/V Alaska Queen was stranded on the north east side of Pitt Island, southwest of Prince Rupert. The M/V Malaspina deviated from its course, and was the first ship on the scene.

The Malaspina launched a fast rescue boat and stood by the four stranded fishermen for approximately 45 minutes, until the Canadian Coast Guard arrived on scene, and released the Malaspina.

At the time of the mayday response, the Malaspina was south bound from Ketchikan bound for Bellingham, Wash.

"Alaska Marine Highway System crews are highly trained to respond to these types of situations and we are very proud of the actions of the Malaspina crew in coming to the aid of this vessel in distress," said AMHS General Manager Capt. John Falvey. "Safety of life at sea is our highest priority and their actions demonstrated just that."

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For more information contact Capt. Falvey at (907) 228-7250.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 4, 2006

No. 06-2528

M/V Aurora Rescued Kayakers in Sound

(Juneau) — A group of kayakers were rescued by the M/V Aurora in Prince William Sound after they issued a call for help due to weather and rough seas.

The Aurora was enroute to Valdez from Whittier at about 3:30 p.m. on Thursday when it overheard radio transmission from a group of kayakers requesting help from the Coast Guard. Aurora Capt. Bob Rugur diverted to Cochran Bay, where the group was thought to be, and established radio contact with the kayakers.

Rugur said the kayakers were in the middle of Cochran Bay more than a mile from the closest land and reporting that they could not get to shore. Because of poor visibility, the kayakers guided the Aurora to their position via hand-held radio. In seas of up to five feet, the Aurora retrieved four kayaks and five people while another boat, the Safeguard II, retrieved another four people and two kayaks.

It was determined that the rescued kayakers were part of a 15-person party and so a search began involving a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter, the Aurora and two other good Samaritan boats. The remaining kayakers were spotted by the Coast Guard helicopter on a beach east of Point Cochran. No kayakers were injured in the incident.

The five kayakers rescued by the Aurora were accommodated onboard for the night and will return to Whittier on Friday, according to the Alaska Marine Highway System.

"With poor visibility and winds between 30 and 45 knots, our crew was able to maneuver the Aurora in such a way to provide a lee side so the rescue craft could be used to lift the kayakers aboard," said AMHS General Manager Capt. John Falvey. "It was an excellent piece of seamanship to get to the kayakers and a strong team effort to get them onboard."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 7, 2004

M/V Kennicott's Chief Steward Recognized for Passenger Emergency Response

(Juneau)—Alaska Marine Highway General Manager John Falvey recognized the chief steward aboard the M/V Kennicott for a job well done in responding to a passenger emergency while underway on June 27. Chief Steward Teresa Gilbert performed the Heimlich maneuver on a passenger who began choking while eating dinner in the ship's conference room. After successfully expelling the obstruction, it was determined that a French fry had become lodged in the passenger's airway and had cut off their ability to breathe. Following the ordeal, the passenger retired to a stateroom to rest.

"Ms. Gilbert's fast response may have very well saved the life of one of our passengers," said Captain Falvey. "We are also thankful to the Kennicott's Chief Purser Lynn Olson and Junior Assistant Purser Dennis Hansen who were also on the scene to administer oxygen should it have been required."

The marine highway presented Gilbert with a plaque on July 3 as thanks for her quick response to the passenger's life threatening situation.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 8, 2006

No. 06-2525

M/V Taku Rescues Fishing Crew

(Juneau) — The M/V Taku rescued the crew of a fishing tender after it had run aground on Gull Island in Lynn Canal early Saturday morning, according to the Alaska Marine Highway System.

The Taku received a "mayday" call from the fishing tender Stella at about 3:57 a.m. stating the ship was taking on water and the crew was preparing to abandon ship. The Taku was approximately 25 minutes away and responded to the U.S. Coast Guard call for assistance along with the tug Western Mariner.

The Taku arrived on scene and launched a lifeboat, which recovered three crewmembers that had been floating in a liferaft. The crewmembers were brought aboard the Taku and given coffee, breakfast and a stateroom. They had no injuries, according to the Coast Guard.

The lifeboat was secured and the Taku left for Auke Bay just after 5 a.m..

"Our AMHS crews practice this drill on a weekly basis for just this sort of emergency and from the report we've gotten the crew of the Taku was well prepared to assist a distressed ship," said Capt. John Falvey, AMHS General Manager. "We're proud of their actions."

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For more information, contact DOT&PF spokesman Mike Chambers at 465-8994 or 321-6656.

State of Alaska Department of
Transportation and Public Facilities

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 21, 2005

No. 05-2507

M/V Malaspina Aids Disabled Skiff in BC
Ferry's Rescue Boat Tows Skiff to Shelter in Lama Passage

(Juneau) – The state ferry M/V *Malaspina* recently came to the aid of a disabled skiff while traveling northbound through the Inside Passage in British Columbia.

At about 2:15 p.m. on Saturday, January 15, the crew of the *Malaspina* observed a flare fired from an open skiff approximately 2 miles ahead of the ferry in Lama Passage, approximately four miles south of Bella Bella, British Columbia. The *Malaspina* crew launched a fast rescue boat, which proceeded to the skiff. The *Malaspina* crew notified the Canadian Coast Guard at Prince Rupert of the situation, which also dispatched a rescue boat from Bella Bella. The ferry's rescue boat crew had the skiff in tow within minutes to a sheltered area behind Walker Island, where it was handed over to the Coast Guard boat crew. In all, the operation took about 40 minutes, after which the *Malaspina* was released to proceed on its voyage to Ketchikan.

"We were just happy we were there at the right time to provide assistance," said Captain Larry Sackett, the *Malaspina*'s master on duty at the time. "The waters of the Inside Passage can be deadly, so it is the duty of mariners to offer assistance. Fortunately, this time, wind and weather were not difficult, so everything went well."

The *Malaspina* makes a weekly round-trip voyage between Bellingham, Washington and ports throughout Southeast Alaska.

#

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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 2, 2008

No. 08-25118

Chenega crew rescues kayakers,
Marks second mariner assist this year

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – Crewmembers from the Alaska Marine Highways System ferry Chenega rescued four kayakers Sunday afternoon in Passage Canal off the shores of Whittier.

Chenega's captain, Sam Daniels, said a radio call was relayed to Chenega at 2:33 p.m. requesting assistance to help four kayakers who were in distress.

Within eleven minutes, Chenega's rescue boat was launched and speeding away from the 235-foot ferry to rescue the kayakers.

By 2:50 p.m., coxswain Guy Beedle and his assistant Ian Russell had pulled the kayakers aboard the rescue boat and safely transported them to a nearby petroleum dock in the harbor where they were met by medical personnel.

The kayakers are identified as Anchorage residents Katie Longden, Hunter Burton, Kim Uddipa and Mitch Mark.

"They paddled out of Whittier for years, and checked the weather prior to departing Saturday, but were caught by surprise when things came up about six hours sooner than expected," said Daniels. "Winds were around 30 knots and seas were about three feet."

-more-

RESCUE 2/2/2/2

According to Daniels, the Anchorage foursome encountered breaking waves that tossed them from their kayaks when weather conditions deteriorated.

Earlier this year, Chenega's crew rescued three boaters whose vessel sank June 9 near Whittier.



Harbor rescue: Chenega's rescue boat crew (center) pulls four Anchorage kayakers safely aboard the ferry's rescue boat Sunday afternoon off the coast of Whittier. (Official DOT&PF photo by Chenega crewmember)

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For more information contact: Roger Wetherell, Chief Communications Officer at (907) 465-8994

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 4, 2008

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 08-25137

Chenega captain to accept lifesaving award at Big Apple gala

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry Chenega and its crew will be honored Friday night during an estimated 800-attendee gala in New York City.

Chenega's skipper, Capt. Samuel Daniels, will attend the Admiral of the Ocean Sea award dinner ceremony where he will accept the Honored Seafarer Award on behalf of the ship, AMHS and the State of Alaska.

AMHS and the Chenega crew are being honored for the rescue Chenega's crew performed June 8 after they plucked two men and a boy out of the frigid waters of Prince William Sound near Southcentral Alaska.

The award presentation and dinner is hosted and coordinated by the United Seamens Service (USS). The USS is an organization that has promoted the welfare of seamen since 1942 and supplies seagoing libraries to the American Merchant Marine, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard, and to seafarers of allied nations through its affiliate, the American Merchant Marine Library Association, Public Library of the High Seas since 1921.

"Each member of Team Chenega has every reason to be incredibly proud of their lifesaving actions and the value they place on the lives of others who travel Alaska's dangerous waters," said Leo von Scheben, Commissioner, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Chenega's Fast Rescue Boat (FRB) crew sped to the boaters who were clinging to debris to remain afloat. Chenega's crew rescued 28-year-old Luke Renner of Homer and Andy Renner, 31, and his eight-year-old son Owen, both of Palmer, on that Alaska summer day. Their 22-foot pleasure boat reportedly sank after the vessel's bow was struck by several waves.

-more-

CHENEGA HONORS 2/2/2/2

“I was so amazed at how fast the crew got to us,” said Luke Renner. “I’ll be booking reservations on the ferries from now on.”

Chenega’s crew also rescued four kayakers in September who found themselves in stormy seas and 30-knot winds off the shores of Whittier, Alaska.

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For more information, contact Roger W. Wetherell, Chief Communications Officer at (907) 465-8994 or by email to roger.wetherell@alaska.gov

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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9, 2008

No. 08-2575

Chenega crew rescues three Alaskans after boat sinks

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – Three Alaskans are alive today after the crew aboard the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) fast ferry Chenega pulled them from the chilly waters near Whittier Sunday afternoon.

Chenega and its crew departed Whittier at 4 p.m. and encountered a debris field six minutes into its transit to Cordova. The crew spotted the debris and the three boaters about a mile southeast of Billing Creek in Passage Canal.

Chenega's skipper, Capt. Samuel Daniels, immediately sounded the "code blue" signal alerting the crew and passengers of people in distress. Daniels also shifted control of Chenega from the bridge to the port bridge wing to maneuver the ship closer to the three people in the water.

Within three minutes, Chenega's Fast Rescue Boat (FRB) crew sped to the boaters who were clinging to debris to remain afloat. Chenega's crew rescued 28-year-old Luke Renner of Homer and Andy Renner, 31 and his eight-year-old son Owen, both of Palmer. Their 22-foot pleasure boat reportedly sank after the vessel's bow was struck by several waves.

"I was so amazed at how fast the crew got to us," said Luke Renner. "I'll be booking reservations on the ferries from now on."

The Chenega rescuers aboard the FRB transported the threesome to Chenega where they received medical attention from the crew and passengers Laura Evans and Kristin Burkart, intensive care unit doctors from New York City.

Chenega returned to the Whittier Ferry Terminal where it was met by a Whittier Fire Department ambulance crew who took the Renner's to a medical facility in Anchorage for treatment of hypothermia.

"I am just so thankful that you (AMHS) had your ship in the water yesterday," said Luke Renner.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 17, 2008

No. 08-2505

Ferry skipper, crew to receive Coast Guard award

(JUNEAU, Alaska) — Alaska Marine Highway System Capt. Phil Taylor and the ferry Columbia crew will be honored tomorrow morning by the Coast Guard in an award ceremony at the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) headquarters here.

Capt. Taylor and his crew will receive the Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award (MPSA) for assisting in rescuing passengers from the cruise ship Empress of the North May 14, 2007.

The MPSA is the second highest award the Coast Guard presents for unusual courage in the advancement of Coast Guard missions.

"The efforts of Captain Taylor and Columbia's crew will long serve as an example of true selflessness and heroism to many people for years to come," said Leo von Scheben, Commissioner, DOT&PF.

Shortly after midnight on May 14, the Empress of the North grounded near Rocky Island Light in Southeast Alaska with 281 passengers and crew aboard.

The motor vessel Columbia responded to a Coast Guard Urgent Marine Information Broadcast and diverted from their original destination. Once on scene with the cruise ship, Columbia's crew volunteered to serve as a host platform for the 252 passengers that had been already evacuated from the grounded cruise ship.

The Columbia teamed with the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Liberty and four other vessels to safely transport the 252 passengers between the Empress of the North and the Columbia. Captain Taylor and his crew were instrumental to the overall success of the rescue effort, one of the largest in Alaska history. None of the passengers were injured during the rescue evolution.

The award ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m. at the DOT&PF building located at 3132 Channel Drive in room 140 on the first floor.

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For more information contact DOT&PF Chief Communications Officer Roger Wetherell at 465-8994.

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

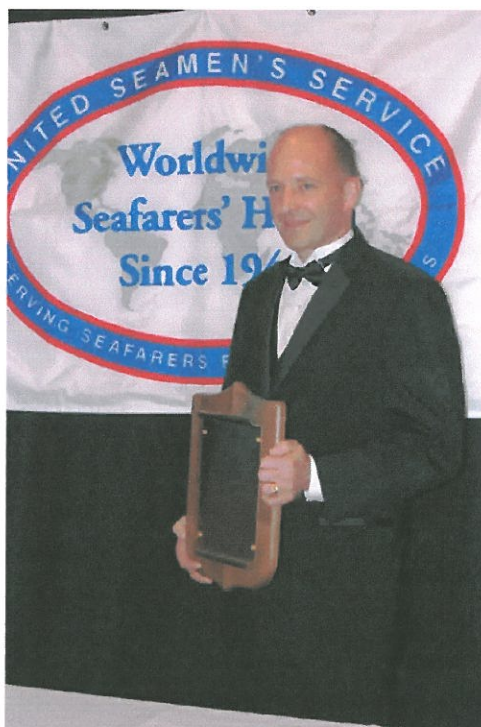
Nov. 10, 2008

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

No. 08-25139

Chenega skipper accepts lifesaving award before 800 in New York City

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) Capt. Samuel Daniels accepted the Honored Seafarer Award on behalf of the ship, AMHS and the State of Alaska Friday night during the Admiral of the Ocean Sea award dinner ceremony in New York City.



New York – AMHS Capt. Samuel Daniels displays the award he accepted Friday night for his crew's lifesaving efforts of three people earlier this year. Official DOT&PF photo by Roger W. Wetherell

-more-

CHENEGA 2/2/2/2

AMHS and the Chenega crew were honored for the rescue Chenega's crew performed June 8 after they plucked two men and a boy out of the frigid waters of Prince William Sound near Southcentral Alaska.

Chenega's Fast Rescue Boat (FRB) crew sped to the boaters who were clinging to debris to remain afloat. Chenega's crew rescued 28-year-old Luke Renner of Homer and Andy Renner, 31, and his eight-year-old son Owen, both of Palmer, on that Alaska summer day. Their 22-foot pleasure boat reportedly sank after the vessel's bow was struck by several waves.

About 800 people attended the ceremony including U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Thad W. Allen.

####

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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9, 2008

No. 08-2576

Photo Release

Chenega crew rescues three Alaskans after boat sinks

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – Fast Rescue Boat crewmembers from the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry Chenega begin rescuing three Alaskans whose boat sank Sunday afternoon off the coast of Whittier. The crew rescued 28-year-old Homer resident Luke Renner, Andy Renner, 31 of Palmer and his eight-year-old son Owen Renner. (Photo courtesy of an unidentified Chenega passenger)



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http://www.dot.alaska.gov/comm/pressbox/arch_2007/PR_1001_Chenega-Rescue.shtml#

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 1, 2007

No. 07-2523

Press Release Contact: DOT&PF Chief Communications Officer Mike Chambers, 465-8994 or by cell 321-6656

Chenega Rescues Mariner In Distress

(Juneau) — The M/V Chenega, responding to a request for assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard, rescued a boater on Sunday who grounded his vessel on Lone Island in Prince William Sound due to poor weather. The Chenega received the radio report at about 1:40 p.m. on Sunday.

The Chenega was on its way to Cordova when it received the request from the Coast Guard. The Chenega proceeded to the scene and a fast rescue boat, manned by First Officer Dennis Gum and Able Seaman Clark Posey, was launched to pick up the boater.

The boater was picked up in good condition and transported to a Coast Guard Auxiliary Vessel to be taken back to Whittier. His name was not available for this release.

“ Our crew did an excellent job of coming to the assistance of this mariner and I’ m proud of their actions on Sunday,” said Alaska Marine Highway System General Manager John Falvey.

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