

**SENATE JOURNAL  
SUPPLEMENT**

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**February 15, 2013**

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**Commemorative Profiles  
of  
Senate Districts C, D, E and F**

**In Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary  
of the  
First Convening of the Legislative Branch of  
Government in Alaska**

**Twenty-Eighth Alaska State Legislature**

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**February 15, 2013**

**Juneau, Alaska**



The following Senate District Profiles were submitted for publication by the Senate Rules Committee:

**Senate District C**

*Presented by Senator Click Bishop on February 11:*

Senate District C is a fairly large and geographically diverse area, including urban Fairbanks, small rural towns and villages, and vast stretches of completely wild Alaska.

The district ranges from west Fairbanks, along the Richardson Highway east to Delta Junction, south to Valdez, and west along the Glenn Highway into Palmer. It includes large pieces of the Alaska Range and the Chugach Mountains, and much of the Copper River Basin and the Tanana River Valley.

Historically, much of the area was populated by the Athabascans, who were pretty much left alone until a series of gold rushes brought white prospectors and a variety of "support" services into the country between 1898 and 1904. Valdez, the southernmost community of the district, promoted the "All-Alaska" route to the Klondike. At the northern end, Captain E.T. Barnette established his trading post at the confluence of the Chena and Tanana rivers, and was conveniently in business when the gold rush at Fairbanks began.

Today, among the most interesting and influential features of Senate District C include the Fairbanks campus of the University of Alaska, established in 1917 as the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. Close to the campus is Fairbanks International Airport. Near Delta Junction is the Pogo Mine, producing approximately 350,000 ounces of gold annually, and significant farmlands producing barley, dairy, exotic animals, and potatoes, among other foodstuffs. Delta also plays host to Ft. Greely, where the Alaska National Guard operates the Army's Ground-Based Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense System. Delta Junction is also the terminus of the Alaska Highway, built in nine months in 1942 to provide a road connection between Alaska and the Lower 48. Further south along the Richardson Highway, at Black Rapids, the Army operates the Northern Warfare Training Center.

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District C also hosts more than 300 miles of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System, flowing North Slope crude oil to the Alyeska Marine Terminal in Valdez, which has loaded and shipped more than 17 billion barrels of crude to West Coast refineries. Valdez is also the hometown of the state's first governor, Bill Egan, who was a local businessman for many years.

In 1913, the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) began construction of a dike in Valdez to divert annual flooding away from the city, which allowed Valdez to thrive. This project was bid on by the Natives of Tatitlek, who developed an outer protection for the dike made of woven brush, which was determined to be satisfactory by Lt. Edgerton, the ARC engineer. Following the disastrous 1964 earthquake, the original townsite of Valdez was determined to be too unstable, and the town was moved several miles west.

The Glenn Highway winds through the southern portion of District C from Glennallen to Palmer. For decades, before the opening of the Parks Highway in 1971, the Glenn and Richardson highways were the only route between Anchorage and Fairbanks. Near Palmer, in the very southwestern corner of the district, the Independence Mine State Historical Park attracts thousands of visitors – history and mining enthusiasts – every summer.

Approximately 35,200 Alaskans live in Senate District C, in communities large and small. These include: West Fairbanks and the Chena Ridge, Salcha, Delta Junction, Big Delta, Ft. Greely, Deltana, Paxson, Glennallen, Valdez, Lake Louise, Chickaloon, Sutton and the Palmer-Fishhook area of Palmer.

Senate District D

*Presented by Senator Mike Dunleavy on February 11:*



Senate District D is located in the Matanuska Valley and consists of the following communities: Caswell, Chase, Deshka Landing, Fishhook, Houston, Lakes, Meadow Lakes, Petersville, Skwentna, Susitna, Susitna North, Talkeetna, Tanaina, Trapper Creek, Willow, Farm Loop, Gateway, Knik-Fairview, Palmer, Wasilla, and Yentna.

It is the fastest growing area of the state with over 400 new students enrolled in Valley schools each year. Many of the residents in District D commute to Anchorage for work. However, the economy of the Valley is diverse, including retail, tourism, agriculture, and wood products.

District D is home to some of the most fertile soil in North America, supporting many family farms. The valley is renowned for the annual Alaska State Fair, where local farmers produce award-winning vegetables. The world's largest cabbage was grown within the district borders, weighing in at 138.25 pounds.

Senate District D is also known for its towering mountains, numerous large rivers, and incredible outdoor activities. The district is the center of dog mushing in Alaska including the re-start of the Iditarod in Willow. Some of the best white water rafting and mountain climbing are also centered in the district.

Popular recreation sites include Hatcher Pass, Crevasse-Moraine Trails, Kepler Lake, Bonnie Lake, Finger Lake, and Long Lake. To the north, Talkeetna is popular for its recreational fishing, hunting, boating, flightseeing, skiing, and dog mushing. Local businesses provide services to Denali climbers.

District D is home to Alaskans that embody the life, culture, and work ethic of the State. It is a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

### **Senate District E**

*Presented by Senator John Coghill on behalf of President Charlie Huggins on February 15:*

Senate District E, located in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, has a population of more than 35,000 residents and contains the City of Wasilla and the communities of Meadow Lakes, Big Lake, Knik, Fairview, Goose Bay, and Point MacKenzie.

The region's beauty and the availability of large-lot homes at a fraction of the cost of Anchorage has attracted a growth boom that continues to shape the area. Over the past decade, the Mat-Su Borough saw its population grow by an average of five percent annually, with much of that growth occurring in the area of Knik. Many of those newcomers have young children, and this group particularly has driven the demand for new housing and municipal services. The Mat-Su Borough School District is now the second largest in the state, with a student enrollment of 17,230.

One hundred years ago, the region was home to the Athabaskan Dena'ina, who called the area "Benteh," meaning "many lakes." The numerous lakes and streams provided ample fishing for indigenous populations and the area became a popular wintering ground for semi-permanent Native villages. Trails connected these villages to hunting grounds in the Susitna Valley and the Talkeetna Mountains.

One of these settlements, the Townsite of Knik, served as an important port for the Alaska Gold Rush. The 1890 Census recorded the Knik population as 160 people, 96 of whom were Alaska Natives. As most mining towns contained mostly single men, it is interesting to note that the census recorded 36 families at Knik. In 1908, the U.S. Government financed a trail from Seward to the gold town of Nome. Parts of that trail – later known as the Iditarod Trail – ran through Knik. On December 1, 1916, an Iditarod musher drove into Knik with 3,400 pounds of gold hauled by 46 dogs. Today, the Knik Recreation and Sled Dog Special Land Use District honors the "Father of the Iditarod," Joe Redington, Sr., who moved to the area in 1948, and protects the area's historic dog mushing activities.

Around 1900, the Boston and Klondike Company made the first sled trail north from Knik to the mineral-rich Talkeetna Mountains via Big Lake. Between the 1920s and World War II, a number of homesteads were staked in the Big Lake area, and by the 1960s, numerous lodges and children's camps were operating there, alongside at least 300 private cabins and homes. Lake-front lots became more accessible with the expansion of roads and power in the 1970s. Low land costs, recreational opportunities, the semi-rural lifestyle, and the relatively short commute to Anchorage – and even shorter commutes to the growing Mat-Su employment centers – have supported continued growth in this area in recent years.

The City of Wasilla's history dates back to 1916, when the Alaska Engineering Commission constructed a work camp at the intersection of the Alaska Railroad and the Carle Wagon Trail, which linked Knik with the Willow Creek Mining District. After platting the town site in June 1917, the Commission auctioned off lots from the new Wasilla railroad platform. Wasilla, named for Chief Wasilla, a local Dena'ina chief and shaman who died in 1907, was incorporated in 1974 as a second class city and has continued to develop as the retail and commercial hub of the Mat-Su Valley. It became a first class city in 1984. Today, the City of Wasilla is famous as the official headquarters for the annual Iditarod Trail Race, home to the Iron Dog Snowmachine Race, and the hometown of former city mayor and candidate for U.S. Vice President, Sarah Palin.

In recent years, Senate District E has become home to Port MacKenzie and its mainline rail extension. Port Mac can accommodate Panamax-size vessels, enabling the port to export and import. The construction of the rail extension will bring tremendous economic and employment benefits to Alaska. With a shorter distance to tidewater from the Interior, the new segment of rail will stimulate the development of our state's natural resources and mines.

Known as "Alaska's Year-Round Playground," the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Senate District E is a great place to live, work, play, and raise a family!

### **Senate District F**

*Presented by Senator Fred Dyson on February 15:*



Senate District F, which contains parts of both the Anchorage Municipality and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, has a population of 35,905 living in multiple towns. The towns and neighborhoods represented in District F are Eagle River, Chugiak, Fort Richardson, Birchwood, and Eklutna, which are all located along the Glen Highway. The district runs along the northern section of the Knik Arm and contains notable landmarks such as the Eklutna Lake, "The Butte," Lazy Mountain, and the land beyond.

While American settlers did not live in the area before the railroad was built in 1915, the Dena'ina Athabascan village of Eklutna has been inhabited for over 800 years and continues to be rich with Alaska Native history.

The communities within District F are mostly suburban and many residents commute to Anchorage for work. Though there are no major industries in the district, the residents provide a large portion of the workforce for Anchorage, including the highest percentage of military personnel among all districts in Alaska. There are agricultural communities in Palmer and Eagle River, as well as various small businesses that provide local support to the residents of the area. There is no shortage of outdoor recreation with popular hikes such as Mt. Baldy and Thunderbird Falls, as well as many other opportunities around Eklutna Lake. With students from two school districts, District F has some of the most successful educational institutions in the state.

The communities of District F have a small town feel, which makes it a wonderful place to live among many great people.

**Please report corrections to the Senate Secretary's office.**