

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE

January 28, 2010

2:06 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Joe Paskvan, Chair
Senator Joe Thomas, Vice Chair
Senator Bettye Davis
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Con Bunde

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Gasline Training Overview

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No Previous Action to Report

WITNESS REGISTER

CLICK BISHOP, Commissioner
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD),
POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered Gasline Training overview.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[2:06:10 PM](#)

CHAIR JOE PASKVAN called the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:06 p.m. All members were present at the call to order.

Gasline Training Overview

[2:07:16 PM](#)

CHAIR PASKVAN announced that the Gasline Training Overview would be the committee's order of business today.

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CLICK BISHOP, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), introduced department staff in the

audience. He said says the 2007 Alaska Gasline Inducement Act (in AS 43.90.470) requires the commissioner of the DOLWD to develop a job training program that would provide training for Alaskans in gas pipeline management, construction, operations, maintenance and other related positions. He said he assembled a team of industry providers, University partners, K-12 educators, pipeline contractors and other stakeholders to develop the plan before them today.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said that plan's overall purpose is "to bring Alaskans into a new era of collaboration, innovation among educators and training providers combined with strategic investments [indisc.] regionally delivered and accredited programs to create a world class training and educational system."

He said the plan identified four broad strategies; number one was to increase awareness of access to career opportunities in natural resource development. A strategy was identified to implement the plan in the 2008-2012 timeline. Another outcome in the plan was to retain a public relations-type person to raise awareness, and they have hired Beth Leshper for that position. He said whether Alaska gets a gas pipeline today or not, this is a good plan and tool, because the skills gap exists today in Alaska's industries. This work will not go to waste.

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COMMISSIONER BISHOP said that people are starting to regard this plan as a model template for delivering a trained workforce. It is expandable with nuances to facilitate the type of training people are trying to deliver. For example, the health care industry is using it to develop a health care delivery system.

The second strategy, he said, is to develop a comprehensive integrated career and technical education system [section 32(1)(a) of the plan] that aligns training institutions and coordinates program delivery; for this they have hired Jeff Selby, a retired tech/vocational educator, who put together the Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center model in the Bering Straits School District.

Recently, Commissioner Bishop said he signed an MOU with the commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Larry LeDoux, to develop a statewide career pathway training plan for all K-12 schools. It takes time to put a program of this magnitude together, and they are drawing

heavily on outside expertise. Their target is to have the draft plan in place by April/May of this year.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP reported that he is continuing to meet with regional training centers around the state to deliver a workforce, but they have a long way to go.

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Strategy three is increasing opportunities for registered apprenticeships in skilled occupations and other structured training opportunities. He brought Jerry Andrews on several years ago to help with that. Early on they were going to recruit and hire a pipeline training coordinator to bring this plan to fruition, but he has been cautious about bringing on another full time person at this point, so he has asked Mr. Andrews to "do double duty for a while." He is familiar with the plan, one of the strategies fits his purview real well with the apprenticeship model, and he has TAPS pipeline experience.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP noted that the TransCanada ExxonMobil open season FERC filing is tomorrow, and that application will be public information. It will have the estimated manpower numbers for the whole project including compressor stations and main line construction. He will take those numbers to a February 24 AGIA training team meeting and start the real work of extrapolating the execution, delivery method, training, and cost of delivering a workforce.

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He reread strategy one about increasing awareness of access to careers and elaborated that this requires investments in the Alaska Construction Academy Model around the state to introduce youth and dislocated adult workers to basic construction skills, to provide funding for school-based career guides who provide job referrals to secondary students, to provide funding for improvements to the Alaska Career Information System and other department web-based resources that provide career planning tools and connect students with the Alaska-based training programs.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said one of the outcomes he has wanted since he began this position is to "warehouse" the gasline career training information in one place, both electronic and hard copy. He said the students, not the youth career guides, at King Career Center took the 113 AGIA-related occupations and went researched things like wage scales, where to get training, and who the training providers are - for all the occupations. He

made a few suggestions and they are "tweaking" it, but he wants to put that document in every school throughout the state. As a foot note, he said in FY09 the Alaska Construction Academy trained 1,645 youths and 416 adults.

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COMMISSIOINER BISHOP moved on to strategy two, aligning career and technical education systems, and elaborated that the department has coordinated several meetings between training providers in the state including the University of Alaska, the Alaska Vocational Tech Center and regional training centers on how to better align and articulate training programs. They are also working closely with the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) toward developing a template for career plans to be completed by all high school students establishing standards for Alaska training programs, supporting the youth of the Alaska Career Readiness Certificate and doing communication outreach with both secondary and post-secondary educators and administrators throughout the state.

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COMMISISONER BISHOP said another huge hurdle is aligning assets with the goal of establishing industry standards among regional training programs. Strategy three is expanding registered apprenticeships and structured training. The department has made a commitment by reaching out not only to the industries that have traditionally used the apprenticeship model, but also for workers in the skill trades such as construction, and other high-demand industries in Alaska including health care, manufacturing and retail trade. This has been done by the "old fashioned method" having discussions with one employer at a time. Just this morning he was talking about health care apprenticeships for certified nursing assistants - which could be called a non-traditional area of apprenticeship.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP conveyed that he is making strides in the mining industry as well. He had to allow 20 foreign labors to come in and run geophysical core drills, and their annual salaries were \$100,000/year, but he said "enough" and after a year-and-a-half-long collaboration between labor, industry, the University, and Native corporations they have the first core driller apprenticeship class in Kotzebue. This last spring, 36 core drillers, all local to the region, went through the program, and all were employed for the summer. Now they have a registered apprenticeship pathway to segue these people into journeyman status - and they can become a \$100,000/year driller.

Success breeds success, Commissioner Bishop said, and now Tanana Chiefs Conference, Tower Hill International, wants to do a first-of-its-kind class in Fairbanks for a gold mine in Livengood.

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Strategy 4, the Commissioner reported, is to increase training opportunities; and to give members a broad bush overview, he said the state made more significant investments including doubling the number of the University's engineering students, providing over \$3 million in training for a variety of gas pipeline occupations to over 1,570 adults in the state training and employment program. A federal pipeline training grant is being used by the Galena City School District to train rural aircraft dispatchers - skills that can be transferred to transportation and logistical support for the pipeline construction.

In a little bit of a wrap up he said that he is looking forward to getting the numbers from both projects' filings with FERC for an open season so he can see where the state is for manpower. Both Denali and TransCanada people are working on the training plan. He emphasized that you can't lose sight of the goal; this is not just about training for the mainline pipeline construction, it is about training for upstream jobs that will be here after the mainline construction is gone.

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CHAIR PASKVAN said it's good news that we are moving forward on the development of the plan and it's good to see they are approaching the implementation phase with some of the successes the Commissioner has noted. He asked how many years before Alaska is ready.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP answered approximately four years; but post pipeline training is good also for jobs that haven't been identified yet.

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CHAIR PASKVAN asked what would happen if a small diameter pipeline were to be built instead of the big one.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said he would be happy to train for either. A smaller pipeline would create a great opportunity for a shake down on the big pipe. It'll take all the same equipment.

CHAIR PASKVAN said it ultimately comes down to the budget and how much of it can go for training.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said that he has a 10-year budget with place holders in it.

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CHAIR PASKVAN followed up the commissioner's commentary on the 113 job classifications by asking when that schedule would be distributed to the high schools.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP answered starting in 2010.

[The power in the building went out at approximately 2:42; Chair Paskvan took an at ease at approximately 2:45 and then adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:00 p.m. when the power had not returned.]