

SCOMM

844:12

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 3/23/92

FURTHER: L&C

DATE TURNED INTO OFFICE: 4-23-92

Senate Special Committee on
Internat'l Trade & Tourism

considered HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 81

Relating to travel advisories issued by the Department of State.

and recommends:

replace with _____ CS _____ ()

or adopt previous _____ CS _____ ()

attaches amendment(s)

same title

new title

technical
title change
(HB only)

adopts _____ Letter of Intent

further referral to the _____

do pass

do not pass

no recommendation

individual recommendations

NEW FISCAL NOTES: Dept/Date

zero fiscal notes _____

fiscal notes _____

appropriation--no fiscal note

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTES: Dept/Date

zero fiscal notes House ITT 3-4-92

fiscal notes _____

DO PASS:

Curtis S. ...

Paul ...

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Paul ... (Do Pass)

Chair: Signature and Recommendation

STATE OF ALASKA
1992 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

No. 1
 Bill Version: HJR 81
 (H) Publish Date: 3-4-92

Revision Date: _____ Department Affect: _____
 Title: Relating to travel advisory BRU: _____
issued by the Dept. of State Component: _____
 Sponsor: House ITT
 Requestor: House ITT COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

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EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0					

CAPITAL	0					
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REVENUE FUND SOURCE:	0					
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER FUND SOURCE:						
TOTAL	0					

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: _____

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

Prepared By: Rep. Tom Moyer *Tom Moyer* Phone: 465-4930
 Division: Chair, House ITT Date: 3-3-92

Approved by Commissioner: _____ Date: _____
 Agency: _____

Alaska State Legislature

Senator Paul Fischer, Chairman
Senator Al Adams, Vice-Chair
Senator Rick Uehling
Senator Arliss Sturgulewski
Senator Fred Zharoff



Post Office Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811
(907) 465-3791
(907) 465-3883 FAX

Senate Special Committee on International Trade and Tourism

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Al Adams
Senator Fred Zharoff
Senator Arliss Sturgulewski
Senator Rick Uehling

FR: Senator Paul Fischer, Chairman *of*
Senate Special Committee on International Trade & Tourism

DATE: April 16, 1992

RE: Committee Schedule for the Week of April 20, 1992

Thursday, April 23, 2:30 - 3:30 pm Fahrenkamp Room

HJR 81 - Relating to travel advisories issued by the Department of State.

HJR 82 - Requesting the federal Office of Management and Budget to revise the Standard Industrial Classification system so that distinct statistics for the travel and tourism industry are compiled.

HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TOURISM

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX V, JUNEAU 99811
(907) 465-2973



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 23, 1992

TO: Senator Paul Fischer, Chair
Senate Special Committee on
International Trade and Tourism

FROM: Representative Tom Moyer, Chair *TM*
House Special Committee on
International Trade and Tourism

RE: HJR 81 "Relating to travel advisories issued by the
Department of State"

I would like to respectfully request that you schedule HJR 81, which relates to travel advisories issued by the Department of State, for a hearing at your earliest convenience. I've attached back-up information on this resolution, along with copies of numerous articles on the Alaska-Canada Highway. The resolution passed the House unanimously on Friday, March 20.

As you probably know, the resolution is the direct result of a travel advisory issued by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs in early February. The State Department issued this advisory on the Yukon and the Alaska-Canada (Alcan) Highway, which was very negative for both Alaska and the Yukon and there were many erroneous statements in the advisory. These advisories are issued in written form and also placed on a recording that can be accessed by dialing a hotline number.

After prodding from the Yukon and Alaska tourism offices and the Alaska Congressional delegation this advisory was finally reworded earlier this month and the recording has been changed. The current recording is not quite as sensational as the original one. I still believe that the Legislature should go on record urging the State Department to contact states and other entities that might be affected by such advisories in the future.

Thank you for your prompt scheduling of HJR 81.

ALASKA

Alaska Division of Tourism
P.O. Box E
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0800
Phone: (907) 465-2010

Department of Commerce &
Economic Development
State Office Building, Ninth Floor
333 Willoughby Avenue
Fax: (907) 668-8399

TELECOPIER TRANSMITTAL SHEET

DELIVER TO: Dave Johnson 604-685-5285

FROM: Conn Murray

U.S. Consul General's office

State of Alaska, Director
of Tourism

Number of pages INCLUDING transmittal sheet: 1

DATE: 2-6-92

OPERATOR: _____

TIME: _____

IF TELECOPY DOES NOT TRANSMIT PROPERLY, PLEASE CALL (907) 465-2012.

The Travel Advisory on the Yukon tended to blind-side not only our friends in Canada, but Alaska as well since the Highway is our only land-link to the "lower 48."

Please note that there is no point on the highway where there is more than 97 miles between gas stations -- and the average is closer to 55. There are places on the U.S. interstate system where they're further apart than that. As for medical facilities, almost every little town has them. In one spot there is about 150 miles between medical facilities -- I'll bet there are places in Nevada or Kansas that are similar. Peak season on the highway it's always advisable to have reservations, just as it is in Alaska, Hawaii or any other tourist destination. But the Government of the Yukon assures us that with new and expanded facilities they are expecting business as usual in '92, and so are we in Alaska. Gas prices throughout Canada are higher than the U.S. On the highway they average \$2.19 per U.S. gallon, certainly not triple most U.S. prices. As for food, lunch in Teslin runs from \$3.00 to \$7.00, with dinner \$5.00 to \$17.00, and other highway towns are comparable. Based on world prices, or even many other U.S. prices, travel on the Alcan highway might be considered a bargain. For this reason, I'm sending along our suggestions for changes in the Advisory to make it confirm a little more closely to the facts.

Thanks for your help. I'm hoping your recorded message can be changed, and perhaps a revision provided the press.

note: Our division is moving the following press release in Alaska.

ALASKA DIVISION OF TOURISM P.O. BOX E.

JUNEAU, AK 99811-8800 (907) 465-2012 FAX 526-8399



MEMORANDUM
Thursday February 6, 1992

TO: Susie Kemp/State Division of Tourism
FROM: John Kravonis, Senator Stevens' Office (202) 224-1031
RE: State Department Notice on Travel to Western Canada

Attached is the State Department notice on travel to Western Canada.

State has a service where you can call up and hear tape recorded notices about travel conditions in different countries. I don't think that the notice sounds as bad on paper as it does when you hear it on the tape. The number for the tape is 202-647-5226. Ask for the tape on travel conditions in Canada.

I've spoken with State about the tape and they seem willing to make changes if you have any suggestions. You can either contact the US Consul General in Vancouver, Dave Johnson at 604-685-4311, or you can contact Tim Collins who is with the Canada Desk at the State Department. Both gentlemen were very willing to help.

One thing to bear in mind, much of the information in the notice seems realistic about actual conditions in Western Canada. And, the State Department is required by law to let American travellers know about conditions in foreign countries -- travelling in Western Canada is not like travelling in the Chicago suburbs. However, the tone, and some of the comments, might not be the most appropriate. Again, I suggest Susie and the Division of Tourism coordinate a response to State where you recommend changes in the text.

Let me know if you meet any obstacles.

FAK
J. PERT
403 667-2634

INFORMAL MESSAGE

Date posted: 06-Feb-1992 16:15 DST
From: HA Van der Veer WSHDC - UNTO
VANDEHACZ
Dept: WSHDC UNTO
Tel No: (202) 682-7705

TO: J Normand Guerin UTO (GUERIJNC AT A1 AT UOTTER)
TO: Paul Desbiens UTO (DESBIPC AT A1 AT UOTTER)
TO: Gilles JW Tasse UTO (TASSEGJC AT A1 AT UOTTER)

Subject: Travel Advisories YUKON

We have received the following from Yukon Tourism, which could be interpreted in several ways, including one that assumes subjective statements by the US Government about travel in Canada.

Rather than issuing a SPECIFIC advisory about the potential of MENINGITIS-related illness, the release editorializes whether the YUKON is definitely frontier, and that getting a motel room, medical care or car service in the Yukon may be tough. In fact, by inserting the health issue, the continuation of the text could imply that these conditions of lack of facilities prevail ANYWHERE in Canada outside Whitehorse.

Yukon Tourism has expressed concern about this kind of tactic, and addressed the fax to me since the dateline is Washington. Travel advisories are accessed through the public telephone system. Anyone interested in advisories, which usually range from health alerts to civil war and uprisings (Georgia, Haiti, Yugoslavia, Venezuela) can dial a phone number which gives that type of information.

Can you advise whether this merits any steps to be taken by the Department, Tourism Canada or this Mission to address the question of implicit discouragement of travel in Canada.

Here's the text as transmitted:
(WASHINGTON) THE STATE DEPARTMENT TOLD AMERICANS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT FINDING A MOTEL ROOM IN THE YUKON CAN BE TOUGH, AND THERE AREN'T TOO MANY GAS STATIONS EITHER.

THE DEPARTMENT'S BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS EXPECTS MORE TOURISTS TO DRIVE THE ALASKA-CANADA HIGHWAY THIS YEAR DURING ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY, AND IT ISSUED A TRAVEL ADVISORY TO LET VISITORS KNOW WHAT THEY'RE IN FOR.

AMONG OTHER SUGGESTIONS - THE ADVISORY SAID TRAVELERS TO EASTERN CANADA SHOULD CONSIDER VACCINATING CHILDREN BECAUSE OF A RISE IN MENINGITIS CASES AND RELATED DISEASES.

THE ADVISORY SAID TRAVELERS CAN EXPECT TO FIND FEW MOTEL ROOMS AWAY FROM CITIES - AND LIMITED CAR REPAIR AND MEDICAL FACILITIES OUTSIDE OF WHITEHORSE.

IN FACT THE DEPARTMENT NOTED: "THE YUKON IS DEFINITELY FRONTIER COUNTRY".

② WASHINGTON NR 202 647-5225

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1. The U.S. State Department is warning travellers about visiting the Yukon. The Department has issued an advisory that contains a number of negative comments about travelling in the Territory. (Elaine Schiman) The traveller advisory is described in an Associated Press wire story. The advisory is categorized as a notice which means it's telling people which areas might be inconvenient or difficult to travel in. The notice on the Yukon says finding a motel room or a gas station can be tough. It says camping and motel facilities can range from primitive to non-existent, away from population centres. The notice also says traffic outside of towns can be very sparse even during peak tourist season and it says the Alaska Highway runs through some spectacularly beautiful areas but much of it is essentially uninhabited. Finally, the advisory noted the Yukon is definitely frontier country. Shauna Sutton is the executive director of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon. She was surprised to hear of the advisory but admits many people in the south believe the north is much rougher and tougher than it really is. Sutton says her association will try to educate people more on how good the highways up here really are.

(Sutton) "... I think the important thing that will come out of this is that we will have to put on a stronger thrust as far as educating people down south as to what we're all about up here." The Tourism Department of YTG only just heard of the travel advisory this morning. Spokesman Graham McDonald says the tourism people are looking into it to try to find out how it happened and how widely the news of it has been distributed. The Department had been informed of it by a tourism representative from Juneau who had heard it on the radio there and was quite concerned.

2. The Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce is hoping to hire someone to develop and implement a tourism plan for Whitehorse. That is one of two proposals put forward at a public meeting last night. The other is to hire someone to work at attracting conventions to the city. (Dave Cooper) About 30 people turned out at a public meeting last night to talk about ways to attract more tourists to Whitehorse. There are two main proposals. One is from the Tourism Industry Association. It wants to hire someone whose job would be to attract conventions to Whitehorse. It would cost from \$75,000 to \$150,000 to do that. The cost would be shared by the city, YTG, business :

14139

NO. 460 FEB 2 1955

NO STATE DEPT TRAVEL ADVISORY

TRAVEL ADVISORY - CANADA - NOTICE

1. SUMMARY: THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASED NUMBER OF CASES OF MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE IN SEVERAL AREAS OF EASTERN CANADA. ALTHOUGH THE RISK FOR TRAVELERS IS VERY LOW, U.S. TRAVELERS MAY WISH TO CONSIDER HAVING THEIR CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 2 AND 14 VACCINATED AGAINST THE DISEASE. IN ADDITION, IN WESTERN CANADA, THE YUKON TERRITORY IS COMMEMORATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUILDING OF THE ALCAN HIGHWAY - ITS "RENDEZVOUS 80". U.S. TRAVELERS PLANNING TO ATTEND "RENDEZVOUS 80" SHOULD BE AWARE OF AND TAKE APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS RELATED TO TRAVEL IN THE FAR NORTH. END SUMMARY.

and the Public and Ontario Health Ministers -

2. MENINGITIS: THE U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL HAVE ISSUED A HEALTH ALERT CONCERNING THE INCREASED NUMBER OF CASES OF MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE IN SEVERAL AREAS OF EASTERN CANADA. THE AFFECTED AREAS INCLUDE

THE OTTAWA-CARLTON AREA, THE LAURENTIDES REGION NORTH OF MONTREAL, THE LANAUDIERE REGION, THE OUTAOUAIS AREA IN WEST QUEBEC, AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND. AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE, A PROGRAM OF VACCINATION IS BEING INSTITUTED FOR CHILDREN IN THOSE AREAS. THE RISK FOR SHORT-TERM TRAVELERS IS VERY LOW AND NO PARTICULAR PRECAUTIONS ARE NEEDED FOR THOSE TRAVELING TO THE AFFECTED AREAS FOR MOST ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS SKIING OR SHOPPING. HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF CASES AMONG SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IS SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE NORMAL, VACCINATIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR CHILDREN 2 THROUGH 14 YEARS OF AGE TRAVELING TO THE AFFECTED AREAS IF THEY WILL BE IN VERY CLOSE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH LOCAL SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN, OR WILL BE STAYING MORE THAN THREE DAYS AND EXPECT TO HAVE SOCIAL CONTACT WITH LOCAL SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN. IDEALLY, THE VACCINE SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED AT LEAST 30 DAYS BEFORE TRAVEL. VACCINATION IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN UNDER TWO YEARS OF AGE, AND ADULTS ARE CONSIDERED AT VERY LOW RISK. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL'S INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE AT (404) 222-4889.

3. RENDEZVOUS 78: 1978 MARKS THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUILDING OF THE ALCAN HIGHWAY. THE YUKON TERRITORY IS COMMEMORATING THE EVENT WITH A SERIES OF HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CELEBRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AS PART OF ITS "RENDEZVOUS 78" CELEBRATION. AS CANADIAN OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE A LARGE INFLUX OF U.S. VISITORS, IT IS

WORTHWHILE FOR U.S. CITIZENS TO KEEP IN MIND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WHEN TRAVELING IN THE FAR NORTH.

4. THE FRONTIER: THE YUKON IS DEFINITELY FRONTIER TERRITORY. FACILITIES FOR CAR REPAIR OUTSIDE OF THE CAPITAL, WHITEHORSE, ARE EXTREMELY LIMITED. ALMOST ALL CONSUMER GOODS MUST BE BROUGHT IN FROM OTHER PARTS OF CANADA OR ALASKA OVER LONG DISTANCES. IT IS 1200 MILES FROM EDMONTON TO WHITEHORSE AND 1800 MILES FROM VANCOUVER TO WHITEHORSE. THE COST OF FOOD, GAS, ETC. CAN BE TRIPLE WHAT IT WOULD BE IN THE U.S.

5. THE HIGHWAY: THE ALCAN HIGHWAY RUNS FROM EDMONTON, ALBERTA, THROUGH BRITISH COLUMBIA (DAWSON CREEK, FORT ST. JOHN, FORT NELSON) THROUGH THE YUKON (WATSON LAKE, WHITEHORSE) AND INTO ALASKA. FOR MOST OF ITS LENGTH IT IS A TWO OR FOUR LANE DIVIDED HIGHWAY. MOST OF IT IS IN GOOD CONDITION AND PREVIOUSLY ROUGH SECTIONS HAVE BEEN REPAIRED FOR THE CELEBRATIONS. THE DISTANCES ARE VAST. THE HIGHWAY RUNS THROUGH SOME SPECTACULARLY BEAUTIFUL AREAS, BUT MUCH OF THE AREA IS ESSENTIALLY UNINHABITED. EVEN DURING PEAK TOURIST SEASON, TRAFFIC OUTSIDE OF TOWNS CAN BE VERY SPARSE.

6. LODGING: A FULL RANGE OF CAMPING AND HOTEL LODGING CAN BE FOUND IN THE YUKON. FURTHER AWAY FROM POPULATION CENTERS, THE FACILITIES CAN RANGE FROM PRIMITIVE TO

NON-EXISTENT. SEVERAL NEW HOTELS AND CAMPGROUNDS ARE OPENING THIS YEAR, BUT TRAVELERS ARE ADVISED TO HAVE CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE WHITEHORSE AREA, DURING THE PEAK SUMMER MONTHS.

7. MEDICAL CARE: AS WITH CAR REPAIR, MEDICAL FACILITIES ARE EXTREMELY LIMITED OUTSIDE OF WHITEHORSE. CARE CAN BE EXPENSIVE AND MOST HOSPITALS AND CLINICS WILL INSIST ON PAYMENT BEFORE DISCHARGE. WHILE SOME (BUT NOT ALL) NOW ACCEPT VISA OR MASTERCARD, MOST WILL NOT WAIT FOR PAYMENT FROM INSURANCE COMPANIES. PROBLEMS WITH COLLECTING BILLS FROM AMERICANS HAVE MADE MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS INCREASINGLY CAUTIOUS. TRAVELERS SHOULD CHECK TO MAKE SURE THEIR MEDICAL AND AUTO INSURANCE COVERS THEM WHILE IN CANADA. IN MANY INSTANCES A SUPPLEMENTAL POLICY IS REQUIRED.

8. FIREARMS: WHILE NOT LIMITED TO THE YUKON, ALL TRAVELERS TO CANADA SHOULD KEEP IN MIND CANADA'S EXTREMELY STRICT LAWS REGARDING FIREARMS. IN GENERAL, HANDGUNS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN CANADA. CANADIAN LAW REQUIRES THAT OFFICIALS MUST CONFISCATE GUNS FROM ANYONE CROSSING THE BORDER WHO DENIES HAVING A GUN IN HIS/HER POSSESSION. THE CONFISCATED GUNS ARE NEVER RETURNED. IT IS POSSIBLE TO TAKE HUNTING RIFLES INTO CANADA UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. ANYONE CONSIDERING IT SHOULD CONTACT THE NEAREST CANADIAN CONSULATE IN ADVANCE FOR

DETAILED INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTION. IN ALL CASES, TRAVELERS SHOULD DECLARE ANY FIREARMS IN THEIR POSSESSION TO CANADIAN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES WHEN ENTERING CANADA. IF THE TRAVELER IS DENIED PERMISSION TO BRING THE FIREARM INTO CANADA, IN MANY CASES THERE ARE FACILITIES NEAR THE BORDER CROSSING WHERE FIREARMS COULD BE SURRENDERED AND STORED PENDING THE TRAVELER'S RETURN TO THE U.S.

9. INFORMATION: FOR FURTHER INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE U.S. CITIZENS TRAVELING TO RENDEZVOUS '82 MAY CONTACT THE CONSULAR SECTION OF THE U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL AT 1075 WEST GEORGIA ST., VANCOUVER, CANADA V6E 4E9 AT TEL: 604-685-4333. THOSE TRAVELING TO EASTERN CANADA MAY CONTACT THE CONSULAR SECTION OF THE U.S. EMBASSY AT 300 WELLINGTON ST. OTTAWA, CANADA K1P 5T3 AT (613) 938-8338.

10. REVIEW DATE: AUGUST 3, 1990.

11. THIS ADVISORY ALERTS U.S. CITIZENS TO AN INCREASED NUMBER OF CASES OF MENINGITIS IN EASTERN CANADA AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN THE YUKON TERRITORY DUE TO THE ANTICIPATED LARGE INFLUX OF VISITORS FOR "RENDEZVOUS '82".

4. THE FRONTIER: THE YUKON MAY BE CONSIDERED FRONTIER TERRITORY IN MANY AREAS. FACILITIES FOR CAR REPAIR, WHILE GENERALLY ADEQUATE, MAY SOMETIMES BE LIMITED OUTSIDE OF THE LARGER COMMUNITIES. BECAUSE OF DISTANCE FROM MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS, PRICES ARE HIGHER THAN IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES. GASOLINE COSTS AVERAGE \$2.19 PER U.S. GALLON. LUNCH IN A TYPICAL SMALL COMMUNITY LIKE TESLIN RUNS FROM \$3.00 TO \$7.00, WHILE DINNER IS \$5.00 TO \$17.00.

5. THE HIGHWAY: THE ALASKA (FORMERLY THE ALCAN) HIGHWAY STARTS IN DAWSON CREEK, B.C. AND RUNS NORTH AND WEST THROUGH FT. ST. JOHN, FT. NELSON TO THE YUKON TERRITORY TOWNS OF WATSON LAKE, THE CAPITAL CITY OF WHITEHORSE AND ON INTO ALASKA, ENDING AT FAIRBANKS, NEARLY 1,500 MILES FROM ITS BEGINNING. FOR MOST OF ITS LENGTH IT IS A TWO OR FOUR LANE DIVIDED HIGHWAY. MOST OF IT IS IN GOOD CONDITION, AND PREVIOUSLY ROUGH SECTIONS HAVE BEEN REPAIRED FOR THE CELEBRATIONS. DISTANCES ARE VAST. THE HIGHWAY RUNS THROUGH SOME SPECTACULARLY BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, BUT MUCH OF IT IS SPARSELY INHABITED. GAS STATIONS AVERAGE AROUND 50 TO 60 MILES APART, WITH THE LONGEST STRETCH BEING ABOUT 97 MILES. ALMOST EVERY COMMUNITY PROVIDES MEDICAL SERVICES, WITH THE LONGEST STRETCH BETWEEN FACILITIES BEING ABOUT 150 MILES.

6. LODGING: A FULL RANGE OF CAMPING AND MOTEL LODGING CAN BE FOUND IN THE YUKON. FURTHER AWAY FROM POPULATION CENTERS, HOWEVER, FACILITIES CAN RANGE FROM RUSTIC TO PRIMITIVE. SEVERAL NEW MOTELS AND CAMPGROUNDS ARE OPENING THIS YEAR, BUT AS WITH ALL DESTINATION ROUTES TRAVELERS ARE ADVISED TO MAKE RESERVATIONS -- PARTICULARLY DURING THE PEAK MONTH OF JULY. IT MIGHT ALSO BE WISE TO PLAN TRAVEL EITHER A LITTLE EARLIER OR A LITTLE LATER THAN PEAK SEASON. BOTH LATE MAY AND EARLY SEPTEMBER CAN BE BEAUTIFUL AND RELAXED TIMES TO VISIT ALASKA AND THE YUKON.

ALASKA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 1992

For Information Contact:
Connel Murray, Director
Alaska Division of Tourism
(907) 465-2012

NORTHERN TOURISM OFFICIALS CRITICIZE REPORTS OF STATE DEPARTMENT TRAVEL ADVISORY

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA -- Tourism officials in both Alaska and Canada reacted strongly today to reports of a travel advisory issued by the United States State Department, which indicated travelers might have trouble finding accommodations along the Alaska Highway in the Yukon Territory.

"We've read the advisory and frankly we're mystified as to how reports could be so misleading," said Connel Murray, Alaska's Director of Tourism.

One report, widely circulated in Alaska, stated flatly that finding a motel or a gas station in the Yukon can be tough. Not necessarily true, said Murray.

• more •



"We've been monitoring the situation closely, and while we are expecting a banner year because of the 50th anniversary celebration of the construction of the Alaska highway, we have no indication that travelers will have problems finding accommodations and other services."

Murray's views were echoed by Klaus Roth, director of tourism marketing for Canada's Yukon Territory. Roth indicated the Yukon has been aggressive in increasing its ability to accommodate visitors. As an example, he cited the expansion of existing R.V. parks and campgrounds, and the addition of new ones to accommodate the expected increases in traffic. He also noted the Alaska Highway, which gained fame as the "Alcan" when it was constructed through virtual wilderness in 1942, is now paved through most of its nearly 1,500-mile length.

He also stressed that while the highway did, indeed, traverse the Yukon's "frontier country" -- as the travel advisory described it -- services for the motorist were more than adequate.

"After all, people have been driving this highway for half-a-century now and we've had to generate the facilities to take care of them including hotels and motels, rural lodges, gas stations and service facilities, and medical facilities," stressed Roth.

Murray said the State of Alaska had also been taking the necessary steps to accommodate expected increases in highway travel. Waysides and parks have been upgraded and an ongoing highway improvement program is underway as weather permits, he said.

- more -

Additionally, Murray countered points made in the advisory about the highway.

- There is no point on the highway where there is more than 97 miles between gas stations, and the average is closer to 55 miles.
- Almost every town along the highway has medical facilities. The greatest distance between medical facilities is 150 miles.
- Gas prices throughout Canada are higher than U.S. On the highway, prices average \$2.19 per U.S. gallon, certainly not triple most U.S. prices.

Murray also said telephone and mail inquiries were pointing to a longer-than-average season on the highway. Businesses that serve motorists have been alerted to be prepared for visitors arriving earlier than usual, and departing later.

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI
ALASKA

COMMITTEES:

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE (VICE CHAIRMAN)
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
FOREIGN RELATIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate

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(202) 224-8888

222 WEST 7TH AVENUE, BOX 1
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KENAI, AK 99811-7718
(907) 283-5808

109 MAIN STREET
KETCHIKAN, AK 99801-8489
(907) 225-8880

February 7, 1992

Ms. Elizabeth Tamposi
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Consular Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ms. Tamposi:

A recent travel advisory for Canada has come to my attention (copy attached). I would like to take the opportunity to express several concerns I have about the contents of this travel advisory, and the manner in which it was written.

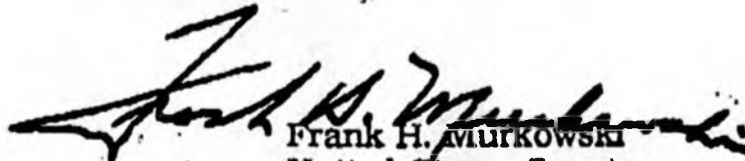
As you know, Alaska is a state that depends heavily on the tourism industry to support its economy. It is unfortunate that the travel advisory that was issued on Canada which concerned a Meningitis outbreak in the Eastern portion of Canada could be mistakenly associated with the advisory's notice about the 1992 celebration of the building of the Alaska Highway, the Alcan. Travelers may not realize the great distances that separate Eastern and Western Canada and may change their travel plans to Alaska accordingly, in order to avoid what they might perceive as a risk to their health. Obviously, this could easily adversely affect Alaska's tourism industry.

I understand that the State Department is attempting to inform travelers of conditions through Canada in this advisory. However, I take exception to the need for extreme detail. Travelers going through Canada to Alaska will probably expect that it is a long distance and do not need to be told, for example, that "Further away from population centers, the facilities can range from primitive to non-existent." On the contrary, the State of Alaska and Canada, in anticipation of the 1992 celebration, have expended much time and effort to provide quality facilities for travelers through these areas.

I am sure you realize that many Americans take seriously the State Department travel advisories. In the future, would it be possible to contact my office in advance of an advisory such as this, since advisory's affecting Western Canada, invariably affect Alaska?

It would be helpful in the future if the travel advisories were worded to be more sensitive to possible adverse outcomes in individual states. Perhaps a statement clarifying that an epidemic condition in one region has no specific bearing on another would be helpful. In this way, you may avoid an unfortunate misunderstanding by readers, and not bring an adverse economic effect.

Sincerely,



Frank H. Murkowski
United States Senator

Enclosure

NEWS



U.S. SENATOR

**FRANK
MURKOWSKI**

OF ALASKA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 7, 1992

CONTACT:
Mike Heatwole 202/224-3924

Alaska Senator Blasts State Dept. Travel Advisory

Sen. Frank Murkowski today insisted that the State Department modify or rescind a travelers advisory issued Thursday. The advisory warns tourists who want to travel to the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Highway to vaccinate young children because of a meningitis outbreak in Eastern Canada and warned of a lack of hotel accommodations in the Yukon.

"I seriously question whether the person who wrote this advisory has ever been west of the Mississippi. This advisory makes conditions in the Yukon Territory sound worse than a third world country and that couldn't be farther from the truth. It's tone is just lamebrain.

"Americans and Canadians have been traveling the highway for years. It used to be a dirt road chock full of potholes, but now the road is paved almost the entire way. I think now the worst one can expect is a dirty car," Murkowski said.

"I take strong exception to the creative writing used in this advisory. While the accommodations in the Yukon won't rival the Waldorf Astoria, they certainly aren't primitive," Murkowski said.

Murkowski said he had two immediate problems with the advisory.

"While a meningitis outbreak is an issue of great concern, Eastern Canada is 1,250 miles away from where most visitors will be

traveling. Pairing this advisory with the Alaska Highway celebration was irrational and downright shameful.

"Second, the State of Alaska, the federal government and the government of Canada have been preparing for this celebration for years and have gone out of their way to make sure that each person traveling the Alaska Canada Highway this season has an incredible experience and will want to come back. In most cases the facilities and the hospitality a guest will receive will be better than most roadside inns," Murkowski said.

The Alaskan senator said the average distance between service stations was 20 to 50 miles with the longest stretch being 100 miles. In addition, both the Alaska Division of Tourism and the Yukon's Ministry of Tourism have made provisions to accommodate the expected additional visitors this year.

Murkowski said it was unfortunate that this advisory was issued at a time when most people are making their summer plans and that he hoped that the inaccurate advisory could be changed in time to prevent people from canceling their vacations.

Murkowski today sent a letter to the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs asking them to correct the traveler's advisory. Murkowski also has been in contact with the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver.

"It's fair to say that a little common sense will go a long way in planning for a journey along the Alaska Highway and the State Department Advisory should have emphasized that. The advisory recommended having reservations made in advance due to the large influx of visitors. The same could be said for someone visiting Hawaii or Vail, Colorado, during peak visiting months," Murkowski said.

The Alaska Highway construction project is generally recognized as one of the greatest engineering feats of the 20th century. During World War II, the Army saw a tactical need to have a road connecting the Lower 48 with the Alaska Territory in case of Japanese invasion. The 1520-mile road project, which took eight months and 12 days to construct, was placed on the "fast-track" after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor.

"The Alaska Highway is full of history. I hope that everyone planning to come up this summer will do so and experience the magic of this place we call home," Murkowski said.

Travel Advisory

United States Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20520



There are three types of travel advisories. Warnings recommend deferral of travel to all or part of a country. Cautions advise about unusual security conditions, including the potential for unexpected detention, unstable political conditions, or serious health problems. Not intended to deter travel to a country. Notices provide information on situations that do not present a broad-scale risk, but which could result in inconveniences or difficulty for traveling Americans.

Canada — Notice

Canada - Notice
February 4, 1982

Summary: There has been an increased number of cases of meningococcal disease in several areas of eastern Canada. Although the risk for travelers is very low, U.S. travelers may wish to consider having their children between the ages of 2 and 19 vaccinated against this disease. In addition, in Western Canada, the Yukon territory is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the building of the Alcan Highway - its "Rendezvous 92." U.S. travelers planning to attend "Rendezvous 92" should be aware of and take appropriate precautions related to travel in the far north. End summary.

Meningitis: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Quebec and Ontario Health Ministries have issued a health alert concerning the increased number of cases of meningococcal disease in several areas of eastern Canada. The affected areas include the Ottawa-Carleton area, the Laurentides region north of Montreal, the Lanaudiere region, the Outaouais area in West Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. As a preventive measure, a program of vaccination is being instituted for children in those areas. The risk for short-term travelers is very low and no particular precautions are needed for those traveling to the affected areas for most activities, such as skiing or shopping. However, because the number of cases among school-aged children is substantially above normal, vaccinations should be considered for children 2 through 19 years of age traveling to the affected areas if they will be in very close physical contact with local school-aged children, or will be staying more than three days and expect to have social contact with local school-aged children. Ideally, the vaccine should be administered at least 10 days before travel. Vaccination is not recommended for children under two years of age, and adults are considered at very low risk. For further information, contact the Centers for Disease Control's International Hotline at (404) 332-4559.

"Rendezvous 92": 1982 marks the 50th anniversary of the building of the Alcan Highway. The Yukon territory is commemorating the event with a series of highly publicized celebrations throughout the year as part of its "Rendezvous 92" celebration. As Canadian officials anticipate a large influx of U.S. visitors, it is worthwhile for U.S. citizens to keep in mind potential problems when traveling in the far north.

The Frontier: The Yukon is definitely frontier territory. Facilities for car repair outside of the capital, Whitehorse, are extremely limited. Almost all consumer goods must be brought in from other parts of Canada or Alaska over long distances. It is 1200 miles from Edmonton to Whitehorse and 1500 miles from Vancouver to Whitehorse. The cost of food, gas, etc. can be triple what it would be in the U.S.

The Highway: The Alcan highway runs from Edmonton, Alberta, through British Columbia (Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson) through the Yukon (Watson Lake, Whitehorse) and into Alaska. For most of its length it is a two or four lane divided highway. Most of it is in good condition and previously rough sections have been repaired for the celebrations. The distances are vast. The highway runs through some spectacularly beautiful areas, but much of the area is essentially uninhabited. Even during peak tourist season, traffic outside of towns can be very sparse.

Lodging: A full range of camping and motel lodging can be found in the Yukon. Further away from population centers, the facilities can range from primitive to non-existent. Several new motels and campgrounds are opening this year, but travelers are advised to have confirmed reservations, especially for the Whitehorse area, during the peak summer months.

Medical Care: As with car repair, medical facilities are extremely limited outside of Whitehorse. Care can be expensive and most hospitals and clinics will insist on payment before discharge. While some (but not all) now accept Visa or Mastercard, most will not wait for payment from insurance companies. Problems with collecting bills from Americans have made medical institutions increasingly cautious. Travelers should check to make sure their medical and auto insurance covers them while in Canada. In many instances a supplemental policy is required.

Firearms: While not limited to the Yukon, all travelers to Canada should keep in mind Canada's extremely strict laws regarding firearms. In general, handguns are not permitted in Canada. Canadian law requires that officials must confiscate guns from anyone crossing the border who denies having a gun in his/her possession. The confiscated guns are never returned. It is possible to take hunting rifles into Canada under certain circumstances. Anyone considering it should contact the nearest Canadian consulate in advance for detailed information and instruction. In all cases, travelers should declare any firearms in their possession to Canadian customs authorities when entering Canada. If the traveler is denied permission to bring the firearm into Canada, in many cases there are facilities near the border crossing where firearms could be surrendered and stored pending the traveler's return to the U.S.

Information: For further information/assistance U.S. citizens traveling to "Rendezvous 82" may contact the Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General at 1075 West Georgia St., Vancouver, Canada V6E 4E9 at tel: (604) 685-4311. Those traveling to eastern Canada may contact the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy at 100 Wellington St., Ottawa, Canada K1P 5T1 at tel: (613) 238-5338.

No. 82-016

This advisory alerts U.S. citizens to an increased number of cases of meningitis in eastern Canada and potential problems in the Yukon territory due to the anticipated large influx of visitors for "Rendezvous 82."

FOR RELEASE

February 7, 1992 #018

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY CONSIDERED MYSTIFYING

WHITEHORSE - "There's no denying" says Tourism Minister Art Webster, "that compared to downtown Washington D.C., the Yukon is definitely 'frontier country.' But the services provided and the amenities offered by hospitable people throughout our beautiful territory exceed every expectation of the thousands of American highway travellers who safely visit the Yukon every year."

The minister was reacting to a U.S. State Department travel advisory released Wednesday.

It warned travellers that it may be hard to find a motel or gas stations along the Alaska Highway during this summer's 50th anniversary commemorations of the construction of the Alaska Highway.

"The statement is ridiculous," said Webster. "Certainly our bookings are up due to the Highway Anniversary, but recent indications are that plenty of accommodation is still available."

Webster went on to say although research indicates that the anniversary events this year may result in an increase of 18,000 to 20,000 visitors over last year, the expected increase equals tourist highs set in 1987.

"We certainly didn't have a problem accommodating tourist needs in '87," the minister said, "so I can't imagine why we would have one now. Our industry has developed significantly in the past four years and we are well-positioned to handle the numbers."

The advisory warned Americans that gas stations and medical facilities are limited.

.../2

"The Yukon portion of the Alaska Highway is about 600 miles, Webster continued. "There are gas stations approximately every 50 miles and medical facilities ranging from nursing stations to full-fledged hospitals in the communities along the route."

The Yukon Department of Tourism is currently working with representatives from Alaska, Tourism Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon to correct the impressions left by the advisory.

"People who have been researching a trip to the Yukon are well informed about our geography and our amenities," the minister said. "However, we have to allay any false impressions to ensure future travellers aren't discouraged from travelling to the Yukon."

- 30 -

CONTACT:

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Director, Tourism Development
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Dennis Senger
Public Affairs Bureau
(403) 667-5431

Government of the Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6

**** PRESS RELEASE ****

DATE: MARCH 20, 1992

**CONTACT: REPRESENTATIVE TOM MOYER'S OFFICE
ALEXIS MILLER
465-4930**

**BOGUS TRAVEL ADVISORY CONDEMNED BY HOUSE. PLEA MADE TO STATE
DEPARTMENT TO AVOID FUTURE FLAPS**

Future flaps over travel advisories on the Alaska Highway may be avoided with the unanimous passage of HJR 81. The resolution, introduced by the House Special Committee on International Trade and Tourism, chaired by Representative Tom Moyer (D-Fairbanks) passed the House this morning. HJR 81 urges the U.S. State Department to check with affected parties, such as tourism offices, on the accuracy of travel advisories issued by the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

The recent flap erupted over an erroneous travel advisory issued by the State Department in early February. The federal agency's 24-hour hotline number to its Citizens Emergency Center in Washington, D.C. offered a taped recording about conditions in the Yukon and British Columbia along the Alaska Highway.

Sensational statements were made about food and gas prices, medical facilities, and lodging and car repair. Ultimately the State Department reissued the advisory after prodding from Alaska

and Canadian tourism officials.

-MORE-

2-2-2-2

March 20, 1992

Representative Moyer said, "The bogus travel advisory ended up getting us a lot of good press because we were able to nip it in the bud. Next time we might not be so lucky. So, we don't want a 'next time.' If the State Department listens to this resolution, there won't be one!"

-30-

NORTH COUNTRY OVERTURE

Alaska Highway marks its 50th

BY N. PATTY

As we were driving north in the Alaska Highway about 100 miles from Seattle, it passed in either direction in a half-hour on the Yukon. Suddenly, shafts of sunlight on a chain of snow-tipped steep hills and climbing. The sun flashed from a cloud that was fastened to the wall of

North Country overture. It was beautiful. There were no mountains anywhere. A grand road pointed north — a road of road curving and spruce forests to low mountains, bounding hills of low hills in the road bending around river the track of a wandering

from Dawson Creek, in British Columbia, into a Yukon Territory, deep in Alaska. The road on the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek since the northern is opened 50 years ago. Distance: 1,488 miles to Fairbanks. And de- which access route to is chosen — from the miles from Seattle to 2,331 miles from Great to Fairbanks. In front of us, nobody said the granddaughter. Are we going to start see-

road shimmering like liquid Klusene Lake, the Yukon a milepost 1000 from Dawson

breeze ruffled a patch of wildflowers by a wood marked the spot as Sol-

there, on a frosty day in 1943, that American and officials cut a ribbon to Alaska Highway to north-convoy. It was at war had bombed Pearl Harbor. We fears that enemy forces had invaded Alaska — and after they did.

1, 1943 — President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered construction of a new highway to Alaska. In 1943 — Thousands of American soldiers and airmen in tent camps out through 1,500 miles of wilderness.

a peak of construction, 11,500 troops and 7,500 civilians work on the new highway. Engineers regiments built

cludes the 10th, 35th, 63rd, 85th, 97th, 104th and 111st regiments. They came civilian contractors to straighten some of the curves and flatten dangerous grades. The job was done in just eight months and 11 days. The Corps of Engineers called the project "one of the greatest undertakings since the building of the Panama Canal." And now it is time to remember. Throughout 1992, Alaska and Canada will be celebrating Alaska Highway's 50th anniversary. With a series of events to mark the highway's 50th birthday.

It is estimated that at least 100,000 visitors will be traveling the Alaska Highway in 1992. That would compare with about 70,000 highway travelers in 1991.

Hopefully, says Susan Kemp, executive director of the Fairbanks-based Great Alaska Highways Society, the turnout will include many of those veterans who built the wartime road.

Today's Alaska Highway, while still an adventure road, is mostly a mild, two-lane highway that is paved for all but a few miles.

"We're going to have a party," she says. The highway-builders of 1943 faced brutal conditions. Bottomless muds, swamps, washed trucks and bulldozers. Flash floods ripped away dozens of bridges. Clouds of mosquitoes tormented workers. Steel snapped to temperatures that fell to 70 degrees below zero. Trucks overturned on sharp curves around rivers and lakes, taking their passengers to frigid graves. Tired rookie truckers, unaware of the hazards of hypothermia, pulled off the road for naps — and never awakened.

Brig. Gen. James A. O'Connor, the officer in charge of construction in the southern sector, said of the troops: "They were from the same pattern as the frontiersmen who followed Lewis and Clark across the continent."

We were reading the sign at Soldier's Summit when a fancy, blue-and-white motorcoach coasted to a stop above Klusene Lake. The logo on the side of the coach read: "Alaska Yukon Explorer."

This was not just any motorcoach. It was 60 feet long and came equipped with an add-on lounge unit — attached to the rear of the coach with a sort of accordion fold — where an attendant serves pampered passengers soft drinks and pastries.

called, "Great day." He glanced at the Soldier's Summit sign, lit a cigarette and stretched. The ghosts of the Alaska Highway stirred. If the crews who built the remarkable road back in 1943 had seen anything like this fancy bus, they probably would have thought it was delivering passengers from another plane.

Tourism was far from the minds of those tired, homesick men. The first highway was a primitive truck trail. Conditions ranged from sudden mudslides to choking dust as the seasons changed.

Today's Alaska Highway, while still an adventure road, is mostly a mild, two-lane highway that is paved for all but a few miles.

"No longer a wilderness road, rather a road through the wilderness," says the editors of "The Milepost," the reliable Alaska Highway guide book. It is an accurate description.

By the way, the Alaska Highway never officially was the "Alcan." Alcan is a nickname, of uncertain origin, left over from World War II. Old-timers also dubbed it the "Old Can Highway," for all the discarded oil cans and fuel drums strewn through the construction zones. The modern Alaska Highway has an appeal for free-roaming travelers that is difficult to explain. It's something like trekking in the Himalayas or rafting the Amazon.

Robert Service, the Yukon's gold-rush bard, tried to explain the spell of the North Country with rhymes that told of a land "where the mountains are nameless and the rivers all run God knows where."

But there's more to it than that, say highway travelers. First, there is the solitude of the open road, the silence. "The Alcan," the Alaskans call it.

Nature turns up the volume for the snap of a twig, the song of a bird, even the dive-bombing whines of a mosquito. The sky seems bigger, wider here.

You're on your own — it might be a half-day's drive between repair garages and doctors — but the feeling is one of exhilaration, not danger.

Another here is the scenery — and the scale of it. The route through the North Country is orchestrated with a vast wilderness of lofty mountains, shining lakes, braided rivers and wildlife.

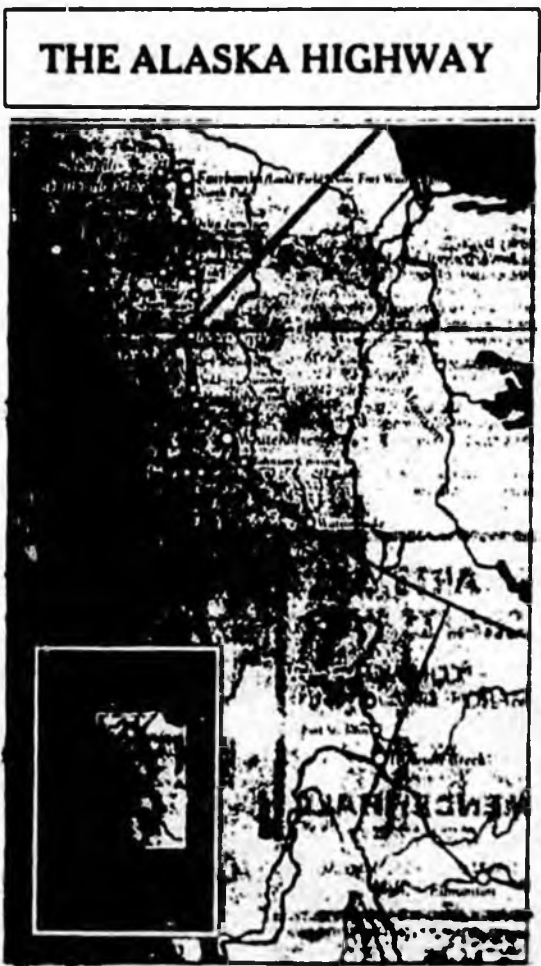
Mountains fill the sky. Forests spread across foothills, over the horizon, beyond imagination. Herds of caribou, muskoxen in the thousands, moose and reindeer like ideas over mountains and marshes. Highways wind atop ridges so high that at times the view is like looking down from a high plane.

And only once in awhile is there evidence of human presence — scattered highway houses, a building of log cabins, a covey tourist lodge, a cabin that smells of many mornings' bacon on the grill, a wind-battered country store, a tiny church.

The only "big" city in the almost



On the road: Mountains tower above the Alaska highway near Klusene Lake in the Yukon.



North to Alaska: The highway covers 1,488 miles from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks.

Warning is eased Highway is 'basic,' not dangerous

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The State Department has revised a recent warning to travelers planning trips on the Alaska Highway through Canada's Yukon Territory. The department issued a traveler's advisory Feb. 4 warning that there were few motel rooms, service stations and medical facilities along the Yukon stretch of the highway.

'The new advisory encourages travelers to use common sense, which makes sense in planning any long journey.'

— Sen. Frank Murkowski

The highway runs from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, through the Yukon to Fairbanks, Alaska and the Yukon are celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and many tourists are expected to travel the highway this summer.

The revised advisory uses "far less sensational language," according to a news release issued recently by Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska. Rather than saying lodging is "primitive to non-existent" along the Canadian stretch of the highway, the new advisory says lodging is "basic" outside of the four main towns. It also warns that the longest stretch between medical facilities is about 130 miles, rather than saying such facilities were "extremely limited outside Whitehorse."

"The new advisory encourages travelers to use common sense, which makes sense in planning any long journey," Murkowski said. "But at least it isn't the totally uninformative trips that was released earlier."

Murkowski said the new advisory was issued after complaints by Alaska's congressional delegation and other Alaskans.

Last year, 80,000 vacationers drove the two-lane road, which is sometimes called the last great driving adventure remaining in North America. This year, with both Alaska and Canadian governments actively promoting the anniversary, the figure is expected to be 20,000 higher.

"The first two words are mysterious and magic — that's what comes to me when I think of the road. And I was born here in Alaska," says Susan C. Kemp, executive director of the Great Alaska Highways Society.

But tourist officials do worry that the celebration, which kicked off 11 days ago in Dawson Creek, could pose problems for the industry. Peak summer tourist travel on Alaska roads often means traffic jams, miles of no-vacancy signs, road stops piled with human waste and long waits for everything from dinner reservations to accommodations to see on the buses that take sightseers into Denali National Park.

The Los Angeles Times contributed to this report.

NORTH COUNTRY OVERTURE

Alaska Highway marks its 50th

By STANTON H. PATTY

We were driving north on the Alaska Highway, about 1,800 miles from Seattle.

No vehicles had passed in either direction for more than a half-hour.

Daybreak in the Yukon. Clouds parted. And suddenly, shafts of sunshine poured down on a chain of mountain peaks - snow-tipped steeples, 6,000 feet high and climbing, that seemed to be hanging in the sky.

A burst of sun flashed from a blue-white glacier that was fastened like a gaudy diamond in the wall of mountains.

It was a North Country overture, big, bold, and beautiful.

"I never knew there were mountains like that anywhere," a granddaughter said from the back seat.

The highway pointed north - a long, thin ribbon of road curving through birch and spruce forests toward faraway mountains, bounding over the saddles of low hills in the foreground and bending around river gorges like the track of a wandering grizzly.

The route - from Dawson Creek, in northeastern British Columbia, through Canada's Yukon Territory and on to Fairbanks, deep in Alaska's heartland.

Everything on the Alaska Highway is measured from Dawson Creek, milepost 0 since the northern highway was opened 50 years ago.

Driving distance - 1,488 miles from Dawson to Fairbanks. And depending on which access route to Dawson Creek is chosen - from the west or from the east - motorists cover 2,313 miles from Seattle to Fairbanks, 2,354 miles from Great Falls, Mont., to Fairbanks.

"Nobody in front of us, nobody in back of us," said the granddaughter. "When are we going to start seeing bears?"

Just ahead shimmering like liquid jade was Kluane Lake, the Yukon's largest. Milepost 1030 from Dawson Creek.

A light breeze ruffled a patch of pink and gold wildflowers by a wind-eroded sign that marked the spot as Soldier's Summit.

It was there, on a frosty day in November 1942, that American and Canadian officials cut a ribbon to open the Alaska Highway to north-bound military convoys.

America was at war. Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. There were fears that enemy forces would invade Alaska - and six months later they did.

Feb. 11, 1942: President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered construction of an emergency highway to Alaska.

March 1942: Thousands of soldiers, bewildered American settlers found themselves in tents, camped in mud through 1,500 miles of tundra.

At the onset of construction, 11 military troops and 7,500 civilians were at work on the new highway.

Soldiers from seven U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regiments built the banner road. The roll call in-

cludes the 18th, 35th, 83rd, 86th, 97th, 240th and 341st regiments.

Then came civilian contractors to straighten some of the curves and flatten dangerous grades.

The job was done in just eight months and 11 days.

The Corps of Engineers called the project "one of the greatest undertakings since the building of the Panama Canal."

And now it is time to remember. Throughout 1992, Alaska and Canada will be celebrating Alaska Highway Rendezvous '92, with a series of events to mark the highway's 50th birthday.

Rendezvous planners are predicting that at least 100,000 visitors will be traveling the Alaska Highway in 1992. That would compare with about 70,000 highway travelers in 1991.

Hopefully, says Susan Kemp, executive director of the Fairbanks-based Great Alaska Highway Society, the turnout will include many of those veterans who built the wartime road.

Today's Alaska Highway, while still an adventure road, is mostly a mild, two-lane highway that is paved for all but a few miles.

"We're going to have a party," she says.

The highway-builders of 1942 faced brutal conditions: bottomless muskeg swamps, snow-laden trucks and bulldozers. Flash floods ripped away dozens of bridges. Clouds of mosquitoes ferociously bit.

Neck-snapped in temperatures that fell to 70 degrees below zero. Trucks overturned on sharp curves around rivers and lakes, taking their passengers in frigid graves. Tired, rookie truckers, unaware of the hazards of hypothermia, pulled off the road for naps - and never awoke.

But then James A. O'Connor, the officer in charge of construction of the southern sector, said of the team: "They were from the same pattern as the frontiersmen who followed Lewis and Clark across the continent."

"We were reading the sign at Soldier's Summit when a lance, blue and white motorcoach crashed to stop above Kluane Lake. The sign on the side of the coach read: 'Alaska-Yukon Reporter'."

"This was not just any motorcoach. It was an old long and camouflaged with an add-on sounder attached to the rest of the coach with a sort of accordion fold - there an attempt to serve as a barrier between soft drinks and coffee."

Here, one of the passengers called "Great day."

He glanced at the Soldier's Summit sign, lit a cigarette and stretched.

The ghosts of the Alaska Highway stirred.

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By the way, the Alaska Highway never officially was the "Alcan."

Alcan is a nickname, of uncertain origin, left over from World War II. Old-timers also dubbed it the "Oil Can Highway," for all the discarded oil cans and fuel drums strewn through the construction zones.

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Nature turns up the volume for the snap of a twig, the song of a bird, even the drive-bumping whine of a mosquito. The sky seems bigger, wider here.

You're on your own - it might be a half-day's drive between repair garages and doctors - but the feeling is one of exhilaration, not danger.

Another lure is the scenery - and the scale of it. The route through the North Country is orchestrated with a vast wilderness of lofty mountains, shaggy lakes, braided rivers and wildlife.

Mountains fill the sky. Forests spread across foothills, over the horizon, beyond imagination. Herds of caribou, sometimes in the thousands, roam and move like lilies over meadows and marshes. Highways wind atop ridges as high that at times the view is like looking down from a bush plane.

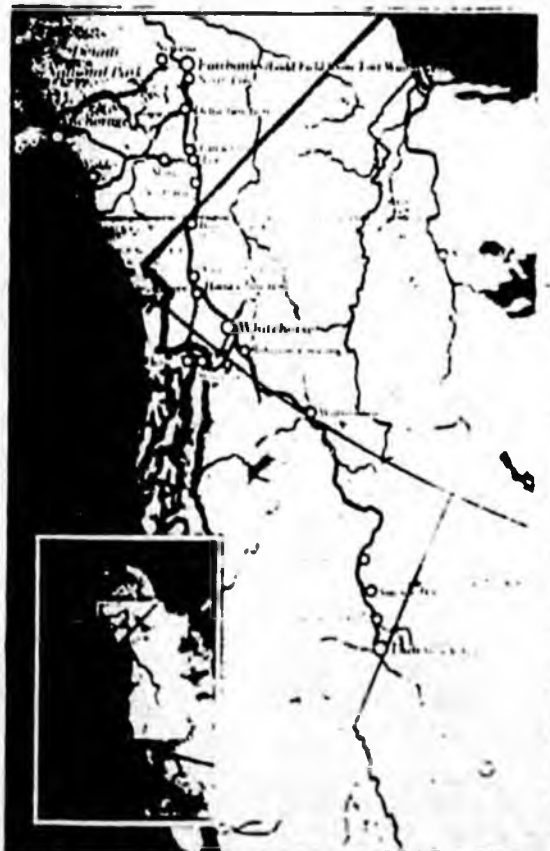
And only once in a while is there evidence of human presence - a trailered highway hawk, a huddle of log cabins, a covey tourist lodge, a cafe that serves all manner of baked-on-the-griddle, a sand-battered country store, a lily church.

The only "big" city in the alms: The only "big" city in the alms: Please turn to Highway, Page 10



On the road: Mountains tower above the Alaska Highway near Kluane Lake in the Yukon.

THE ALASKA HIGHWAY



North to Alaska: The route through the Yukon Territory and into Alaska. Dawson Creek is the starting point.

Warni is ease Highway 'basic,' no dangerou

The State Dept. revised a report to travelers warning of the danger of driving through Canada's Yukon.

The department's earlier advisory Feb. 6 said there were few motel for Alaskans and medical facilities for the Yukon stretch of the

'The new advisory encourages travelers to use common sense, which is common sense in planning any long journey.

- Sen. Frank Merrill

The highway runs from Creek, British Columbia, Yukon to Fairbanks, Alaska. Yukon are celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and are expected to travel the highway.

The revised advisory is less sensational language, according to a news release issued by Sen. Frank Merrill.

Rather than saying the "primitive to non-existent Canadian stretch of the highway," the new advisory says lodges, outside of the four main towns, also warns that the longer between medical facilities, 150 miles, rather than facilities were "extremely primitive."

"The new advisory encourages travelers to use common sense in planning their journey," Merrill said. "It is the total trip that was released."

Merrill said the new advisory was issued after a committee of congressional advisers urged the change.

Last year, an 800-number for the two-lane road, sometimes called the "Alaska Adventure Road," was set up to help travelers plan their trip.

The first two words of the advisory are "basic" and "common sense." Merrill said he was born here in Alaska.

Sen. Merrill, executive director of the Alaska Highway, said the advisory is a "basic" and "common sense" advisory.

But tourist officials of the celebration, which is being held in Dawson Creek, said the advisory is a "basic" and "common sense" advisory.

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Highway...

Continued from Page 8
1,500 miles between Dawson Creek and Fairbanks is Whitehorse (pop. 20,721), the capital of Yukon Territory.

But even though you're on your own when driving the Alaska Highway - perhaps as never before behind the wheel - you are not really alone. Dusty caravans are in sight much of the time...automobiles, camper trucks, trailers and motorhomes; many hauling canoes, skiffs and mountain bikes.

And the country cues quick friendships with other travelers. One day we turned into a campground by Kluane (Kloo-AH-Ne) Lake. There was a chilly breeze. We walked for awhile by the shore, then decided to have a snack of juice and rolls from the traveling pantry in the trunk of the car.

"Better yet, why don't you have lunch with us?" asked Raul and Yvonne Miller, from Esccondido, Calif.

Our granddaughter, Christine, 12, thought that was a great idea. Shyness is not one of her failings.

The Millers, midway through a two-month circle trip through the north, had parked their camper by Kluane Lake the night before.

Yvonne was heating toasted

cheese sandwiches and vegetable soup.

Raul weighted a table cloth with rocks and pieces of firewood. "There's plenty of food, dig in," he said.

Offering a can of insect repellent is a sure way to get a conversation going with strangers. A popular T-shirt worn by highway travelers has a sketch of a giant mosquito and these words: "I GAVE BLOOD ON THE ALASKA HIGHWAY."

Are the mosquitoes really that bad?

Well, it depends. They can be. But modern repellents - right up there with wonder drugs, say Alaskans and Yukoners - do help discourage the pesky bugs.

Nevertheless, we did hear a motorcoach driver telling about the time up at Delta Junction, in Alaska, when someone mistook a mosquito for floatplane and began refueling the critter.

You'll also meet genuine North Country characters along the way.

There are long-timers like Doug Elston - "Old Griz," they call him - at Kluane Wilderness Village in the Canadian Yukon. For a small fee, he teaches newcomers how to pan for gold, and he tells colorful tales, tall and true.

It is true that Elston helped to build this highway, as a bulldozer operator, back in '42?

"We didn't have enough sense to know that the job was just about impossible." Old Griz said as he swirled a pan of paydirt.

Up in Tok (rhymes with "joke"), about 200 miles southeast of Fairbanks, watch for a hot-pink sign reading: "Rita's Campground and Potpourri Gifts."

Rita and Doug Ewers, highway pioneers for sure, established the first privately owned campground on the Alaska Highway at Tok in 1967.

In those days, only truckers and adventurous motorists dared to drive the mostly gravel, mostly curvy early version of the Alaska Highway. Business was skimpy.

"We advertised at \$1 a person per night, showers included," Rita recalls.

"We worked the whole thing by ourselves then, and that's still the case."

There have been some changes, however. The rate is now \$10 a night, but the showers are still included.

Rita and Doug say that nothing could persuade them to leave Alaska.

"I went 'Outside' (Alaskan for the Lower 48 states) once, for surgery," Doug says. "That was in 1960. I've never had a reason to go back."

From Soldier's Summit, we pulled out onto the highway, aiming toward another distant horizon.

"You're clear forever," the granddaughter said from the back seat, glancing up and down the empty road.

"Mush," she added, giggling. "When are we going to see bears?"

Stanton H. Perry is the retired assistant travel editor of the Seattle Times. He lives in Vancouver, Wash. This article originally was written for the Alaska Division of Tourism.

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Published February 26, 1992



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Advisory

Continued from page A1

Friday and referred inquiries to its main office in Washington, D.C.

State Department officials in Washington, D.C., were unavailable for comment. The federal agency's 24-hour hotline to its Citizens Emergency Center in Washington, D.C., offered the taped recording about the Alaska Highway, along with numerous other taped messages about travel worldwide. The hotline number is (202) 647-5225.

The federal government's notice details difficulties in finding lodging, car repair and emergency medical care in the Yukon, and warns motorists that prices can be triple those charged in the United States.

Murray said he was mystified at the advisory's "misinformation." Costs along the highway are not even double that of the United States, there are plenty of accommodations, no more than 97 miles between gas stations and no more than 150 miles between medical facilities, he said.

"After all, people have been driving this highway for half a century now," said Klaus Roth, director of tourism marketing for the Yukon, in a statement Friday. "And we've had to generate the facilities to take care of them, including hotels and motels, rural lodges, gas stations and service facilities and medical facilities."

Drivers familiar with the Alaska Highway seemed unfazed Friday by news of the advisory.

John Spalding, sales manager for Niles Travelers Inc., an Anchorage recreational vehicle dealer, said he could imagine lines of unsuspecting travelers at motels along the highway and unprepared drivers hitching back to town for a tank of gas.

But Spalding, who has driven the highway many times, said driving the route always has required planning, and motels are almost always full in summer.

"People could get caught running out of gas in between places if they're not paying attention, but there are signs that say no gas for 260 miles or something like that," said Pat Keller, an Anchorage truck driver for the moving company Bekins Northwest.

The American Automobile Association always advises its members to make lodging reservations ahead of time, bring two spare tires, and fill the gas tank when its below half full, said Dan Winker, manager of AAA Alaska. The association also rates summer as the third best time to drive the Alaska Highway, with fall and winter ranked higher, he said.

"I think everybody's panicking (in the Lower 48) because they think 90 million people are coming up," Winker said. "I haven't talked to anybody on this end who's panicking."

The Anchorage

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Locally owned since 1915, Alaska's best newspaper

18 No 39 25¢

U.S. warns travelers to avoid Iraq, Alaska Highway

By DOUG FORD
TIMES BUSINESS WRITER

No Hilton, no Holiday Inn, not even a Motel 6 with a light on awaits travelers along the 1,520-mile Alaska Highway. But does that mean unwary visitors will have to sleep in the rain?

Apparently the U.S. State Department thinks so.

To the chagrin of Alaska and Yukon Territory officials, the federal government has issued an emergency advisory warning people who may be considering visiting Canada and Alaska during the highway's 50th anniversary celebration that they could face an inhospitable wilderness.

Moreover, the taped travel advisory,

released earlier this week, comes on a telephone recording with alarming messages about an outbreak of meningococcal disease in eastern Canada, and hazards in war-torn Yugoslavia and Iraq.

Yes, travel to Alaska, or more precisely driving the highway named for the state that links the 49th state with its Lower 48 counterparts via Canada, has

managed to make the State Department's travelers' advisory on dangerous foreign places.

Rattling their own bureaucratic swords, Alaska and Canada's travel officials said Friday they object to the Alaska Highway being lumped with global hot spots by the U.S. government.

"What started as a localized situation,

has turned into an international flap," said Connel Murray, director of the Alaska Division of Tourism. The Alaska Congressional delegation and Canadian Embassy have demanded the State Department revise the recording, he said.

The State Department's district office in San Francisco declined to comment. See Advisory, back page

TRAVEL ADVISORY

Alaska Highway Celebrations

The Alaska Highway, which stretches through Canada to Alaska, turns 50 years old this year, and communities along the route are celebrating in British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska. The highway, also known as the Alcan Highway and originally the Alaska Canada Military Highway, was built in 1942 in response to the Japanese threat in the Pacific after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The road was laid out in eight months and 12 days by seven regiments of the United States Corps of Engineers. It runs 1,520 miles from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Fairbanks, Alaska. Twenty-five miles of it remain unpaved.

At least 200 events are planned for the Rendezvous '92 anniversary, which is being co-ordinated by a joint committee. Whitehorse in the Yukon will have 10 days of parades, concerts and dances from May 15 to 24 as well as a storytelling festival July 4 to 6 and an international air show on July 26. Elsewhere in the Yukon, Haines Junction offers a two-hour guided historic tour along a section of the original United States Army pioneer road on the highway from May 24 to Sept. 6. Storytelling by old-timers and American Indian elders at Marshall Creek will also be part of this event. Retired veterans from the Army Corps of Engineer Regiments will attend a homecoming re-

union at Watson Lake Sept. 11 to 13. Among other events are dog sled races, a six-hole golf tournament on the frozen Bering Sea, a fiddling festival and concerts and fairs.

Tourists are advised that although highway services are adequate, they are often some distances apart. Gas stations are on average 50 to 60 miles apart, the longest stretch being 97 miles. Travelers are encouraged to make reservations



The New York Times

for hotels and motels through travel agencies in the United States. Otherwise, visitors should have no problem finding R.V. parks and campgrounds.

The calendar of events can be obtained from Great Alaska Highways Society, Post Office Box 74250, Fairbanks, Alaska 99707; (907) 452-8000.