ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 2007-2008 0872

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		Commissions - 02/05/2007	rights-of-way, easements, and public places. Requires that municipality's broadband rules and regulations be neutrally competitive and nondiscriminatory.	
New York	NY A.B. 6688	*Amended and recommited to Assemly Committee on Ways and Means - 06/12/2007*	Establishes a tax credit for the installation or purchase of satellite broadband equipment up to $1,000 for taxpayers residing in an area where broadband is otherwise unavailable.	Tax Incentives
New York	NY A.B. 6689	*To Assembly Committee on Ways and Means - 03/16/2007*	Establishes a tax credit for investment in terrestrial broadband infrastructure to a taxpayer living in a broadband underserved area.	Tax Incentives
New York	NY A.B. 9117	*Referred to Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions - 06/13/2007*	Provides for data collection on the availability of broadband services within the state. This data will be included in a report to be submitted annually to the legislature.	Assessment
New York	NY S.B. 1049/A.B. 2726	*Reported and Committed to Finance - 05/22/2007*	Establishes a broadband tax credit equal to 10 percent of the qualified expenditures incurred for providing current generation broadband services to at least 10 percent of the subscribers in a rural or other underserved area. Offers a 20 percent tax credit for the provision of next generation broadband to rural subscribers, underserved subscribers, or any residential subscriber.	Tax Incentives
New York	NY S.B. 3224	*Amended and Recommitted to Finance - 06/08/2007*	Establishes a tax credit for the installation or purchase of satellite broadband equipment for taxpayers residing in an area where broadband is otherwise unavailable.	Satellite & Tax Incentives
New York	NY S.B. 3239	*Reported and Committed to Finance - 05/15/2007*	Establishes a tax credit for investment in terrestrial broadband infrastructure to a taxpayer living in a broadband underserved area.	Tax Incentives
New York	NY S.B. 5533	*To Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs - 04/25/2007*	Enacts the New York State Wireless Broadband Communication Act of 2007 in order to improve New York State's ability to respond to and recover from a predictable surprise.	Coordination & Leadership
New York	NY S.B. 5391/A.B. 318	*To Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions - 01/03/2007/ To Senate Finance Committee - 04/25/2007*	Provides match-based grants to county-level economic development organizations that are conducting county telecommunication assessments. Requires the Department of Public Service to conduct a study of New York's high-speed internet infrastructure and reports the results to the governor, the president of the senate, and the speaker of the assembly.	Assessment
North Carolina	NC H.B. 757	***Regular Session Ended -08/02/2007***	Creates the legislative study commission on rural internet access and appropriates funding for the study.	Assessment
North Carolina	NC S.B. 1068	***Regular Session Ended -08/02/2007***	Removes the sunset on the e-NC Authority; increases the distribution to local governments of the sales tax on telecommunications and video programming; earmarks a portion of the state's share of the sales tax on these services for grants for broadband deployment, peg channels, and community media centers.	Deployment
North Dakota	ND H.B. 1027	***Second reading failed to pass Senate - 03/19/2007 (Regular Session Ended 04/25/2007)***	Creates a sales tax exemption for wireless service provider equipment and primary sector telecommunications equipment.	Tax Incentives
Ohio	OH HB 72	*To House Committee on*	Creates the Ohio Broadband and Wireless	Assessment

		Public Utilities - 02/27/2007	Telecommunications Task Force to examine and make recommendations on the availability of broadband and wireless telecommunications in Ohio and any economic impact such availability creates, the present or future availability of broadband and wireless telecommunications in all Ohio counties, and any other issues the Task Force deems appropriate.	
Ohio	OH S B 24	***Approved by Governor - 06/30/2007***	Provides that if the director of development determines that a grant from the industrial site improvement fund may create new jobs or preserve existing jobs and employment opportunities in an eligible county, the director may grant up to $750,000 for infrastructure improvements, including broadband installation.	Deployment
Pennsylvania	PA H B 327	*To House Committee on Consumer Affairs - 02/09/2007*	Allows political subdivisions to offer broadband services only after submitting a written request to the local exchange telecommunications company serving the area and when, within two months of receipt of the request, the local exchange telecommunications company or one of its affiliates has not agreed to provide the data speeds requested.	Government Ownership/Operation
South Carolina	SC H B 3569	***Act 169 Approved - 06/14/2007***	Creates the South Carolina Wireless Technology and Communications Commission to oversee implementation of a statewide wireless broadband network; specific duties include leveraging state-owned telecommunications infrastructure and coordinating government and private entities.	Coordination and Leadership
South Carolina	SC S B 465	***Regular Session Ended - 06/29/2007***		
Tennessee	TN H B 2099/S B 1580	***Chapter 164 Approved - 05/15/2007***	Expands membership of theTennessee Broadband Task Force include a representative from the department of education and requires the task force to conduct an annual broadband deployment assessment and submit a report regarding same.	Assessment
Tennessee	TN H B 2100/S B 1572	***Regular Session Ended - 06/12/2007***	Creates the nonprofit Tennessee broadband access corporation to facilitate the deployment of broadband access to every home and business in the state by 1) tracking the deployment and adoption of telecommunications and information technology; 2) enabling public-private partnerships among telecommunications providers and relevant government entities; and 3) serving as a resource for citizens and other government agencies to address concerns and questions regarding telecommunications and information technology issues	Coordination and Leadership
Tennessee	TN H B 2102, S B 1715	***Regular Session Ended - 06/12/2007***	Requires the department of economic and community development to establish the ConnectTN program to support statewide broadband deployment.	Coordination and Leadership
Tennessee	TN H B 2103, S B 1716	***Regular Session Ended - 06/12/2007***	Establishes the ConnectTN program to promote broadband expansion throughout the state. Also authorizes data collection from any public or private entity so that Tennesseans' access to broadband technologies can be assessed.	Assessment
Tennessee	TN H B 2104, S B 1717	***Regular Session Ended - 06/12/2007***	In conjunction with the ConnectTN program, directs the department of economic and community development to work closely with community leaders to develop and implement technology growth strategies.	Coordination and Leadership

Utah	UT S.B. 268	***Act 37 Approved - 03/15/2007***	Establishes a restricted account within the general fund to be used for grant to providers deploying broadband service in rural areas. Appropriates $1 million from the general fund for fiscal year 2007-2008 to the rural broadband service fund restricted account. Requires providers interested in receiving grant money to file an application with a viable business plan that includes the initial terms and conditions of the service they intend to provide.	Rural Access
Vermont	VT H.B. 248	***Act 79 Approved - 06/09/2007***	Establishes the Vermont Telecommunications Authority to facilitate the deployment of broadband infrastructure and services for residents and businesses throughout Vermont with a focus on unserved and underserved areas. The Authority would be able to issue $40,000,000 in bonds to support the goal of ubiquitous broadband and wireless infrastructure by 2010.	Coordination and Leadership
Vermont	VT H.B. 443	***Regular Session Ended - 05/12/2007***	Requires telecommunications providers to adopt a network modernization plan to accelerate the availability of broadband services.	Regulation
Virginia	VA H.B. 2385	***Chapter 322 Approved - 03/13/2007***	Creates separate classification for tangible personal property owned and used by certain providers of wireless broadband Internet service for local taxation purposes.	Tax Incentives
Washington	WA H.B. 1128	***Chapter 522 Approved - 05/15/2007***	Appropriates funding to the Utilities and Transportation Commission to conduct a survey that identifies factors preventing the widespread availability and use of broadband technologies. The survey must collect and interpret reliable geographic, demographic, cultural, and telecommunications technology information to identify broadband disparities in the state.	Assessment
Washington	WA S.B. 5120	***Regular Session Ended - 04/22/2007***	Requires the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic development to commission a survey on the deployment of broadband technologies among households in the state.	Assessment
West Virginia	WV H.B. 3007	***Regular Session Ended - 03/10/2007***	Creates the Wireless Infrastructure Council; authorizes long term leases of state-owned property for the placement and operation of wireless infrastructure; creates the Wireless Infrastructure Assistance Fund; and grants the Commissioner of Highways the power of eminent domain and disbursements.	Coordination and Leadership

All bills are assigned to at least one of the following categories: Assessment, BPL, Coordination & Leadership, Definition, Financing, Government Ownership & Operation, Network Neutrality, Passenger Rail Services, Public-Private Partnership, Repeal, Rights-of-Way, Tax Incentives, and Universal Service.

Compiled by Michelle Larson-Krieg, National Conference of State Legislatures

Denver Office: Tel: 303.364.7700 | Fax: 303.364.7800 | 7700 East First Place | Denver, CO 80230 |
Washington Office: Tel: 202.624.5400 | Fax: 202.737.1069 | 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 515 | Washington, D.C. 20001

Alaska Statewide Telecommunications Workshop

Friday, February 15, 2008
8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Hotel Captain Cook
Quarter Deck

Senator Stevens' Broadband Initiatives

"The Senator remains very focused on the important economic opportunities and quality of life improvements that broadband can bring to Alaska. If you have any questions about any of these, please don't hesitate to give me a call." – Paul Nagle, Republican Chief Counsel Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

* * * * *

S. 1965, Protecting Children in the 21st Century – Senator Stevens introduced this bill with Senator Inouye and 20 co-sponsors.

This bill would require schools that receive Federal E-Rate funds to offer education regarding online behavior, including social networking, chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. Children need to understand how to protect their identity on the Internet and what constitutes suspicious behavior. This bill would also create an interagency working group to identify and encourage technologies and initiatives to help parents protect their children from inappropriate content. Educating children about safe behaviors on the Internet and educating parents about the tools they have available is the single best method to greatly improve Internet safety.

S. 1853, Community Broadband Act of 2007 – Senator Stevens is a cosponsor.

This bill would make it easier for municipalities, cities, and towns across our nation to offer broadband access to their residents through public-private partnerships. When the market doesn't respond quickly enough, local officials need to be able to step in and provide for the broadband needs of their citizens in a responsible way.

FY 08 Omnibus

The omnibus includes a Senator Steven's amendment authorizing $4.5 million for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009 to provide pilot project grants for Internet technology to minority serving institutions, including at least one serving Alaska Natives. Hopefully, with successful pilot projects this program can be expanded to all such institutions. The Omnibus was signed into law late last year.

Sponsored by the University of Alaska and the Institute of the North

Farm Bill

The Senate passed Farm Bill contains a Steven's amendment to update an existing broadband grant program to provide for broadband grants to communities that already have dial-up connections. When the program was first initiated years ago, many communities didn't even have local dial-up access. Obviously, that has changed. Because the program bars communities with dial-up access, over $6 million allocated to Alaska has not yet been awarded. This change will allow that money to go to communities that don't yet have broadband access (but may have dial-up). The conference for the Farm Bill is ongoing.

Internet Tax

Senator Stevens took the lead in securing the compromise to extend the Internet Tax moratorium for seven years. This is the longest extension of the moratorium in its history. This will help keep the price of Internet access affordable for families and continue to expand Internet access.

Universal Service

Senator Stevens has again championed extensions to the ADA exemption for the E-Rate program and prohibiting the FCC from implementing any restrictions on universal service limiting support to a primary line.

The Senator has also registered his concerns with the FCC that they not implement any interim measures to the USF program that would disrupt service rollout to Alaska or other unserved rural areas and has emphasized that any change be competitively neutral.

Provided by:

Paul J. Nagle
Republican Chief Counsel
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United State Senate
554 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-4878 Office Direct
(202) 224-1259 Fax
(202) 215-1285 Mobile
Paul_Nagle@commerce.senate.gov

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

2004

Source
SCS CSHCR 32(FIN)

Legislative Resolve No.
52

Relating to information infrastructure and establishing the Alaska Information Infrastructure Policy Task Force.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the development of information infrastructure will provide Alaska communities with access to broadband connectivity and provide for improved telecommunications, health care, education, homeland security, and economic development opportunities; and

WHEREAS access to fiber optic and wireless connectivity will help bridge the digital divide that separates rural Alaska from the benefits of technological advances realized by urban areas; and

WHEREAS public-private partnerships have been used successfully around the globe to facilitate information infrastructure development; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority may issue conduit revenue bonds for qualified applicants;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature establishes the Alaska Information Infrastructure Policy Task Force to review and analyze the state's current and

long-term information infrastructure needs; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall identify existing public and private fiber and broadband infrastructure in Alaska; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall conduct a preliminary analysis of the state's long-term infrastructure needs; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consider how best to define the state's role and interest in information infrastructure development; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall address the state's long-term information infrastructure needs by encouraging industry and government to take action, either separately or through joint efforts such as pooling and integrated resource planning, to meet those needs; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall develop a long-term information infrastructure plan for Alaska that will efficiently enhance the state's economic future; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of 13 members, including

(1) the commissioner of administration or the commissioner's designee;

(2) the commissioner of military and veterans' affairs or the commissioner's designee;

(3) the commissioner of community and economic development or the commissioner's designee;

(4) one member chosen by the President of the University of Alaska;

(5) six at-large members chosen jointly by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate;

(6) three members of the legislature, including one chosen by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one chosen by the President of the Senate, and one chosen jointly by the minority leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall select a chair from among themselves; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that a staff member and other resources shall be provided to the task force, as necessary, by the legislature; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is to begin work on June 1, 2004, or as soon after that date as possible; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may meet during the interim; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force members shall serve without compensation but are entitled to transportation expenses and per diem as authorized for members of boards and commissions under AS 39.20.180; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall provide a report of its findings, the long-term information infrastructure plan, and any draft legislation the task force finds necessary to meet the identified long-term infrastructure needs of the state to the legislature not later than the first day of the First Regular Session of the Twenty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may make any interim reports on information infrastructure issues that it considers advisable; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is terminated not later than the adjournment of the First Regular Session of the Twenty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

News From The House & Senate Majority

web site: http://www.akrepublicans.org

House Majority Press
Craig Johnson – (907) 269-0167
Renée Limoge – (907) 269-0164

Senate Majority Press
Jeff Turner – (907) 269-0257

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 22, 2004

CONTACT: Renée Limoge (907) 269-0164

First Meeting of Alaska Information Infrastructure Task Force

(ANCHORAGE) – The Alaska Information Infrastructure Task Force held its organization meeting earlier today. The Task Force, made up of members of the community and government were appointed by presiding officers Senator Gene Therriault (R-North Pole) and Representative Pete Kott (R-Eagle River).

"Alaska is perfectly positioned to be an important part of the global economic future. It is vital to our state that we all have access to health care, education, government services, homeland security and economic development through the use of broadband telecommunications services," said Speaker Kott.

Created by HCR 32 during the 23rd Legislature, the Task Force will review and analyze current infrastructure, conduct an analysis of long-term needs, define the state's role, act as advocates to industry and government, and develop a long-term strategic plan for all Alaskans.

Dr. H.A. "Red" Boucher and Commissioner Craig Campbell were selected by fellow members of the Task Force to serve as Co-Chairs.

"This is not a widget committee, but a long-range Alaska policy initiative," said Dr. Boucher

Representative Reggie Joule (D-Kotzebue) said, "It is important that we empower people through information management, as opposed to enabling them, and allow them to embrace change, not fear it." He went on to say, "There are great possibilities but without a plan there are many missed opportunities."

The next meeting of the Task Force will take place on December 3, 2004 at 10:00 A.M. at the Anchorage Legislative Information Office. The public is encouraged to attend.

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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Chair:
Legislative Council

Member:
Community and Regional Affairs
Judiciary
Labor and Commerce – Vice Chair

Session:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-3777
Fax: (907) 465-2819
Toll Free (877) 861-5688

Interim:
10928 Eagle River Road – Suite 238
Eagle River, AK 99501-2133
Phone: (907) 694-8944
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REPRESENTATIVE PETE KOTT
DISTRICT 17 – EAGLE RIVER

Sponsor Statement
for
House Concurrent Resolution 6

In 2003 the Alaska State Legislature passed HCR 32 in order to establish the information Infrastructure Policy Task Force. HCR 6 extends that task force. The task force is charged with consideration of Alaska's role and interest in long-term information infrastructure development in order to provide all Alaska communities improved telecommunications, health care, and education, homeland security, economic development opportunities, and access to government via broadband connectivity.

The Task Force will also investigate and recommend access to fiber optic connectivity to help bridge the divide that separates rural Alaska from the benefits of technological advances realized in urban areas. It will look at successful public-private partnerships to facilitate information infrastructure development. The Task Force will develop a comprehensive package with recommendations including legislation, if necessary, to meet the needs of Alaska.

Unfortunately, time expired last session on HCR 6 and it took the Task Force with it.

The Senate amended version of House Concurrent Resolution 6 reestablishes the Task Force and sets a new date that the Alaska Information Infrastructure Policy Task Force reports its findings and submits any draft legislation to the legislature, and terminates by the first day of the Second Regular Session of the Twenty-Fifth Alaska State Legislature.

We respectfully request favorable consideration and support for HCR 6.

Preliminary Report to the Alaska State Legislature on HCR 32

Relating to Information Infrastructure

and the

Alaska Information Infrastructure Task Force

Alaska's Mission

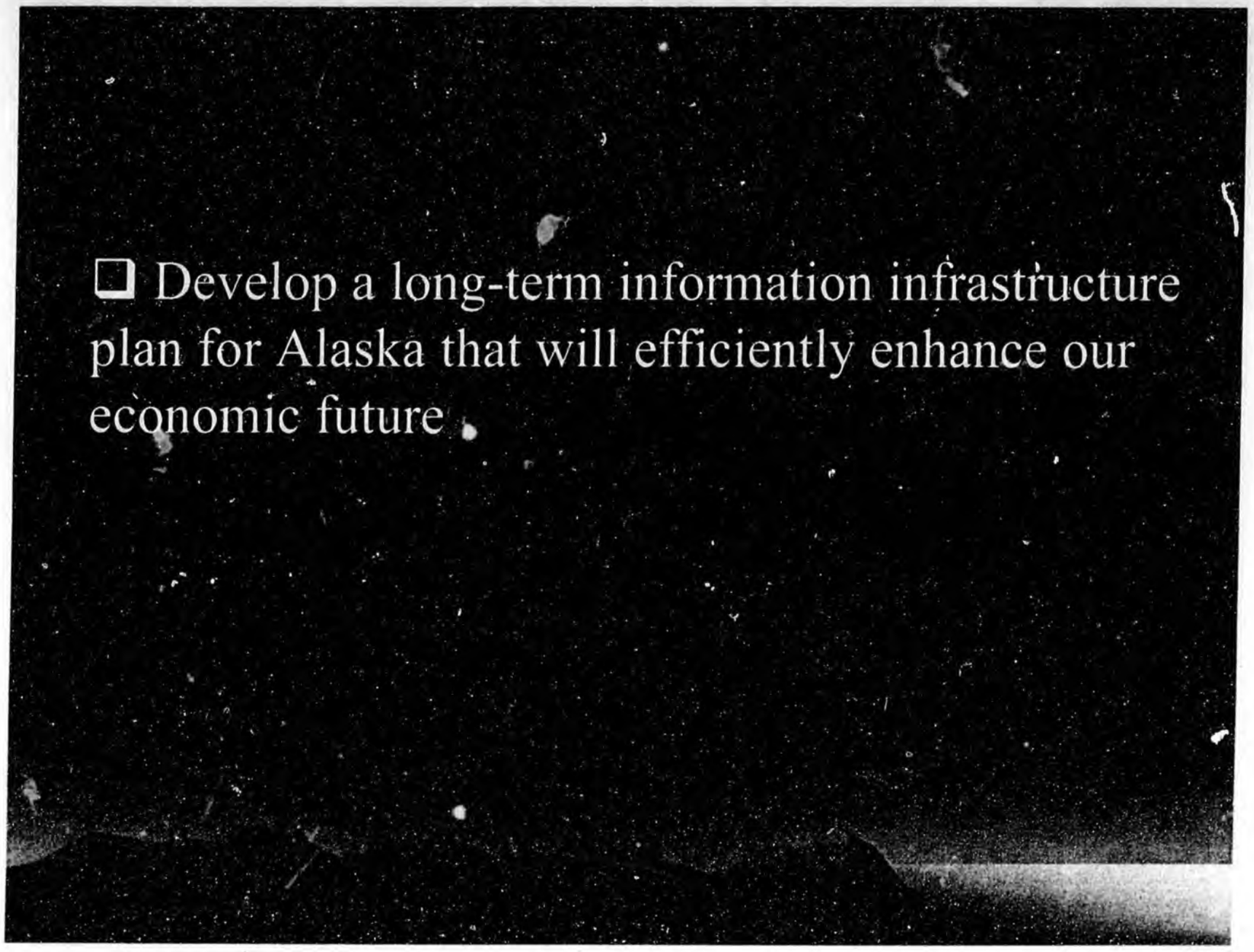
- To develop its IT potential and digital economy
- To help everyone, particularly rural Alaskans, use the Internet and digital technology to expand opportunities in employment, education, healthcare, and access to government
- To develop the leadership to make this happen

Task Force Mission

- ❑ Review and analyze Alaska's current and long-term information infrastructure needs
- ❑ Identify Alaska's existing public and private and broadband infrastructure
- ❑ Conduct a preliminary analysis of Alaska's long-term infrastructure needs

- Define Alaska's role and interest in information infrastructure development

- Encourage industry and government to take action either separately or through joint efforts such as pooling and integrated resource planning to meet those needs


❑ Develop a long-term information infrastructure plan for Alaska that will efficiently enhance our economic future

Accomplishments to Date

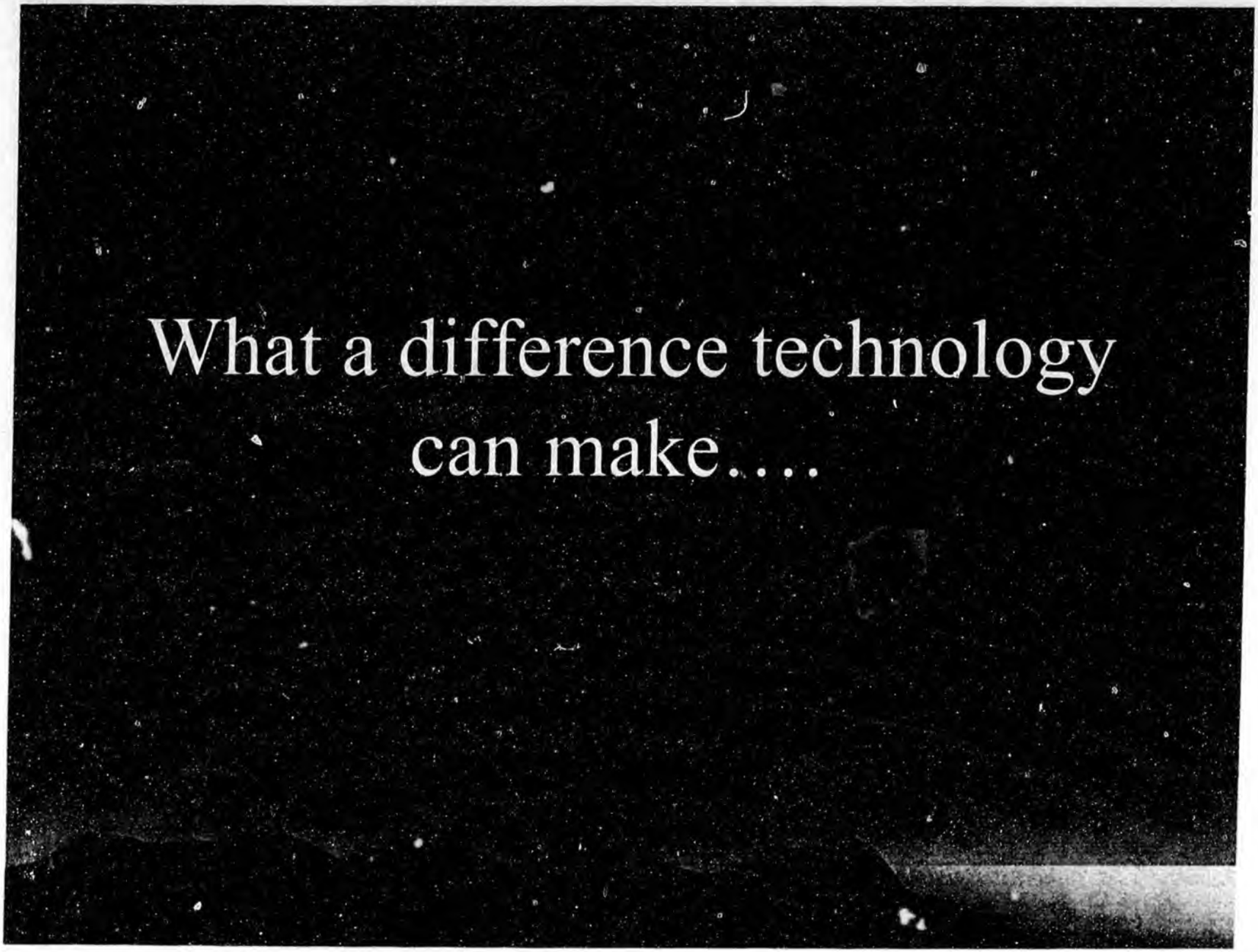
AIIP Task Force met three times in late November/December.

Initiated discussions centered around the services that could be provided with high-speed broadband connectivity in the areas of health care, education, homeland security, and economic opportunities.

What needs to be done now:

1. Extend Task Force through the end of the next Legislative session

2. Provide staff support and funding for research allowing the Task Force to identify existing public and private fiber and broadband infrastructure in Alaska, as charged .


What a difference technology
can make....

Toksook Bay, Alaska

Population:
550 Residents, 55 Houses
80 Students Grades K-3
85 Students Grades 4-12

Economy:
Subsistence hunting, trapping, and fishing; grass basketry, ivory carving, two stores, one airstrip

Demographics:

98%Yup'ik Eskimo

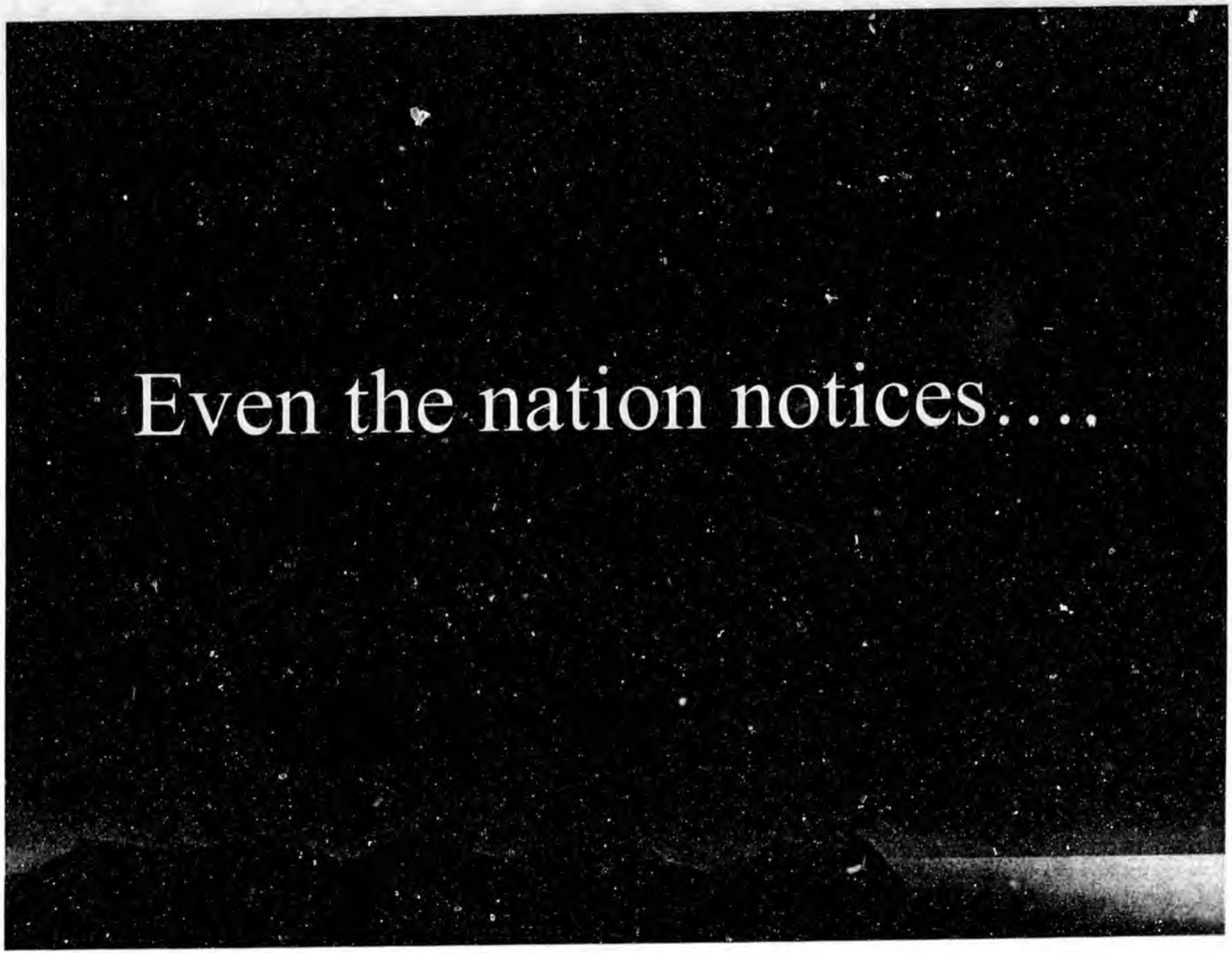
Juneau:
1000 Miles ==>

Seattle:
5700 miles ==>

Washington, D.C.:
5700 miles ==>

Russia:
<== 400 Miles

http://www.toksookbayalaska.com/


Even the nation notices....

The Washington Post

OUTLOOK

Sunday, August 9, 1998

Eskimos Warm to the Digital Age

By Doug Pasa

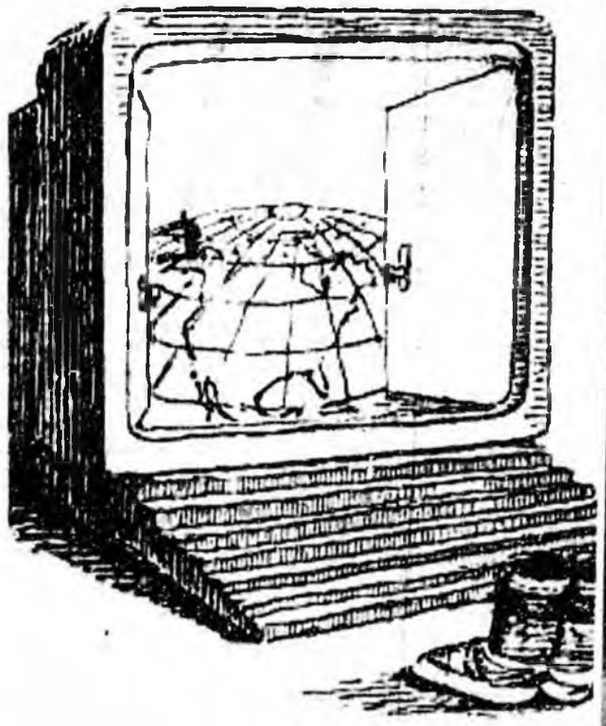
I had never seen a Web site materialize so fast. I was in Toksook Bay, a largely subsistence Yup'ik Eskimo village in western Alaska, 400 miles from Russia and 5,700 miles from Washington. My host, Greg Lincoln, a thirtyish Yup'ik man, was demonstrating the cutting edge of wireless digital technology.

I was greeted by an immediate sound blast of Yup'ik voices accompanied by an animated image of Lincoln's daughter stepping in traditional clothing. Lincoln's Web site (members.aol.com/glincoln45/home.html) celebrates traditional Eskimo life by displaying dancing rituals and stereophonic singing. I clicked on an icon, and was offered crafts made by his family and friends for sale in a "Village Mall." Chalk up one more for indigenous people who don't need to leave traditional lands in order to make a cash living.

The key to Lincoln's demonstration was a small box on the windowsill of his house which pulls down satellite-beamed transmissions powerful enough to provide him with Internet access at bandwidths something like three times faster than the current standard at American corporations and 10 times faster than in most American homes—all without a telephone line. What's more, Lincoln can keep his Internet connection all day—at no cost.

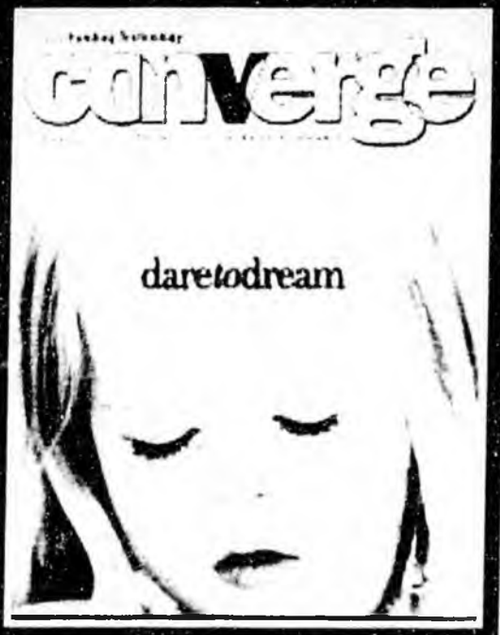
A fledgling company called Alaska Wireless is installing the boxes in Toksook Bay in the hope of show

CONNECTED, C6, Col. 1



Doug Pasa, who has reported for The Washington Post from Burma, Laos and Rwanda, is directing a feature film in Alaska called "Migration."


Alaska
OLOGY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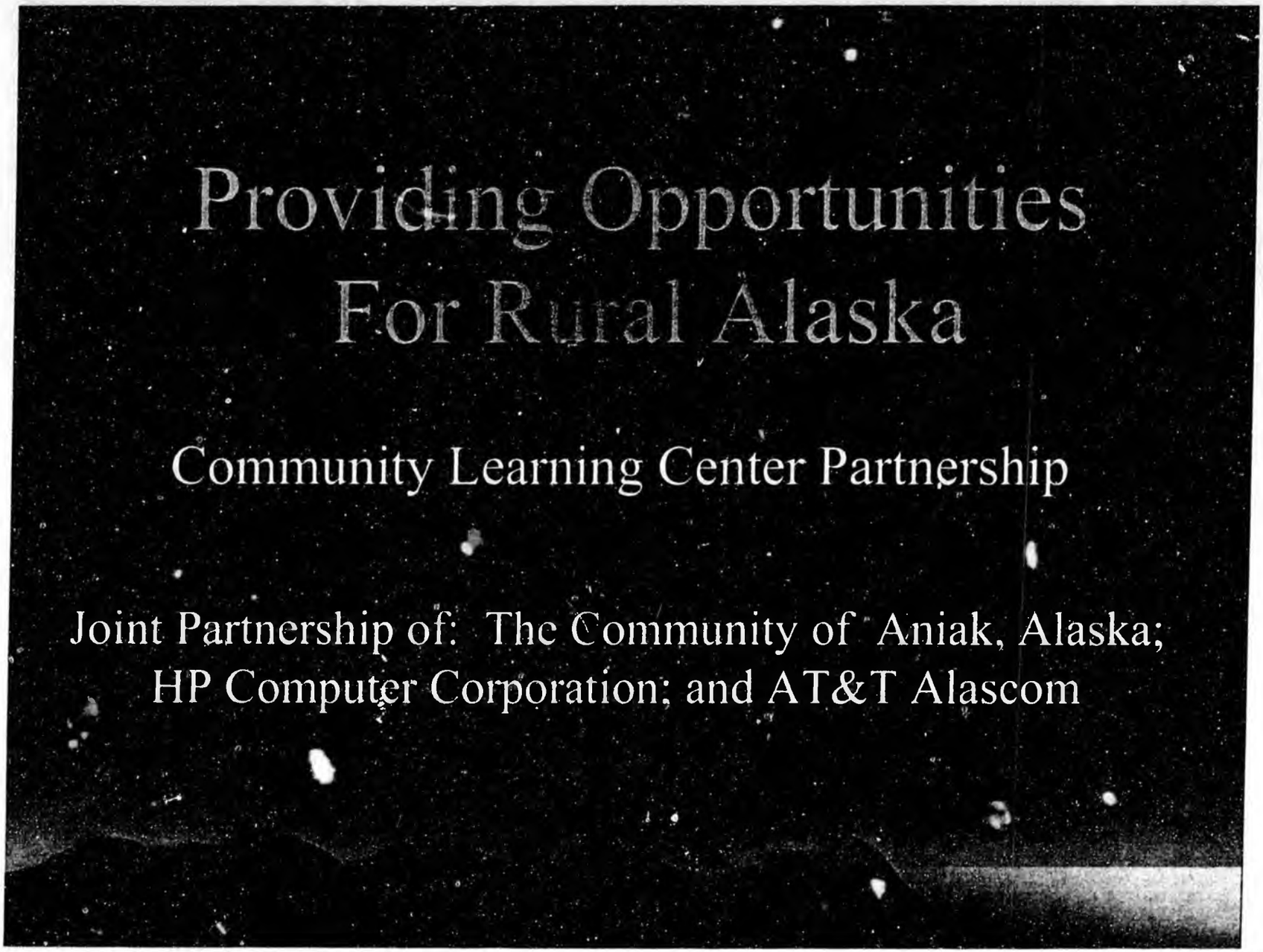
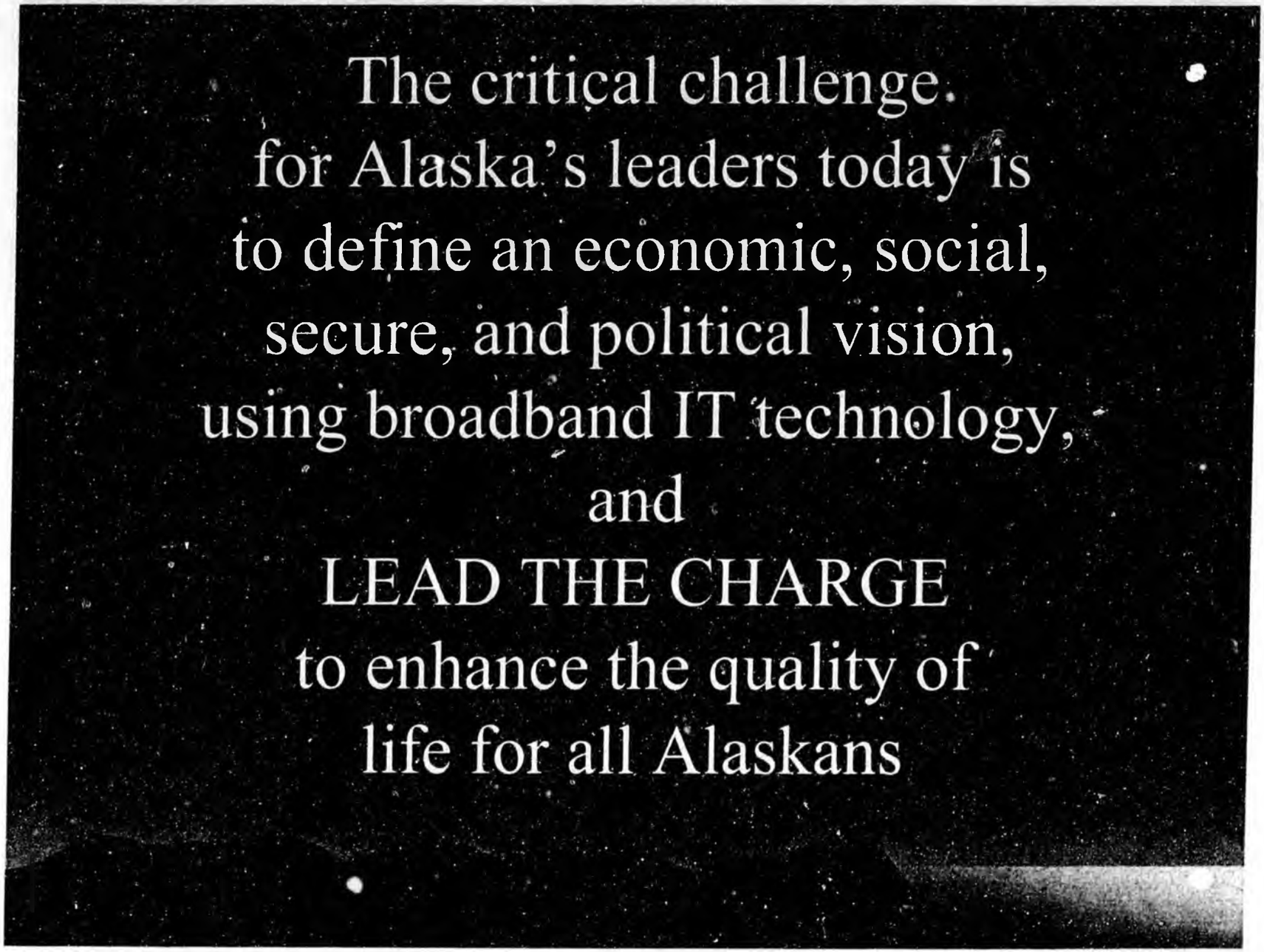
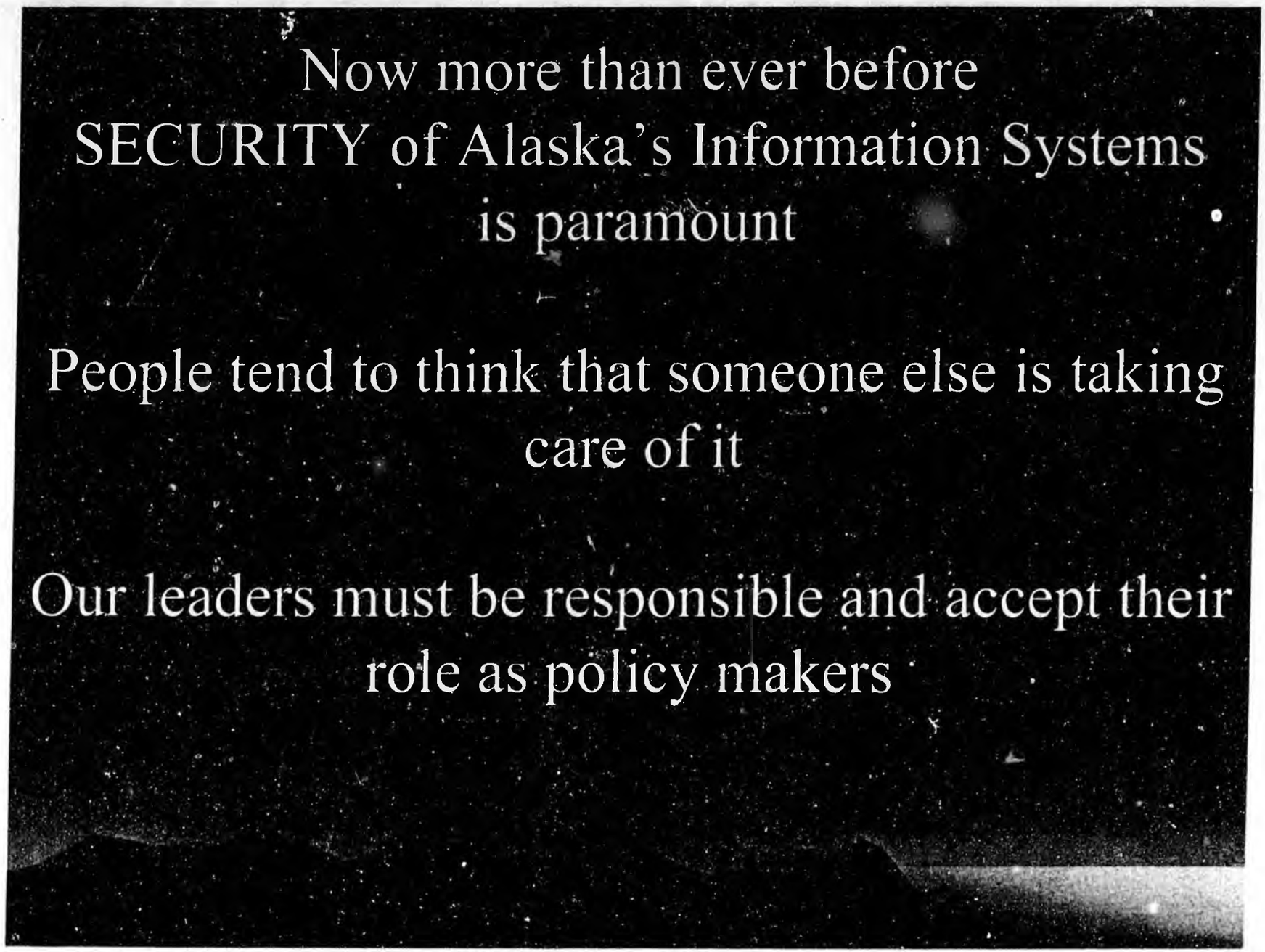
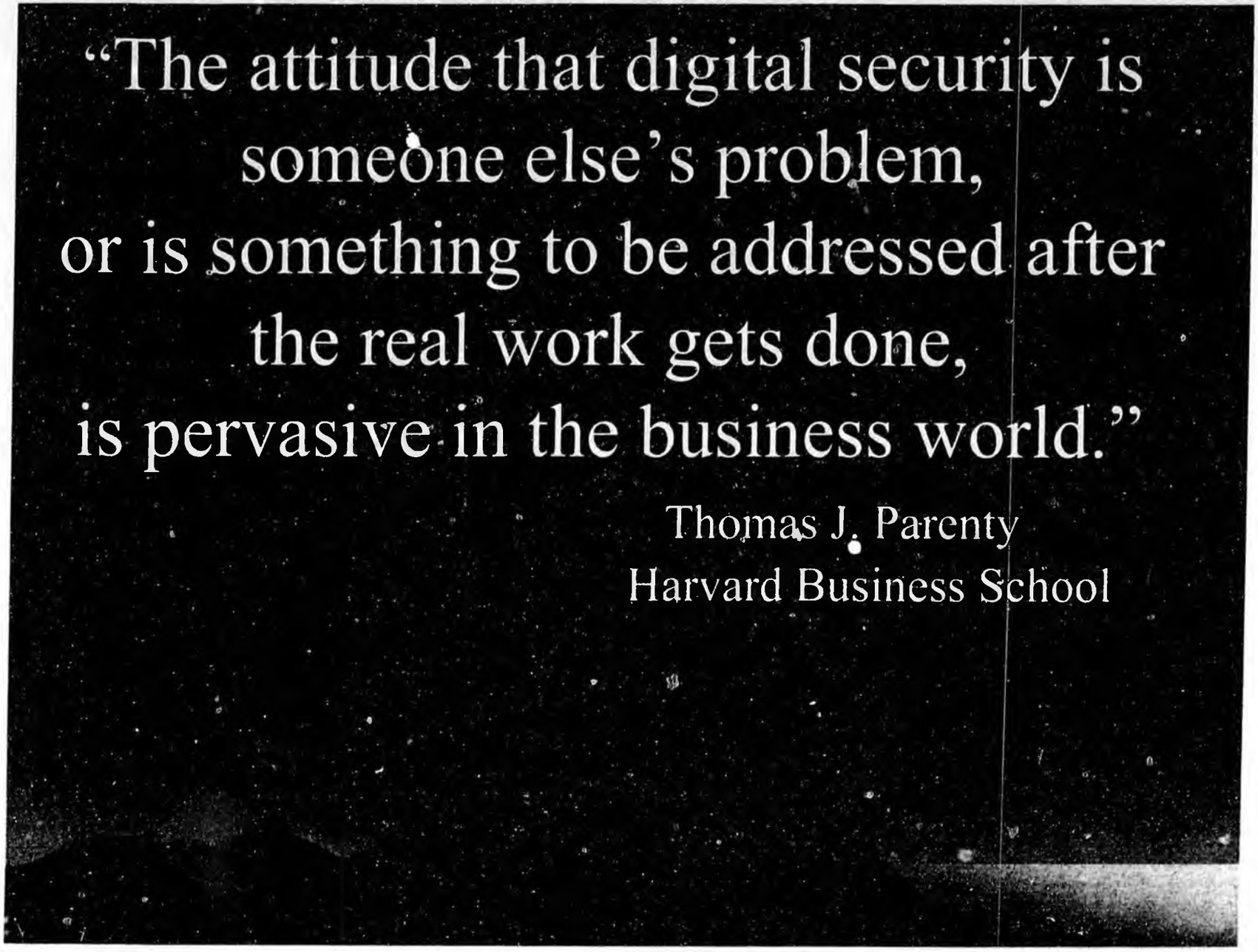
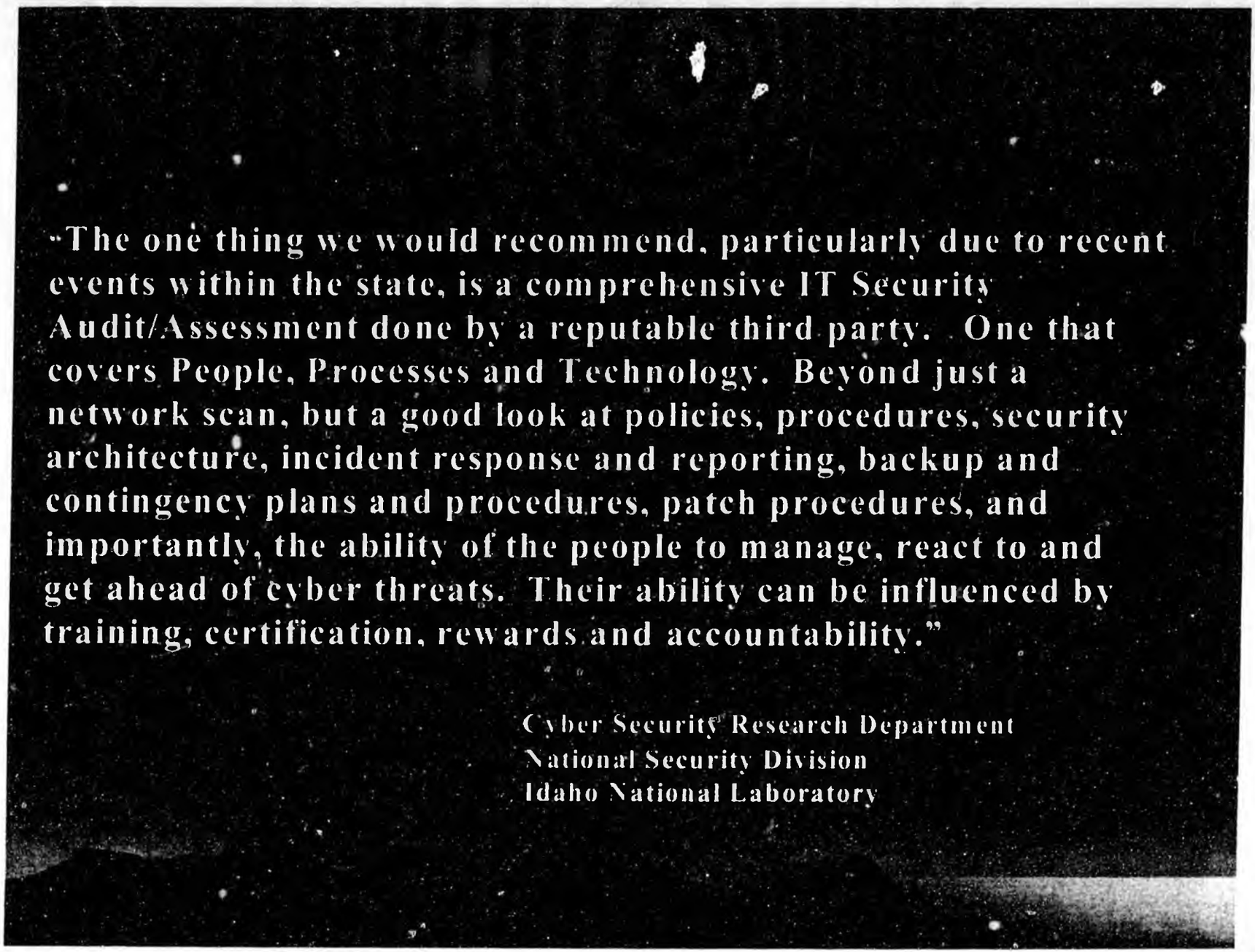

Providing Opportunities
For Rural Alaska
Community Learning Center Partnership
Joint Partnership of: The Community of Aniak, Alaska;
HP Computer Corporation; and AT&T Alascom

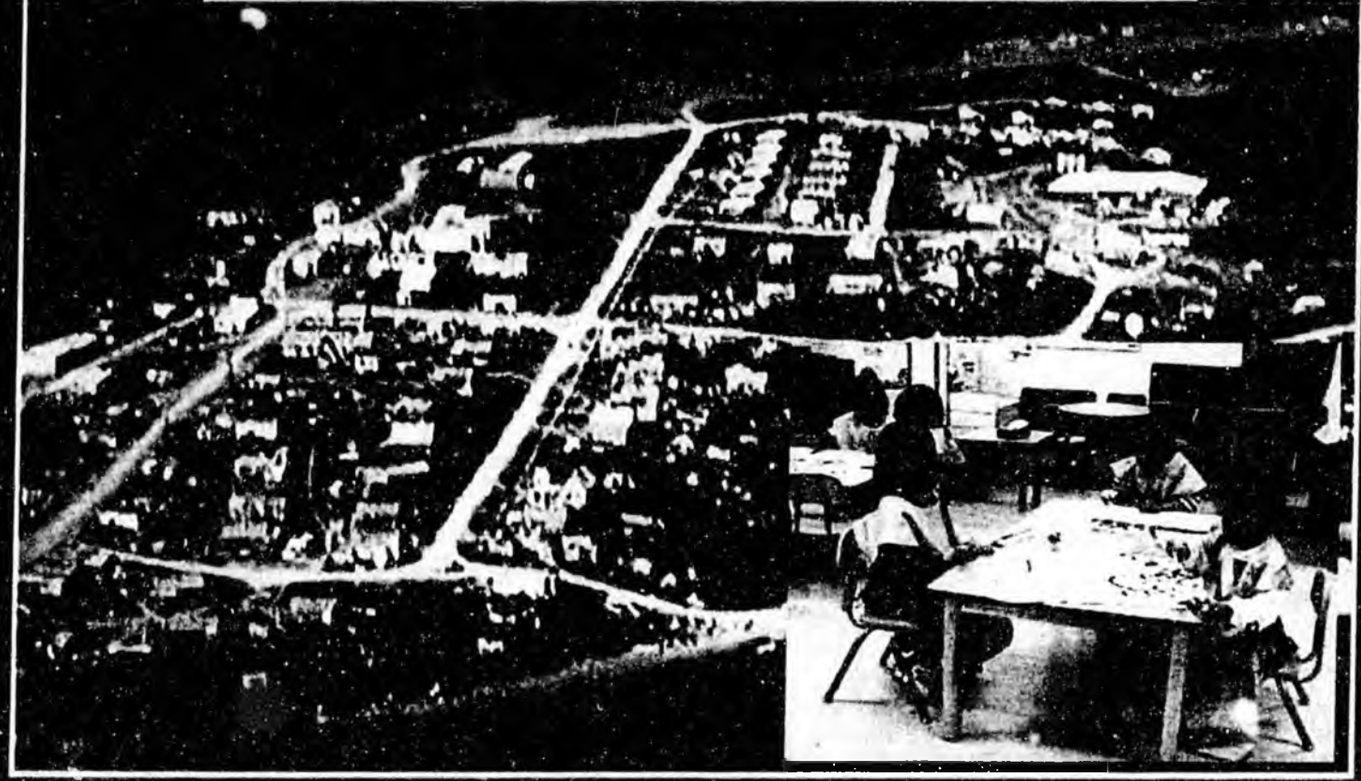

The critical challenge.
for Alaska's leaders today is
to define an economic, social,
secure, and political vision,
using broadband IT technology,
and
LEAD THE CHARGE
to enhance the quality of
life for all Alaskans


Now more than ever before
SECURITY of Alaska's Information Systems
is paramount
People tend to think that someone else is taking
care of it
Our leaders must be responsible and accept their
role as policy makers


"The attitude that digital security is
someone else's problem,
or is something to be addressed after
the real work gets done,
is pervasive in the business world."
Thomas J. Parenty
Harvard Business School


"The one thing we would recommend, particularly due to recent events within the state, is a comprehensive IT Security Audit/Assessment done by a reputable third party. One that covers People, Processes and Technology. Beyond just a network scan, but a good look at policies, procedures, security architecture, incident response and reporting, backup and contingency plans and procedures, patch procedures, and importantly, the ability of the people to manage, react to and get ahead of cyber threats. Their ability can be influenced by training, certification, rewards and accountability."
Cyber Security Research Department
National Security Division
Idaho National Laboratory

2005 and Beyond?
It's Up to Our Leaders



Respectfully Submitted

H.A. Boucher, Chairman
AIIP Task Force
redbou@alaska.net

OFFICE OF
Information Technology

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA

UAF FAIRBANKS

Steve Smith | Chief Information Technology Officer
910 Yukon Drive, Suite 103 | Fairbanks, AK 99775-5320 | Phone: 907-450-8383 | Fax: 907-450-8375

February 29, 2008

Representative David Guttenberg
State Capitol, Room 418
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Guttenberg,

I am in full support of HB 388, creating the Alaska Broadband Task Force. The Alaska Broadband Task Force will help the state move forward to ensure all citizens have affordable access to an essential infrastructure for business, health, education, government and economic development. Many other states including Hawaii, California, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio and North Carolina, have a broadband task force or initiative under way. There is also similar interest in broadband deployment at the federal level.

Alaska, so dependent on telecommunications for every aspect of life, needs, above all other states, to bring focus on this important issue. From a university perspective, we strive every day, working with carriers and communities, to use telecommunications to deliver higher education to every citizen of the state regardless of location.

On behalf of the University of Alaska, I support this effort to bring focus to this critical aspect of life in Alaska and hope you too will support HB 388.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 907-450-8389 (steve.smith@alaska.edu).

Sincerely,

Steve Smith
Chief Information Technology Officer
University of Alaska

Cc: Mike Tibbles, Office of the Governor
Pete Kelly, UA State Relations

Alaska Telephone Association
201 E. 56th, Suite 114
Anchorage, AK 99518
(907) 563-4000
FAX (907) 562-3776
www.alaskatel.org

Jack H Rhyner
President

James Rowe
Executive Director
jrowe@alaskatel.org

February 28, 2008

Rep. David Guttenberg
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: HB 388

Dear Representative Guttenberg,

Thank you for your attention to telecommunications issues in the state and especially for your recent action to introduce HB 388 to establish an Alaska Broadband Task Force. As the members of the Alaska Telephone Association all serve high-cost rural communities and have first-hand experience with the challenges of delivering broadband, the desire of customers for broadband, and the benefits that broadband access can bring, we will monitor the progress of this legislation and look forward with enthusiasm to working with the task force upon its creation.

Sincerely,

Jim Rowe

FAIRBANKS
Daily News - Miner

Guttenberg asks for Internet access study

Published Tuesday, February 19, 2008

JUNEAU — Rep. David Guttenberg, D-Fairbanks, is working on a bill that would set up a 13-member task force to study statewide access to broadband Internet service and recommend ways to get service to more Alaskans.

Guttenberg got involved in the issue before the start of the legislative session when he polled Fairbanks area residents on their level of service and struggled with a slow connection himself on Murphy Dome Road.

Guttenberg's bill is modeled after similar legislation passed last year in Hawaii. It would create a task force appointed by legislative leaders and consisting of state lawmakers, service providers and local, state and federal officials.

The task force would be charged with assessing the level of service across the state and setting a goal for an "acceptable" level of service. It would submit initial findings and recommendations by January and a final report before the end of 2009.

"(T)he deployment of broadband networking and advanced telecommunications services throughout the state are essential for the state to keep pace with global changes in economic diversification, education, health care, energy and environmental technology, and public safety," states a draft of the bill.

High Speed to the Hinterlands

Getting high-speed Internet to the remaining 6 percent of the population that lacks it takes a concerted effort.

BY GARRY BOULARD

When South Dakota Senator Orville Smidt surveys his state's growing and vast communications infrastructure, he's hopeful about the future. "We have more coverage at this point, particularly in the most remote communities,

SENATOR ORVILLE SMIDT SOUTH DAKOTA

than we've ever had," he says.

"And the involvement of different institutions here who absolutely have to have high-speed Internet connections for their work has made our situation only better," Smidt says.

Those institutions include the Homestake Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory, a national lab in the state's Black Hills run by the National Science Foundation, the EROS Data Center in Sioux Falls, which produces aerial satellite mapping, and the Geographical Information Science Center of Excellence at South Dakota State University. All of them have a "very significant interest, emphasis and need for the kind of high-speed Internet connections that you can get only with broadband," Smidt says.

LEFT BEHIND

Rural states like South Dakota are limited by geography. Beyond their academic institutions, government and urban suburban clus- remain huge areas untouched by broadband. Technology experts call this a "digital opportunity gap" that could potentially limit future economic opportunities.

"So much of what creates stability and growth—job creation, health care and education access—comes with the availability of broadband," says Bill Gilles, director of the Center to Bridge the Digital Divide at Washington State University. "Any town or remote section of a state without it is at a real disadvantage," he says.

"Unfortunately, parts of our country are still being left behind," agrees Rick Cimerman, vice president for state government affairs at the National Cable & Telecommunications Association in Washington, D.C. "To make matters worse, many of these areas are the same places that have decreasing populations and industries and are already economically challenged."

For years, South Dakota's challenge has stemmed from being bypassed by a national high-speed network with more than a dozen regional connections across the country. The state's inability to connect with the highest-speed Internet has put millions of dollars in research funding at risk because universities and research centers have been unable to publicize their scholarship or share information.

"Not b...g connected hurt economic development in some of our more remote areas and limited the potential of our universities to do their work and attract new talent," says Smidt.

But early in 2007, access to the highest-speed Internet finally came to South Dakota. The Great Plains Education Foundation announced that it was donating more than $8 million to connect the state's universities and government to the dedicated 10-gigabyte fiber optic network. In return, the state will pay up to $1.7 million a year for operating costs.

The effort to put South Dakota on the right side of the digital divide represents a struggle that continues to exist in other parts of the country. It has taken nearly 10 years for broadband to become widely available for both public and private use.

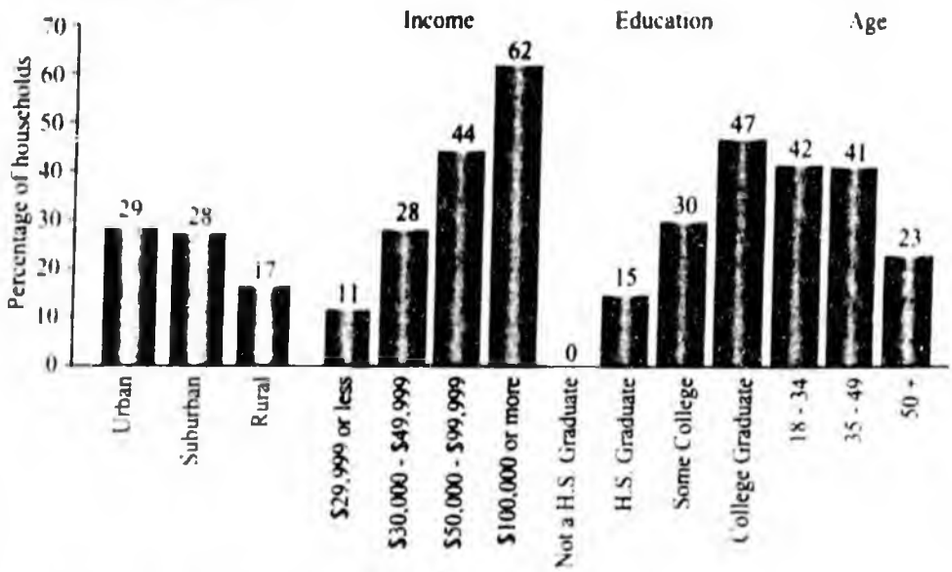
Cimerman says it is now available to about 94 percent of the country. "Service started out in our urban and suburban areas and moved into the more rural parts of every state," he says.

THE REMAINING 6 PERCENT

Many telecommunications companies are

HOUSEHOLDS WITH BROADBAND

WHO SUBSCRIBES TO BROADBAND?



Source: Government Accountability Office, May 2006

Garry Boulard is a program coordinator for State Legislatures magazine. He is a freelance writer from Albuquerque, N.M.

LEGISLATURES WORK ON BROADBAND

The opportunity for states to "receive economic development bonus points" for having statewide broadband access is "quickly passing," says a report from the Arizona Department of Commerce. Soon the availability of broadband will be expected, and "states that have not found a way to establish it will be penalized as businesses and technology-dependent workers of tomorrow choose to locate elsewhere."

More than 30 states reacted to that kind of thinking in 2007. Lawmakers introduced legislation to promote broadband and more are expected to do so this session as the benefits of broadband become more widely acknowledged. "Broadband has the power to create jobs, transform education and improve the delivery of government services," says Tennessee Representative Mark Maddox.

To make sure broadband is available to everyone, lawmakers are creating incentives for providers through grants, loans and tax credits, streamlining regulatory structures and improving access to public rights-of-way. To help create demand for broadband services, legislators are promoting technology literacy among citizens by funding or encouraging distance education programs and telemedicine or health care initiatives. More and more government and public safety services are available through high-speed broadband networks.

Here are just a few of the bills enacted in 2007. Arkansas created Connect Arkansas, based on the ConnectKentucky model, to promote the availability and use of broadband with the goal of universal service by 2012. A key component is a system to identify unserved and underserved areas. The approach also includes technology literacy and education programs so that citizens can take full advantage of broadband services.

The Hawaii Legislature established a broadband task force to work on wider access to public rights-of-way and identify opportunities for increasing broadband coverage. The task force will look into the use of very high-speed broadband services and new advanced communications technologies.

Indiana legislation provides for broadband development financing through the state's Economic Development Corporation.

Utah passed legislation establishing a restricted account within the general fund to be used for grants to providers taking broadband service to rural areas.

The Vermont General Assembly created a telecommunications authority to issue bonds to support a statewide broadband and wireless infrastructure by 2010. It also will provide loans, grants and other financial guarantees, and gather data on wireless and broadband infrastructure and services. Vermont will waive the fees required for access to state-owned transportation rights-of-way for providers.

Washington lawmakers funded a survey to identify factors preventing the widespread availability and use of broadband technologies. The survey will collect and interpret reliable geographic, demographic, cultural and telecommunications technology information to identify broadband disparities in the state.

—Pam Greenberg, NCSL

REPRESENTATIVE TOM SLOAN KANSAS

SENATOR CAROL FUKUNAGA HAWAII

reluctant to meet the needs of the remaining 6 percent because the return from subscribers is so low. But some companies say they are doing all they can.

"We're not by any means running from the challenge of deployment," says Walter White, the vice-president for state and local governmental affairs with Verizon Communications. "We are one of the most aggressive investors of broadband in the U.S., and just in the cities, but in hundreds of rural communities across the country."

Even so, White adds, "There are limits as to how much any one company can do. We are not a full-pockets type of operation."

And even with the help of the private sector, increased broadband usage may also be limited by demographics. A significant percentage of Americans over the age of 50 living in areas that have broadband availability continue to prefer dial-up, according to a report by the Pew Internet and American Life Project.

Broadband users tend to be people who logged onto the Internet early on, and are "wealthier, better educated and more likely to be male than dial-up users," the report says. "The broadband crowd is more suburban and urban than the dial-up population. The dial-up population is proportionally more rural."

But Kansas Representative Tom J. Sloan says the argument that a significant percentage of rural residents will continue to use dial-up even if broadband is available misses the point. "We know there are people in these communities who not only would use it, but need it and are looking to us to help them."

Sloan points to proponents of telemedicine and telehealth, distance education and business owners as folks who would greatly benefit by having a high-speed Internet connection. "I know, because many of them have told me so," he says. "It is our responsibility to figure out at least a way to make broadband available, regardless of whether they all end up using it or not."

The importance of making broadband available for everyone can't be overstated, Hawaii Senator Carol Fukunaga says, even though there is not much of a market in sparsely populated areas.

"Broadband availability is becoming crucial," she says, "especially when it comes to finding solutions to problems in health care, education and economic diversification. There is no part of our state that can go for very long without it."

STAYING COMPETITIVE

Indeed, states lacking high-speed IT connections are at risk of missing out on the opportunities of a new and rapidly chang-

ing economy. Some experts say this new technology is transforming the country more dramatically than the Industrial Revolution did when it caused massive population shifts from rural to urban areas.

"About three-quarters of occupations and job functions in the United States today are information-based jobs," says Gilles. "They can, for the most part, be performed anywhere. A lot of them, in recent years, have gone to India, Ireland and Australia. We have been losing jobs in our country because our economy is still not fully prepared to be competitive in a global world."

That could change, Gilles says. Many American-based companies that have outsourced jobs in recent years have begun to rethink such strategies. "Many of these companies now believe they could enjoy the same kind of economic advantages by having their work done in rural America instead of India," says Gilles. "If we don't have the broadband infrastructure in place, we could very well end up missing out on a great economic opportunity."

States are trying to show providers that there are customers in the remote areas. They have been putting more government information online, hoping to show that there's interest for it in rural areas.

"We have one program up and running with links to all of our state agencies," says Sloan in Kansas. "And another program, just to show that it can be done, provides high speed IT services to our schools, libraries and hospitals."

Senator Smidt says South Dakota has made a big effort to wire K-12 schools. "We're trying to create a constituency of parents who can go online and do things like check their kids' grades."

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PROVIDERS

States have also seen success in extending broadband services by entering into partnerships with the private sector. "Those kinds of partnerships have really shown the greatest results," says Cimerman. He points out that providers can more accurately pinpoint areas of a state that are either unserved or underserved and that the more services state and local governments offer online, the more interested citizens are in buying broadband.

Such partnerships can include a wide variety of arrangements, particularly at the local level, that may include a city owning a wireless network outright and contracting out with a private company to provide the services, or a municipality becoming what is called an "anchor tenant" through the purchase of a certain amount of services on a network owned by a private company.

Berkshire Connect, based in Pittsfield, Mass., has aggregated demand at the county level among such big users as schools, hospitals and nonprofit organizations. Doing so lets it offer wide broadband services at a lower price in a state where more than 30 towns have no broadband accessibility at all. The City of Fort Wayne, Indiana, has established a Wi-FI network through a public-private partnership, while the Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency is a network owned by more than a dozen cities crisscrossing the state, with multiple service providers.

One of the most comprehensive programs is offered by the not-for-profit Connect Kentucky, which has evolved into the national not-for-profit Connected Nation. With more than $7 million in both state and federal money and investments from providers in excess of $700 million, Connect Kentucky has been able to change the broadband landscape in Kentucky in just three years.

"When we began, 60 percent of the households in Kentucky had the ability to subscribe. Today it's about 95 percent," says Brian Mefford, executive director of Connected Nation. "That means about 600,000 new households have been able to subscribe to broadband who could not before." The number of people actually using broadband jumped from 22 percent to 44 percent.

Broadband availability and use has enjoyed such growth in Kentucky because high-speed proponents sat down early on with state and local officials as well as leaders in education, health care and business to determine their needs and the extent of their support.

"We tried to engage everyone who might be a part of the process, from the legislature to state agencies, local community leaders and those companies from the private sector who have a vested interest in the growth of technology," Mefford says.

E-community leadership teams were set up to ask local government, health care, education and business leaders how they would use such technology, what they already had and what did they need. By creating a business plan for broadband use in the state and documenting potential subscriber support, Connect Kentucky was able to lure providers into the market. It resulted in broadband getting into small pockets of the state where it had never existed before.

A similar Connect Nation effort is underway in Tennessee. The blueprint for Connect Kentucky's success can be used in any state, Mefford says. "The key is to get as many people involved as possible."

The approach has won the praise of lawmakers across the country, particularly Fukanaga in Hawaii. "State lawmakers can do so much in this area simply by bringing all of the interested stakeholders together and establishing working groups to examine how best to get from point A to point B," she says.

"Our challenges in Hawaii are particularly great, not just because we are a small remote state, but also because we have multiple islands," Fukanaga says. "Even so, a lot of us have woken up to the idea that we don't have to wait around for the feds to get this started for us. We can greatly increase broadband availability and use, and in the process enhance education, health care and educational opportunities for our people. And we can do it nearly entirely at the state level."

NCSL CONNECTING AMERICA PARTNERS PROJECT

NCSL's Connecting America: Broadband Policy Issues and Options for State Legislatures project, sponsored by the NCSL Foundation for State Legislatures, has brought broadband issues to the forefront for state legislators. Information from a series of programs during 2006 and 2007 and current legislation and state statutes are available at www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/ConnectAmerica.htm.

The task force is chaired by Hawaii Senator Carol Fukunaga and South Dakota Senator Orville Smidt, and is composed of state legislators, legislative staff and private sector partners.

CHECK OUT our online Q & A with Brian Mefford, president and CEO of Connected Nation, who has emerged as a prominent advocate of public and private partnerships. You'll also find a list of state task forces established to deal with broadband issues and links to their sites. Find the link at www.ncsl.org/magazine.

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University of San Francisco
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Telephone: 415-422-2504 Fax: 415-422-2502
E-mail: *telecom@usfca.edu*

Representative David Guttenberg
State Capitol, Room 418
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Guttenberg:

I am writing to support HB 388 to establish an Alaska Broadband Task Force.

I have been involved in telecommunications planning and policy for Alaska since the 1970s, when I worked on the evaluation of the early NASA satellite projects for telemedicine and distance education, and then with the Governor's Office of Telecommunications on planning for the operational satellite system for 200 villages that was the forerunner of the present satellite network.

I have also done research on telecommunications for rural development in many parts of the world, and frequently cite Alaska's experience with communications for isolated communities as an example of combining private sector initiative and public sector funding such as for the E-Rate and other universal service support. I am also a participant in the Arctic Council's Information and Communications Technologies Assessment where Alaska's experience with telecommunications is an important example for other Arctic regions.

I recently participated in the Alaska Telecommunications Workshop held in Anchorage on February 15, 2008, where the necessity of planning for future broadband expansion and utilization in Alaska was discussed. As you know, many other states are conducting similar studies and initiatives. I have been involved with California's Broadband Task Force, and recently participated in planning a similar initiative called Digital Ontario for the Canadian province of Ontario.

I wish you every success, and would be pleased to contribute to Alaska's Broadband Task Force activities.

Yours sincerely,

Heather E. Hudson, Ph.D., J.D.
Professor, Communications Technology Management and Policy

Jeff Stepp

From: Madison, Rebecca A [rebeccam@akrivertracks.com]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 3:31 PM
To: Jeff Stepp
Subject: Support for House Bill 388
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red

Dear Representative Guttenberg, Representative Kerttula, and Representative LeDoux,

I am writing this letter to support House Bill 388 in its effort to establish the Alaska Broadband Task Force.

Many rural areas of Alaska are in the unique position of relying on satellite connectivity for internet access. This costly infrastructure disenfranchises Alaska's rural residents. The cost of broadband internet to the home is so high that many are left to rely on access through the schools or library. Thus, the many business opportunities available via the internet are not available to rural residents. And, the high cost of internet and other telecommunications services to health care providers means that necessary continuing education and disease management digital materials are not currently available in critical care areas.

As the Director of Alaska ChartLink, I see first hand the disparities which exist within the state. We are building an Alaska eHealth Network connecting rural health care providers and existing urban health care networks in order to facilitate electronic health information exchange, expand telehealth capacity and enhance emergency response capabilities. As part of our project, we received $10.5 million dollars from the Federal Communications Commission to connect the rural providers and clinics to the urban hospitals and payers for the purpose of expediting health information exchange and expanding telemedicine services. This project requires matching state and private dollars to succeed. In order to provide the best and most cost effective network for Alaska's healthcare community, we need a coordinated approach to identifying and implementing telecommunications services.

An Alaska Broadband Task Force would greatly benefit Alaskans by providing a mechanism for coordinating projects such as ours. When infrastructure dollars are competitively applied for and awarded, these dollars should be implemented in a coordinated fashion that provides the best solution for Alaska's citizens. The Alaska Broadband Task Force could act as that coordinating body by helping to identify barriers to broadband access, recommending options for removing barriers and identifying advanced telecommunications solutions that work.

This coordination would provide our project, the Alaska eHealth Network with valuable insight into how our funds could be deployed and would benefit the citizens of Alaska by providing a cost, effective statewide health care network. We feel a deep commitment to improving the health and welfare of the citizens of Alaska while creating efficiencies in the health care system by working cooperatively with others throughout the state. This bill is an example of how Alaskans can work together to improve our way of life.

I support this bill and strongly urge the Legislature to act quickly to implement this Task Force. I see this as a next logical step toward improving access to broadband throughout Alaska.

Please give a positive consideration to Hose Bill 388 to improve the telecommunications infrastructure statewide.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Madison, Director
Alaska ChartLink
Ph: (907) 457-1581

March 10, 2008

Dear Representative Guttenberg, Representative Kerttula, and Representative LeDoux,

I am writing this letter to support House Bill 388 in its effort to establish the Alaska Broadband Task Force.

Many rural areas of Alaska are in the unique position of relying on satellite connectivity for internet access. This costly infrastructure disenfranchises Alaska's rural residents. The cost of broadband internet to the home is so high that many are left to rely on access through the schools or library. Thus, the many business opportunities available via the internet are not available to rural residents. And, the high cost of internet and other telecommunications services to health care providers means that necessary continuing education and disease management digital materials are not currently available in critical care areas.

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Please give a positive consideration to House Bill 388 to improve the telecommunications infrastructure statewide.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Madison, Director
Alaska ChartLink
Ph: (907) 457-1581

AkDEC

Alaska Distance Education Consortium

Representative David Guttenberg
State Capitol, Room 418
Juneau, AK 99801

March 11, 2008

Dear Representative Guttenberg,

As Executive Director of the Alaska Distance Education Consortium I am writing in support of HB388, which would create an Alaska Broadband Task Force. Almost exactly one hundred years after the original Alaska gold rush of 1898 – which first put Alaska on the national and world maps as a part of the United States – the race for broadband connectivity began. After an auspicious start in the late nineties when the Internet came North and Alaska was the state with the highest Internet penetration in the nation in terms of dial-up connectivity, Alaska has dropped out of the race for bandwidth due to its a lack of organization, unity and carry-through on how to meet the broadband challenge in its villages.

Despite several efforts by Senator Stevens to forge a consensus among state telecom players and enable fiscal support in a coordinated statewide approach (as opposed to existing piecemeal projects), unity has never been achieved on this issue because there has always an odd-man out. It is past time for the State Legislature to step in and help forge a statewide consensus by authorizing a Broadband Task Force to address these issues.

Any consideration of broadband deployment strategies for rural Alaska might best begin with a series of questions which provide, even if they cannot be answered, a suitable framework for discussion:

- ✓ By the time all rural communities get residential access to current DSL and wireless connectivity, with high-speed rates of a few hundred kilobits in at least one direction, won't these speeds be viewed as the equivalent of today's v.56 dial-up modem?
- ✓ From a purely technical standpoint, if there are successive waves of broadband technologies with increased transfer rates in the coming years, how many of these will even be susceptible to deployment in rural Alaska?
- ✓ Among those technologies which do prove technically suitable, at what rate will they be deployed – in five and ten year cycles after their adoption in urban areas? What will this

1815 Bragaw Street • # 202 • Anchorage, AK 99508 • phone 907.786.1389 • fax 907.786.1121 • akdec.org

mean in terms of rural economic development, i.e., jobs, in village Alaska?

- ✓ Finally, is there any way for rural Alaska to break free of this lag-time cycle and get ahead of the curve? Need rural Alaskans always be behind in the broadband connectivity race?

There is no finish line in the race for broadband. Since no one currently knows the best uses of greater and more affordable bandwidth, there is not even a shared conception of "excess" bandwidth. One consequence of the lack of any broadband "finish line" is that the problem of rural connectivity will not be resolved even when a certain "bit" rate is achieved, any more than the demand for greater bandwidth in urban areas will be satisfied at some future time when new applications are no longer created. Instead, humans will always find inventive ways to "waste" bandwidth far in excess of what government bureaucrats have defined as appropriate minimal entitlements.

The rural bandwidth problem is really one of comparable bandwidth and pricing: actual bandwidth and cost only serve as points of comparison, i.e., a way of measuring the widening and narrowing of an ever-present digital divide. The pertinent question remains and requires an answer: *can rural Alaskans effectively compete for businesses and jobs if they are always behind in the bandwidth race or paying substantially more for bandwidth?*

An Alaska Broadband Task Force can: (1) provide the necessary research to answer these questions; (2) educate the public on these issues; and (3) guide the Legislature in making intelligent decisions on how the State can accelerate broadband deployment, particularly to rural areas, and thereby increase Alaska' global economic competitiveness.

HB388 is a very timely initiative and deserves bi-partisan support. Please feel free to contact me if I can assist you in seeing that an Alaska Broadband task Force becomes a reality.

Sincerely,

Rich Greenfield
Executive Director
Alaska Distance Education Consortium
(tel. 907-269-4611)

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2006
Contacts: Aaron Saunders (202) 224-1028
Steve Wackowski (202) 224-5122

Commerce Committee Chairman Stevens Introduces American Broadband for Communities Act

For Immediate Release
February 17, 2006
Contacts: Aaron Saunders w/Stevens (202) 224-3991
Melanie Alvord w/Stevens (202) 224-8456

Commerce Committee Chairman Stevens Introduces American Broadband for Communities Act

WASHINGTON DC - Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) today introduced the American Broadband for Communities Act of 2006. The Act frees up spectrum not being used by broadcasters for unlicensed wireless devices which would provide communities with wireless broadband and home networking services.

Broadcasters are allocated hundreds of megahertz (MHz) of spectrum to provide television service a[illegible]ss the country. But in any one market some of the spectrum goes unused. Some studies have indicated that there is more than 150 MHz of spectrum in Anchorage, Alaska, and Honolulu, Hawaii, that could be used by unlicensed devices for wireless services. Even in large cities like Boston and Chicago it is estimated that nearly 50 MHz of spectrum goes unused.

The bill would allow manufacturers to design unlicensed devices to be operated in the broadcast spectrum not being used by broadcasters. These unlicensed devices would make it easier for companies to offer broadband services to consumers. The devices would be designed to sense their environment and identify what spectrum is in use and would only use portions of the broadcast spectrum not being used by broadcasters.

"Allowing unlicensed operations in the broadcast band could play a significant role in bringing wireless broadband and home networking to more of our citizens by lowering costs, particularly in Alaska where connectivity is so important due to our remoteness," said Stevens.

The American Broadband for Communities Act also directs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) craft technical requirements for unlicensed devices in the broadcast band that would protect broadcast stations, a proceeding it has already initiated. In addition, the legislation urges the FCC to further establish an interference complaint resolution process for broadcasters.

"I believe that the requirements in the bill will give the broadcasters additional protection while allowing more efficient use of the valuable broadcast spectrum, which is an invaluable public resource," said Stevens.

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U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

DANIEL INOUYE, Chairman — TED STEVENS, Vice Chairman

For Immediate Release
May 23rd, 2007

STEVENS CALLS FOR INTERNET TAX MORATORIUM TO BE EXTENDED

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Vice Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, today called for the Internet Tax Moratorium to be extended during the Commerce Committee hearing entitled "Communications, Taxation and Federalism." The Internet Tax Freedom Act was first passed by Congress in 1998. The law prevents states and localities from taxing Internet access. Without Congressional action, the moratorium on state and local taxes will expire on November 1, 2007, at which time states and localities would be able to start taxing consumer's access to the Internet.

Below are Senator Stevens' comments:

"Thanks to the Internet, more goods and services are sold in Alaska every day, and Alaskans are able to market their goods to customers in the lower 48. This is beneficial for small businesses. Access to the Internet has provided Alaskans with a means to get lower rates for hotel and air travel when they are planning trips outside the state. Additionally, broadband access has eliminated distance barriers for education and medicine.

"To ensure those benefits continue to reach as many Americans as possible, Congress should reduce any obstacles to Internet access. One way to do that is to prevent federal, state and local taxes that drive up costs for Internet access. During the period of the imposition of the moratorium in 1998 and now, there has been tremendous investment, growth and innovation in broadband deployment and I hope this continues.

"I am pleased to see that this issue has bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. I look forward to the testimony today and working with my colleagues to extend the moratorium which expires in November of this year."

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 2007
Contacts: Aaron Saunders (202) 224-1028
Steve Wackowski (202) 224-5122

Senator Stevens Co-sponsors Bill to Expand Internet Access

Legislation Would Encourage Cities and Towns to Offer More Affordable Broadband Services

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) today co-sponsored legislation to increase access to affordable broadband services for cities and towns across America. The Community Broadband Act of 2007 would allow municipalities to help fill existing voids in broadband access and enhance public safety by expanding high-speed internet services available to their residents.

"Access to high-speed internet services can provide people in underserved areas with essential educational and economic opportunities," said Senator Stevens. "In communities throughout Alaska, the internet has become a lifeline for businesses, schools, and individuals. By encouraging public-private partnerships, this bill would make it easier for communities to offer affordable broadband access to their residents."

The Community Broadband Act of 2007 would specifically:

set forth that no state regulation or requirement shall prevent a public provider from offering broadband services;

prohibit a municipality from discriminating against competing private providers;

require a municipality offering high-speed internet services to comply with federal telecommunications law or regulation that applies to all such providers; and

provide the public with notice and an opportunity to be heard before a municipality provides broadband to the public.

Senator Stevens included similar broadband provisions as part of a comprehensive communications reform bill that was approved by the Senate Commerce Committee during the last Congress.

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 19, 2007
Contacts: Aaron Saunders (202) 224-1028
Steve Wackowski (202) 224-5122

Sen. Stevens Champions Funding for Enhanced Communications

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congress today passed the Omnibus Appropriations bill including funding for a number of programs supported by Senator Stevens (R-Alaska) to protect and enhance access to advanced communications technology in the most remote areas of Alaska.

Under the Department of Agriculture, $13.5 million** is appropriated for a grant program to finance broadband transmission in rural areas eligible to benefit from federal distance learning and telemedicine programs.

"Alaska's future lies in connecting our communities to the global economy," said Senator Stevens. "I believe we must take every step to ensure funding for the technologies that will allow this - technologies commonly available in the Lower 48, but often still scarce in Alaska."

To help with the digital conversion championed by Senator Stevens, $5 million** dollars will be made available as grants for the conversion of rural transponders and translators from analog to digital.

Following the events of September 11, 2001, and Hurricane Katrina, Senator Stevens has continued his push to fund first responders with the equipment they need. Through the Department of Homeland Security, $50 million is made available through grants to enhance interoperability between emergency communication systems, of which Alaska will receive a portion.

Additionally, Stevens-sponsored language in the bill protects some of the most important programs to communications in Alaska.

Wireless Internet Access at Native-serving Schools - This pilot program would support investment in wireless technologies at institutions serving minority students nationwide. Initially, this will include at least one Alaska Native-serving school.

Antideficiency Act (ADA) Exemption - This provision extends the exemption for the Universal Service Fund program from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Antideficiency Act (ADA). This exemption allows the program to continue funding programs at schools and libraries without running afoul of accounting rules found in the ADA through December 31, 2008.

Primary Line Restriction Prevention - The provision prohibits the FCC from enacting certain recommendations made by a the Joint Board, a group of FCC and State Utility Commissioners, that would limit the support of the universal service fund to just one line per business. This would prove particularly harmful to small businesses which need a second line for business purposes.

Nationally, Senator Stevens ensured the continuation and enhancement of regulations regarding telemarketing. $23 million is allocated toward the Do-Not-Call program and the implementation of the Telemarketing Sales Rule.

** *Funding levels for the Department of Agriculture contained in the Omnibus Appropriations Act are subject to a 0.7 percent reduction as part of a bipartisan compromise needed to pass the bill. All spending figures in this press release due not reflect these reductions.*

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 14, 2007
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Senator Stevens Champions Alaska Programs in Senate-Passed Farm Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The United States Senate today passed the Farm Bill (S. 2419) by a vote of 79 to 14. Included in the legislation are several Senator Stevens-sponsored provisions which authorize funding for many important programs to Alaska's agriculture industry, educational system, and Native and rural communities.

"While Alaska is not traditionally thought of as a major agriculture state, the Farm Bill passed today has significant benefits for our State," said Senator Stevens. "I am pleased that the Senate has recognized the unique challenges our farmers and rural residents face."

Alaska won a major victory in the Farm Bill when the Senate adopted Senator Stevens' amendment to extend the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Operating Loan program to commercial fishermen. Fishermen will be able to access loans for basic operating costs, including boats, and nets.

"Many of our commercial fishermen need access to these loan programs," said Senator Stevens. "Fishermen new to the industry have found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain credit from commercial lenders for startup costs. As for traditional farmers, equipment necessary to begin a fishing business, such as boats and nets, are very expensive."

Extending eligibility of the FSA program to commercial fishermen would put them on a level playing field with fish farmers, whose product they compete with directly.

"Commercial fishermen make an important contribution to our food supply and economy. Their products - fish and shellfish - have been defined as agricultural products," said Senator Stevens. "The chief competitors of commercial fishermen are already eligible for financial assistance from the FSA. This legislation will ensure our commercial fishermen have the tools they need to succeed - and it will do so at no extra cost to taxpayers."

Senator Stevens also joined Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) in securing a provision to allow Exxon-Valdez oil spill plaintiffs to average any settlement or judgment-related income they receive in connection with the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill litigation over three years for federal tax purposes and contribute up to $100,000 to personal retirement plans. The amendment would provide tax relief to all of the individual plaintiffs in the oil spill settlement, 80 percent of whom are commercial fisherman.

"Although the Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred more than 18 years ago, many people in our State are still dealing with personal losses suffered during that disaster," said Senator Stevens. "Alaskans whose livelihoods were adversely impacted by the spill have not been able to plan adequately for retirement. I applaud Senator Murkowski for her leadership and persistence on this issue. This is a big win for Alaskans."

Along with Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), Senator Stevens championed two amendments to address the unique challenges of being a farmer or rancher in Alaska. One amendment authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to provide reimbursement payments, up to $15 million, to geographically disadvantaged farmers for costs associated with the transportation of agricultural commodities over a distance of more than 30 miles.

A second amendment adds the University of Alaska to the Agricultural Development in the American Pacific program. This program provides a mechanism for the Pacific land grant institutions to collaborate on programs related to food and agriculture production and delivery systems. It also authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to the "consortium" of eligible institutions to carry out research, extension, and instruction programs.

In addition, there are several more programs related to Alaska contained in the Senate-passed bill:

AK Native/Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions - The bill reauthorizes the Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian serving institutions program through 2013. The purpose of this program is to help attract, retain, and graduate Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students to enhance the nation's food and agricultural scientific

and professional workforce.

Rural Alaska Village Grant Program: The bill reauthorizes this program through 2013. Under this program, the Secretary of Agriculture may make grants of up to $30 million a year to the State of Alaska for the development and construction of water and wastewater systems to improve heath and sanitation conditions in rural or Native villages. The State is required to provide 25 percent in matching funds.

Denali Commission: The bill authorizes the Denali Commission to receive funds to address deficiencies in solid waste disposal sites in rural Alaska.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: This provision will make permanent the exemption for U.S.-based commercial trucks transiting through Canada between Alaska and the Lower 48 from Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Agricultural Quarantine Inspection fees.

Digital Television Transition: This Stevens provision will create a grant program to assist rural America with the digital television transition. Additional education and outreach is needed to ensure that Alaska's remote villages are prepared for this transition and don't lose television service.

Broadband in Rural Alaska: This Stevens initiative clarifies that Alaska can use certain grant funds to deploy broadband service even if a village or community currently has dial-up Internet access. Removal of the dial-up restriction will allow for more of Alaska's communities and villages to get robust broadband service and better access to the Internet.

Alaska also stands to benefit from a variety of national programs contained in the bill, including the expansion of nutrition programs, such as the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to promote child health and nutrition, the Food Stamp Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program. The bill also expands support for agricultural conservation programs, and increased funding to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop producers.

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 13, 2007
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Senator Stevens Pushes for Deployment of Broadband in Alaska

Asks FCC to Look Into Calling Card Practices

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Vice Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) today called for increased deployment of broadband service to rural America during the Committee's oversight hearing of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Senator Stevens also urged FCC Chairman Kevin Martin to look into calling card practices that discriminate against Alaska.

Following is an excerpt of Senator Stevens' opening statement:

"Deployment of broadband is an important priority. The Commission has indicated that steps to provide a more accurate picture of the marketplace will be taken, and it is my hope that these actions will be taken soon. Universal service is the most important element for the communications infrastructure our country needs in rural areas. I was glad to see that the joint board has outlined proposals for comprehensive reform. While Alaska is unique, it is not alone in needing universal service programs to deliver the benefits of broadband, telemedicine and distance learning. Universal service has a central role to play in the continued development of this country's resources in rural America and any reform efforts should reflect this important role."

During the question-and-answer portion of the hearing, Senator Stevens asked the FCC to look into calling card practices. At least one major carrier may discontinue service or charge a different rate for its calling cards in Alaska.

Sen. Stevens: We understand that we have a threat about discontinuing some of the national calling cards in our state. Now, I thought we worked it out so that we have a concept that the same rates would apply everywhere. Are you going to permit calling cards to be available only in 49 states?

Chairman Martin: No, and I think you're absolutely right. Rate integration requirements in the law say that they have to be providing that to all 50 states.

Sen. Stevens: That's what really started the whole thing back when Sen. Inouye and I co-sponsored that resolution about Universal Service, making certain we had ubiquitous service all over the country available to everyone, no matter where they were in terms of communication. Now, calling cards are a part of that. I hope you will stick to that and tell the companies if they issue those calling cards, they must issue them in all 50 states. And I would hope you would take action against anyone who doesn't.

Chairman Martin: Yes sir. We'll follow up with that because they are required to do that everywhere.

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2007
Contacts: Aaron Saunders (202) 224-1028
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Stevens Praises FCC Program to Improve Telemedicine in Alaska

New Federal Pilot Program Will Help Fund Broadband Health Care Networks

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Vice Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, today praised a new pilot program implemented by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to improve telemedicine in Alaska and across the nation. The new initiative would support the creation of a nationwide interoperable health information technology infrastructure to improve the quality of health care. Participants in the pilot program are eligible for universal service funding to support up to 85 percent of the costs associated with the design, engineering and construction of their broadband health care networks. Pursuant to the FCC order, the Alaska Native Health Consortium will receive up to $10.4 million in funding assistance to improve telemedicine in rural Alaska.

"Access to affordable and dependable health care is vital to the residents of rural Alaska, and this pilot program is a great start," said Senator Stevens. "Broadband health networks in Alaska and other parts of rural America will mean that millions of Americans will be able to access the best health care in the world, no matter where they live."

The Rural Health Care Pilot Program (RHCPP) implemented by the FCC will provide more than $417 million in funding for the construction of 69 statewide or regional broadband telehealth networks in 42 states and three U.S. territories. More than 6,000 public and non-profit health care providers nationwide are expected to be connected to broadband telehealth networks. The health care facilities participating in the program include: hospitals, clinics, universities, research centers, behavioral health sites, correctional facility clinics, and community health centers.

For a complete list of other states participating in the new program, please go to: http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/rural/rhcp.html.

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 5, 2007
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Steve Wackowski (202) 224-5122

Senator Stevens Introduces Legislation to Protect Rural Telephone Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Vice Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, today introduced the Universal Service for Americans (USA) Act. The bill (S.101) will update the nation's universal service laws. The measure will ensure that all communications technologies are incorporated into our nation's universal service program and that rural America is not left behind in the communications revolution.

"Through the years, our nation's universal service program has ensured that rural Americans, including residents of Alaska, have access to basic telephone and cell phone service," said said Senator Stevens. "The universal service program is essential to bringing broadband, distance learning, and telemedicine to rural Alaska, as well as the rest of our nation. The bill will ensure that schools, libraries and health clinics in rural Alaska and the rest of the nation continue to receive universal service funds on a timely basis."

This legislation expands the list of communications providers that will contribute to the fund. Under current law, long-distance companies pay the bulk of the cost. In addition to updating universal service, the bill includes measures to ensure the long-term integrity of the program with improved auditing requirements. The legislation mirrors Title II of the bipartisan Senate Communications bill that passed the Committee last summer.

Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 28, 2006
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Senate Commerce Committee Approves Communications Reform Bill

WASHINGTON, DC - The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee today approved the Advanced Telecommunications and Opportunity Reform Act (H.R. 5252) by a vote of 15 to 7. The legislation, which Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) introduced in May, is the culmination of 26 hearings, six listening sessions, and bipartisan collaboration between the members of the committee. The bill includes several provisions that will directly benefit Alaska.

"I am pleased at the overwhelming support this legislation has received," said Stevens after the committee's vote. "Today, our committee approved a very meaningful bill. It really brings together all forms of communication under the concept of freedom in the interest of the consumer, and its impact in rural areas will be substantial."

Several provisions included in H.R. 5252 will improve the communications services available in Alaska. The Act reforms the Universal Service Fund (USF), a federal program originally created to offset the cost of building and operating telecommunications networks in rural areas of the United States. It expands the base of USF contributors and creates an annual $500 million fund to address communications needs in rural areas. These funds will be used to deploy broadband to areas that currently do not have service, including rural areas in Alaska.

H.R. 5252 also allows small rural telecommunications carriers to offer video services and, where feasible, increases the availability of satellite services. In addition, the legislation encourages the expansion of wireless broadband and home networking services by freeing up unused broadcast spectrum.

The Advanced Telecommunications and Opportunity Reform Act, which was previously introduced as the Communications, Consumers' Choice, and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006 (S. 2686), reforms existing communications laws. Its provisions promote competition, cost savings for consumers, and the speedy deployment of broadband services to all Americans. The Act will now be sent to the full Senate for consideration.

For more information about this bill and today's mark-up, please visit commerce.senate.gov.

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Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2006
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Stevens Praises Advancements Made Possible by the Universal Service Fund

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, during a Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee hearing, Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) praised the progress that has been made since the inception of the Universal Service Fund (USF). Today's hearing was the first of three that will be convened by the Committee to review the Communications, Consumers' Choice, and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006 (S. 2686), legislation that Stevens unveiled earlier this month.

During the hearing, Stevens stressed that the communications services made possible by USF have made Alaska a safer place to live. He told his colleagues about a man who was snowmachining near Mt. McKinley when he suddenly dropped into a crevasse, wedging his machine. The man was rescued because he was able to connect to 9-1-1 on his cell phone, emitting a signal that a satellite was able to detect. "The world has changed," said Stevens, "and there is a safety factor now in communication that is assured by the Universal Service Fund."

At the end of the hearing, Stevens added, "There must be some mechanism to satisfy the demand of the public; access to modern communications is now an American right. We intend to see that this bill preserves that right."

The Communications, Consumers' Choice, and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006 reforms existing communications laws. Its provisions promote competition, cost savings for consumers, and the speedy deployment of broadband services to all Americans. An integral component of this legislation is the Universal Service Fund, a federal program designed to offset the cost of building and operating telecommunications networks in rural areas of the United States. The bill also stipulates that carriers receiving USF support must provide broadband access within five years of the bill's enactment.

The second hearing on the Communications, Consumers' Choice, and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006 is scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 2006.

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Newsroom

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 2, 2006
Contacts: Aaron Saunders (202) 224-1028
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Chairman Stevens Introduces Comprehensive Communications Reform Bill

WASHINGTON, DC - Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) has introduced S. 2686, the Communications, Consumers' Choice, and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006. The legislation reforms existing communications laws to promote competition, cost savings for consumers, and the speedy deployment of broadband services to all Americans. It includes provisions that reform the Universal Service Fund (USF) and will expand the communications services available in Alaska.

"This measure is a working draft intended to stimulate discussion and is open for comments and suggestions for change. It attempts to strike a balance between competing industries, consumer groups, and local government," said Stevens. "This bill includes provisions throughout that will benefit consumers. It encourages competition and cost savings in the video market. It addresses some critical needs in rural America. And, it encourages deployment of broadband so that our nation can remain competitive."

S. 2686 contains several provisions that will directly affect Alaska. These provisions will reform the Universal Service Fund, allow small rural telecommunications carriers to offer video services, and increase the availability of satellite services where feasible. The legislation also encourages the expansion of wireless broadband and home networking services by freeing up unused broadcast spectrum.

Universal Service Reform
The Universal Service Fund is a federal program originally created to offset the cost of building and operating telecommunications networks in rural areas of the United States. Title II of S. 2686 requires every telecommunications, broadband, and IP-enabled voice service provider to pay into USF. This provision will expand the base of contributors and ensure there are sufficient funds available to meet communications demands in rural areas across the country, including Alaska. This bill also stipulates that carriers receiving USF support must provide broadband access within five years of the bill's enactment.

The bill also creates an annual fund of $500 million to address communications needs in rural areas. These funds will be used to deploy broadband to areas that currently do not have service, including rural areas in Alaska.

Streamlining Franchising Process
In many areas in Alaska, communications services are provided by telecommunications carriers, but currently these carriers must clear many hurdles to gain a local franchise. S. 2686 seeks to streamline this process by allowing small rural telecommunications carriers to enter the video services market. This step will increase competition and expand the services available to consumers at affordable prices.

Video Content
National Satellite
In the past, the programming and choice options that satellite companies have offered in the Lower 48 have not been available in Alaska or Hawaii. S. 2686 includes a provision that will ensure newly deployed satellites will provide those programming options in Alaska and Hawaii, if technically feasible.

Wireless Innovation Networks
Unlicensed White Spaces
In many U.S. markets, a portion of the spectrum allocated to television broadcasters goes unused. This spectrum is commonly referred to as "unlicensed white space." S. 2686 includes a provision that will allow unlicensed wireless devices to use this spectrum. In Anchorage alone, more than 150 MHz could be re-allocated for the use of these devices.

The Act also allows manufacturers to develop devices that utilize unlicensed white spaces. These devices will be certified by the FCC and will only operate on portions of the television spectrum not needed by broadcasters. The intention of this provision is to help bring wireless broadband and home networking to consumers at a lower cost, which is particularly important in remote Alaskan communities. Provisions have been included in the bill to ensure

that there is no harmful interference with broadcast signals.

S. 2686 has been referred to the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation for consideration. The full text of S. 2686, a summary of its provisions, and Senator Stevens' May 1, 2006 floor statement introducing this bill are available at www.stevens.senate.gov.

You will need to have Real One Player installed on your computer to be able to listen or watch the clips above. Real One Player is free software that lets you play audio and video files. Download Real One Player

ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS

CRITICAL ISSUES

The New Literacy • 21st Century Learning in Alaska

Critical Issues is a special publication of the Association of Alaska School Boards. Inside the reader will discover:

To download a copy of this Critical Issues paper, and the bibliography used to prepare it, please visit www.aasb-cdl.org.

ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS
ADVOCATES FOR ALASKA'S YOUTH

21st Century Learning and its Importance in a Competitive Nation and World

Educating young people to be successful in the 21st century is no small task, but the consequences of failing to do so are enormous. Current data show that high school graduates in jobs requiring the highest degree of innovative thinking earn more than 50 percent more than those in jobs requiring the least innovation. For college graduates, the difference is 135 percent.

A parallel trend shows that our nation's current practice of outsourcing jobs to countries such as China and India makes it more difficult for unskilled American workers to earn middle-class incomes. As a nation, we can meet the challenge of job ready skills or relinquish the advantage to emerging economies. These trends make it clear that as a nation and within the state of Alaska, we must shift the focus of education to **learning optimized for the 21st century.**

Twenty-first century learning starts with an understanding of a new purpose for our schools and educators. Twenty years ago, school was the place where students learned information and skills in core subject areas such as English, math, science and history. Educators were primarily information experts who passed along what they had learned in school to their students.

Today, information is readily available from numerous sources. With a computer, the Internet and a search engine, much of the information students used to spend the entire school year learning can be acquired in a fraction of the time or on an as needed basis. As a result, in addition to being information repositories, schools now need to be places where students can acquire knowledge and skills they can use to solve complex problems for the rest of their lives. In addition to being information experts, educators now need to be skilled facilitators and coaches.

For example, students today must master core subjects and a broad range of interdisciplinary knowledge areas that education and business leaders call "21st century skills." Examples include global awareness, financial and entrepreneurial literacy, information and media literacy, civic literacy and health literacy. Students also need to acquire skills such as innovation and creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, information and media literacy, initiative, adaptability and accountability.

Several factors combine to make 21st century learning of critical importance, but chief among them is global interdependence.

Young Americans coming of age in the early 21st century – the 70 million people born between 1982 and 2000 – live in a world that is arguably more complex than it was just a few years ago. In a remarkably short period of time, the world and its people, economies and cultures have become inextricably connected, driven largely by the Internet, innovations in mobile computers and devices, and low-cost telecommunications technology.

21st Century Skills

Global Awareness

To compete abroad successfully, American companies need a workforce equipped to translate American business models and offerings to international marketplaces. Many of the challenges facing us - geopolitical tensions, climate change and disease pandemics - are global in nature and scale, and thus demand cross-border perspectives and solutions. In such a world, tangible skills such as proficiency in multiple languages are obviously critical to success.

What Alaskans are Saying About 1 to 1 Digital Learning

"As we prepare students for an emerging world that is global, where three out of five jobs they will compete for don't even exist, I am convinced this laptop initiative is providing skills that will serve students well, regardless of the career path they pursue."
- Joel Roylance, Anchorage principal

"The staff at our school are in agreement, even without the clear educational benefits that these incredible tools provide, just the increased attendance justifies any expense that this program incurs."
- Tim Shumway, Crooked Creek teacher

"In my years of education I cannot say I have ever felt a shift to the degree that we have made. I've described it as a revolution. We are not turning back. Ever."
Laury Scandling, Juneau principal

"The laptop has really helped me. It has pushed school into the 21st century."
Jacob, Cordova student

These computers changed our lives."
Jeremiah, Fairbanks student

"The laptop program gives us students the opportunity to achieve unbelievable things."
Mark, Kuspuk student

Global Interdependence

Global interdependence has profound implications on all aspects of our society – from how we think and work to how we play and learn. In business, for example, 9 to 5 has been replaced by 24/7, as technology keeps us "always on" and our markets and workforces extend across every time zone. Our colleagues are more diverse, as the number of women and ethnic minorities are increasing. And the focus of business is changing to match the largest growth opportunities – those abroad. International commerce now accounts for a quarter of the American economy and is fueling a third of U.S. economic growth.

The business case for global markets is compelling, and to compete abroad successfully, American companies need a workforce equipped to translate American business models and offerings to international marketplaces.

Moreover, many of the challenges facing us – geopolitical tensions, climate change and disease pandemics – are global in nature and scale, and thus demand cross-border perspectives and solutions.

In such a world, tangible skills such as proficiency in multiple languages are obviously critical to success. But language are just part of the equation. To be productive global citizens, Americans need other skills that are less tangible, including greater sensitivity to cultural differences, openness to new and different ideas, and the ability to adapt to change.

The massive amount of information and opinion available to us offline and online can help us meet these and other challenges, but awash in this sea of information each of us needs the ability to sort fact from fiction and evaluate and interpret conflicting ideas. We also need to know how to work collaboratively and creatively in person, by telephone and online to make decisions and take action.

Making the transition to 21st century learning requires rethinking both **what** and **how** we teach in the context of preparing our students for life and work in this changing world.

Alaska Career Ready
Business & Education Speaking the Same Language

The State of Alaska is piloting a new assessment and training program to equip high school students with foundational skills needed to succeed in college or on the job. The Alaska Career Ready program is scheduled to expand to all Alaska schools in 2009.

The foundational skills assessed by Alaska Career Ready include applied math, reading for information and locating information. Eventually, students who are proficient will be awarded a Career Readiness Certificate, which will provide prospective colleges or employers with another credential indicating foundational skill levels, in addition to a high school diploma and SAT or ACT scores.

"The skills needed to enter many vocations are similar to the skills needed to get into college. By 2010, three-quarters of jobs will require some type of training after high school," says Roger Sampson, former commissioner of education who championed the program. "Alaska Career Ready lets students know what level of skill they need for the occupations they're interested in, how well they match up in those skill levels, and it provides training to ready their goal."

The pilot program will focus assessments on 6th, 8th and 11th grade students in about six school districts in 2008 before going statewide next year, say officials at the Departments of Labor & Workforce Development and Education & Early Development, which are coordinating the effort.

At the urging of AASB and others, the state Board of Education & Early Development decided to test the readiness of school

districts to implement the assessments and training in 2008 before launching the program as a statewide mandate. Officials say 15 states already issue Career Ready certificates and 18 more are in the process of implementation.

The state already has contracted with the Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) of Kingston, Tennessee, to provide benchmark assessments and curriculum, and with ACT Inc. through its WorkKeys program to provide assessments for the Career Readiness Certificate.

Financial, Economic and Business Literacy

"As I talk to businesses, the biggest thing that they look for is qualified people. My job as a leader is to try to look out into the future, see what's necessary, and then equip my people with whatever it is. This (1 to 1 learning) proposal is for every school, every kid, rich, poor, north, south, east, west, rural, and urban. At a stroke, it would begin the elimination of the division between the technological haves and the have-nots."

How Young Alaskans See the World

Today's generation of learners is markedly different from previous generations in what engages them how they learn.

Today's students Are Diverse

According to U.S. Census data, 34 percent of today's students are minorities and multi-ethnic and nearly half of the nation's children under the age of five are minorities. Americans will become even more diverse as immigration fuels two-thirds of the national population growth between now and 2050. In Minnesota's public schools, 80 languages are spoken; in California, the number is 300. Here in Alaska it is 108 .

Reflecting the world that surrounds them, many of today's youth simply don't understand their parents' perspectives on race, religion and hot-button social issues. Ethnic, cultural and social diversity is just part of their lives. The same is true for having more diversity in their peers' abilities and disabilities. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the number of K-12 students enrolled in programs serving students with disabilities doubled to 6.2 million between 1976 and 2000.

oday's Students Thrive on Collaboration

With the global community made possible through the Internet and participatory web sites, today's students also expect collaboration. "A global youth culture has emerged of individuals who share tastes in music, fashion and lifestyle – and who also think alike," observed education consultant Thom Markham. "The research also shows that youth in cities as diverse as New York, Seoul and Caracas have more in common with each other than the ith peers in their own countryside. This trend puts us squarely on the path to greater collaborative and synergistic efforts that could improve the quality of life on a global level."

Today's Students Are Community Minded

If students in the 1960's and 1970's were the "me" generation, demographics and technology have created a 21st century "we" generation. Where community once was defined by geography or perhaps political or religious beliefs, today's students experience community around a wide range of ideas and interests – and across continents and cultures.

Nowhere is today's definition of community more apparent than on the Internet. As New York Times columnist David Pogue wrote, "In 2006, the big Internet news was 'Web 2.0,' that is, participatory Web sites, like YouTube, MySpace, Wikipedia, Digg and Flickr, which relied on material supplied by the audience itself. On these explosively popular sites, the Web is not so much a publication as a global conversation."

Participatory sites provide students with a highly engaging and effective learning environment. University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor J.P. Gee asserts that these "affinity spaces" are critical because they "are sustained by common endeavors that bridge differences in age, class, race, gender and educational level, and because people can participate in various ways according to their skills and interests. They depend on peer-to-peer teaching with each participant constantly motivated to acquire new knowledge or refine their existing skills and allow each participant to feel like an expert while tapping the expertise of others."

Today's Students Embrace Technology

Students today have grown up in a world where mobile computers, cell phones with browsers and other personal digital devices are common tools, and instant messaging, blogs and wikis are common modes of self-expression. They live a media rich, connected and mobile lifestyle, and they are just as often producers of content as they are consumers. Social networks and participatory sites such as My Space and Second Life provide them with engaging opportunities for interaction and informal learning.

Students spend an average of nearly 6.5 hours a day with media.

87 percent of 12 to 17-year-olds – or 21 million young people – are Internet users.

Three-quarters of today's teens use at least two digital devices daily.

Today's Students Des and Relevance

Not surprisingly, students today expect to learn in an environment that mirrors their lives and their futures – one that seamlessly integrates today's digital tools, accommodates a mobile lifestyle, and encourages collaboration and teamwork.

Too often, though, these are not the attributes students find at school. As one student expressed it: "Going to school is like flying on an airplane. I have to turn off my digital life, strap myself in and wait until the end of the flight to resume my digital life."

The disconnect between a student's digital life and school matters because students learn better when they are engaged and research about what engages them points to technology. Numerous studies also have shown that effective integration of technology into teaching and learning – technology when used to support meaningful learning activities in context – can result in higher levels of student achievement.

The link between technology, engagement and achievement is especially important for our K-12 schools because by government mandate, their mission has evolved from providing an opportunity for young people to learn to making sure they do. When students must learn, motivating them to learn becomes essential.

Today's Students Require Access

1 to 1 learning programs, which provide students and teachers with round-the-clock use of a notebook computer as well as access to educational software and digital authoring tools, can be critical components and are showing compelling evidence of preparing students for the future.

Every state, district and school has its own unique objectives for their 1 to 1 programs, but most focus on one or more of the following goals:

- Improving students' academic achievement through the use of technology;
- Assuring equity in access to digital resources;
- Promoting economic development by better preparing students for today's workplace; and
- Enhancing teaching to transform the quality of instruction.

> "1 to 1 computer access changes everything. But let me make this crystal clear: this is not about technology or software, it is about teaching kids."

An increasing number of schools and school districts across the country and in Alaska are experiencing the reality of such observations after implementing 1 to 1 learning programs. In fact, both quantitative and qualitative research show that students with routine access to notebook computers score higher in writing assessments, demonstrate better analytical skills, collaborate more, and have lower absenteeism and dropout rates.

@; 21st Century Skills

Civi racy

Where community once was defined by geography or perhaps political or religious beliefs, today's students experience community around a wide range of ideas and interests and across continents and cultures. Nowhere is today's definition of community more apparent than on the Internet. Participatory sites provide students with a highly engaging and effective learning environment.

How Other States are Teaching New Skills

Reality Today

School districts across the country are revising their academic curriculum to give students more 21st century learning opportunities, according to a survey by the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

More than 50 percent of responding school districts reported that they have **revamped their curricula** to include higher math, science, and technology standards; and nearly 50 percent have indicated they are now **using new assessment measures** for 21st century learning skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking. Many districts are also reporting that they are **offering more Advanced Placement courses and tests** (nearly 42 percent), and **revamping their workforce readiness programs** (35 percent).

"We believe this is a good indication that school districts are moving beyond the basic requirements of No Child Left Behind and really looking at the advanced skills that students are going to need to perform well in the workplaces of the future," said NSBA Executive Anne L. Bryant.

Among those districts that are revising their curricula, **85 percent reported that technology is** playing a **part** in supporting the changes, especially in the area of using technology tools for project-based learning (83 percent), distance or online learning (nearly 57 percent) and upgrading math and science equipment and facilities (nearly 52 percent). A majority of districts (nearly 53 percent) said that they are using new interactive web tools, such as wikis and blogs, in the classroom.

School districts were evenly split (45 percent) between the two biggest technology challenges: funding and integrating technology into the classroom. These two challenges have remained consistent over the four years of the NSBA technology survey.

NSBA conducted an e-mail survey the week of October 1, 2007 of approximately 1,400 registrants of the T+L Conference and members of NSBA's Technology Leadership Network. The group includes technology directors and specialists, teachers, administrators and school board members.

For the **fourth straight year**, survey respondents said by a wide margin – 92 percent – that technology in the classroom increases educational opportunities for students. And when asked how technology helped, nearly 95 percent said it helps students become more engaged in learning.

Home access to the Internet for low-income students continues to be a serious issue with nearly 80 percent of respondents saying it was a problem in their districts, which was about the same reported as last year. Districts are improving Internet access for low-income students by providing opportunities in before- or after-school programs (nearly 54 percent), and supporting access for students at community centers or libraries (48 percent).

The **federal E-Rate program continues** to be important to school districts in meeting their technology goals. Nearly 72 percent replied in the NSBA survey that E-Rate is somewhat or very important to their districts. In terms of improving the program, nearly 76 percent said the application process needs to be enhanced, 35 percent want additional training and outreach to applicants, and 31 percent want sanctions for rule violators.

If school districts were to receive additional technology funding, nearly 75 percent said they would put it into classroom instruction and 66 percent said they would use it for staff professional development.

Progress Report Maine

In **Maine**, economic development was the driving force behind the state's 1 to 1 learning program, which distributed a notebook computer to every seventh- and eighth-grade student and their teachers.

Now, after having notebooks all four years of high school, 12th grade students scored higher than 85 percent of their peers in all five core subjects of the last Maine Educational Assessment. Those students also set a state record for the percentage going on to college. In addition, attendance improved by nearly 8 percent and the number of behavior letters sent home decreased by 54 percent, according to a 2004 study.

"20th century learning was largely spent refining the teaching model of the 19th century. The design of sc needs to keep up with the pace at which students are going. Children are doing things they could never do before. That's very exciting, but the education system has to go there with them."

- Professor Stephen Heppell, UK education technology consultant

@; 21st Century Skills

Information and Communication

"Students are coming into our classrooms today out of an information-rich online experience. This changing information landscape means rethinking literacy. Students require not only the ability to write, but to communicate compellingly ... to find information, critically evaluate it, and employ it to express ideas, answer questions, solve problems, and accomplish goals. As little as we know about the future for which we are preparing our students, it is clear that it will be a place governed by information."

What Are 21st Century Skills?

"For so long we've been used to a c[illegible]la construct that's come out of an i[illegible]rial age. It's become ingrained in teachers, the pedagogical DNA deeply buried within them. Skill sets must be appropriate for a digital age in which young people live. They have a new way of looking at the world. We're getting teachers with a DNA construct working with these young people and there's a fundamental mismatch. We need a new pedagogy called 'DNA for the 21st Century.' Kids and teachers in that complex interrelationship we call 'learning' will provide a rich new way of doing things. If we don't have a new DNA, we're going to continue to condemn future generations of teachers because we haven't changed the fundamental building blocks."

Greg Whitby, Executive Director of Schools, Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, Australia

Skills students now need to succeed in school, work and life:

Information and Communication
- Using technology to access, evaluate, create, manage information
- Analyzing, synthesizing information to solve problems and answer questions
- Understanding ethical/legal use issues

Thinking and Problem Solving
- Developing, communicating ideas, demonstrating originality, inventiveness
- Using sound reasoning, problem-solving to reach goals
- Working effectively with changing priorities

Interpersonal and Self-Direction Skills
- Working appropriately, productively with others
- Adapting to varied roles and responsibilities
- Defining, prioritizing, completing tasks, managing workload

Global Awareness
- Understanding of global issues, nations, cultures
- Working collaboratively with people of diverse cultures, religions, lifestyles
- Using languages in addition to English

Financial, Economic and Business Literacy
- Making appropriate personal economic choices
- Understanding role of the economy in society
- Using entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity, career options

Civic Literacy
- Understanding, participating in governmental processes
- Exercising citizenship rights and obligations
- Understanding local, global implications of civic decisions

For more information visit www.21stcenturyskills.org. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has developed a unified, collective vision for 21st century learning to strengthen American education. Its 26 members represent prominent business and education organizations.

21st Century Skills and the Alaska Workforce

While the Alaska Department of Labor estimates that eight of every 10 well-paying jobs in Alaska currently do not require a four-year college degree, increasingly employers are seeking workers with 21st Century skills to manage and build construction projects, operate complex machinery and think innovatively as part of a workplace team. That means instilling those skills in Alaska's 130,000 K-12 students.

With a workforce now topping 330,000 jobs, Alaska has outgrown the boom and bust cycles of the past. In their place, the state has seen two decades of steady job growth and a maturing of the economy in several important sectors, especially in high-skilled white-collar employment. Labor statistics show the number of architects, engineers, accountants and lawyers in Alaska has grown from about 7,800 to 12,000 since 1990, an increase of 53 percent. In total, Alaska's 24,000 professional and business service workers make up eight percent of the workforce and account for $1 billion in wages.

Yet Gov. Sarah Palin noted in a recent state publication, "In 2005, more than 36 percent of newly hired engineers working in Alaska were not Alaska residents. To address this and other skills gaps, Alaska must continue its investment in professional development at the secondary and postsecondary levels."

In a 2005 report to Congress, the Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century, chaired by Norman R. Augustine, the retired CEO of Lockheed Martin Corp., concluded that "few jobs seem safe" in today's competitive world. The committee credited this to "The Death of Distance" through breakthroughs in aviation and transportation of goods and the World Wide Web (transportation of information in large volumes at little cost).

"How will Americans compete?" the committee asked. "The answer appears to be, not very well. . . For example, five qualified chemists can be hired in India for the cost of just one in America. Given the enormous disadvantages in labor costs, we cannot be satisfied merely to match other economies in those areas where we do enjoy strength; rather we must excel . . . markedly."

This analogy by poet Richard Hodgetts summarizes the essence of innovation in a highly competitive environment:

"For the first time in history, our job as educators is to prepare our children for a future that we can not clearly describe."

Warlick, The Landmark Project

@;- 21st Century Skills

Interpersonal and Self-Direction Skills

Young Americans coming of age in the early 21st Century - the 70 million people born between 1982 and 2000 - live in a world that is arguably more complex than it was just a few years ago. In business, for example, 9 to 5 has been replaced by 24/7, as technology keeps us "always on" and our markets and workforces extend across every time zone. Our colleagues are more diverse, as the number of women and ethnic minorities are increasing.

Consortium for Digital Learning
Preparing Alaska's Students for Success in The Global Economy

AASB is committed to the idea that creating 1 to 1 digital learning environments in Alaska's schools will help all students develop 21st century skills, reach their potential, raise their achievement levels and lead successful lives in the global economy.

In spring of 2006, the AASB Consortium for Digital Learning (CDL) was awarded capital funds in the amount of $5 million by the 24th Legislature. Within seven months after funds were received b, AASB, 1 to 1 initiatives were successfully launched at over 55 project sites in 18 districts throughout the state.

The infrastructure is in place to support the ongoing success of each district's four-year CDL project. Major components include: district performance contracts identifying academic and other targets, onsite/online staff professional development, in-state repair and 24-hour phone tech support, ongoing UAA-ISER evaluation, multiple platform options, and parent education seminars on safe computing.

Next Steps

Educators, students and parents involved with CDL have acknowledged the initiative's effectiveness in engaging students, improving academic performance and instilling skills relevant to today's job market. Establishing successful 1 to 1 digital learning pilot projects in diverse school districts across Alaska has been a good start, but we can and must do more. Given the swift pace of societal transformation, time is not on our side.

Our education system needs to move quickly to ensure that our state's 130,000 students have the benefit of 1 to 1 learning environments so they can graduate from public schools with the skills needed to compete in the rapidly changing global economy. Through the CDL initiative, AASB has articulated a vision firmly rooted in 21st century literacy, and is actively working to educate stakeholders and policymakers on the importance of digital learning as a moral imperative for all of Alaska's students.

Districts currently participating in CDL:

- Alaska Gateway
- Anchorage
- Cordova
- Craig
- Denali
- Dillingham
- Fairbanks
- Juneau
- Klawock
- Kodiak
- Kuspuk
- Lake and Peninsula
- Lower Kuskokwim
- North Slope
- Petersburg
- Southeast Island
- Southwest Region
- Yukon Flats

For more information visit www.aasb-cdl.org

Thinking and Problem Solving

The increased emphasis on problem solving and reasoning skills in the workplace reflects an expansion in demand for better, larger and more sophisticated products and services. Employees, managers and policy makers alike need to grasp complex issues, react appropriately to the existing environment and offer suitable solutions. All levels of an organization – support, supervisory, executive and board – must weigh customer demand and product satisfaction.

PROGRESSIVE STATES Network

March 13, 2008

Dear Members of the Community and Regional Affairs Committee:

On behalf of the Progressive States Network, I am submitting written testimony to support House Bill 388, an act establishing the Alaska Broadband Task Force. As an organization dedicated to helping states implement innovative legislation, we applaud Alaska's effort to increase access to and deployment of affordable high-speed Internet. I also write to suggest a few policies that other states have adopted which would strengthen the effectiveness of the bill.

As a country we have always realized the importance of investing in traditional infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, railways, waterways and public transit. These transportation systems are central to our economy and we have willingly financed their construction, maintenance, and upgrades.

The Internet is the public infrastructure of our time. It is no longer just a standard medium for everyday communication, but just like highways and the power distribution grid, a key component of economic development. To be able to capitalize on all the economic opportunities and savings made possible by broadband connectivity, we must invest in building a strong framework capable of achieving maximum rather than minimal capabilities.

According to data from the Alaska Department of Commerce, currently 30% of Alaskan communities do not have any access to broadband. The communities that do have access to broadband pay some of the highest prices in the nation (almost every community in Alaska pays at a minimum $50 per month for basic broadband) for the lowest speeds. While the average median download speed in the United States is 1.97 megabits per second, far below download speeds in countries such as Japan (61mbps), South Korea (45.60 mbps), Finland (21.70mbps) and Sweden (18.20 mbps), Alaska's median download speed is even slower clocking in at .55 mbps.[1] **(See Appendix 1)**

Creating an Alaska Broadband Task Force to map existing broadband infrastructure in the state and to develop a plan to increase broadband deployment and access is an important first step. It would ensure Alaska remains a global competitor, it would decrease the cost of providing basic services, and, most importantly, it would enhance Alaska residents' quality of life.

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[1] Speed Matters Speed Test.

I. Why High Speed Broadband is Necessary

High speed broadband is interactive, always on, two-way communication. The issue of broadband capacity and speed are critical because it creates the limits of what is possible. Dial up connections of 56 kilobits per second (kbps) or 200 kbps (FCC definition of high-speed) are too slow to run many important applications.[2] In today's high-tech world, having access to high-speed Internet is necessary to ensure economic development, the ability to implement cost cutting mechanisms, and to increase residents' quality of life. **(See Appendix 2)**

Economic Development:

It is estimated that widespread adoption of high-speed Internet will add $134 billion to the U.S. economy annually and create 1.2 million new jobs per year.[3] As evidence of the impact of broadband on the economy, it has been documented that recent economic development and the resulting jobs are going disproportionately to communities with strong broadband deployment. A recent study found that the availability of broadband in communities added over 1% to the employment growth rate and a 0.5% increase in the growth of business establishments.[4]

An affordable and reliable high-speed Internet infrastructure is not only essential to job creation, but also ensures improved educational and health care services, and increased public safety.

Telemedicine:

Traditional healthcare involves face-to-face interaction between doctors and patients. In certain settings, such as remote and isolated areas, face-to-face interactions are hindered by obstacles such as distance and time restraints. These obstacles can make providing medical treatment exceptionally expensive.

High-speed Internet allows for doctors and patients to utilize technology to make healthcare more accessible and affordable. This merging of technology and medicine is referred to as telemedicine. Telemedicine permits the remote monitoring of patients, allows doctors and hospitals to share data and images easily and instantaneously, provides efficient chronic disease management and emergency service to remote areas, and allows supplies and prescriptions to be ordered in simpler and cheaper ways.

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[2] Speed Matters: Affordable High Speed Internet for All, Communications of America Policy Paper, page 6.
[3] Connected Nation, The Economic Impact of Stimulating Broadband Nationally, February, 21, 2008.
[4] William Lehr, Carols Osorio, Sharon Gillet, Marvin Sirbu, Measuring Broadband's Economic Impact, Presented at the 33rd Research Conference on Communication, Information and Internet Policy, Revised January 17, 2006.

In Georgia, telemedicine has been used to save lives and minimize the negative effects of strokes on rural citizens. A telemedicine program connects the Medical College of Georgia's neurology department with ten rural hospitals. When a patient has a stroke there is a short three hour window for doctors to determine if the stroke was caused by clotting or bleeding. Depending on diagnosis, the right course of treatment is instituted. But, the medical treatment for a stroke caused by clotting can have devastating effects if given to a patient who is having a stroke due to bleeding and vice versa. Thus, an examination by a professional is needed before treatment can occur. Since the time it would take to transport a patient from rural Georgia to a qualified treatment center is longer than the 3-hour window, previously there was little rural hospitals could do for stroke patients. Today, with telemedicine a neurologist anywhere in the world is able to provide the necessary examination and determination so that rural hospitals can begin treatment. Telemedicine has increased rural hospitals ability to effectively treat stroke victims.

Additionally, telemedicine has been proven to reduce the cost of healthcare. A recent SUNY study found that patients using telemedicine to manage congestive heart failure experienced a reduction in overall healthcare costs of 41%. Reduced physician office visits alone offered a savings of more than $115 million annually. [5]

Telecommuting:

Telecommuting is estimated to have the ability to create over $20 billion of saving annually across the economy. For every 10% increase in worker telecommuting, fuel use is projected to drop by 1.2 million gallons per week.[6] Telecommuting has also been found to increase worker productivity by 20%-25%.[7] When Cisco paid to have broadband Internet installed in employees' homes, the company traded wasted commute time for an extra hour of work each day. Other companies, such as AT&T and Merrill Lynch each saved $10,000 a year per employee through lower absenteeism alone.

Other benefits of broadband:

Furthermore, widespread broadband deployment is important in enhancing citizens' quality of life. With ubiquitous high-speed Internet access, students from any geographic location and income level in Alaska could take advantage of otherwise unattainable educational and job training opportunities; more people could participate in e-commerce. Moreover, broadband leads to increased public safety through remote surveillance, by ensuring all first

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[5] Craig Lehmann PhD CC (NRCC) FACB, Dean Professor State University of New York, Stony Brook.

[6] http://www.cnn.com/2007/LIVING/worklife/09/27/cb.work.home.advantage/index.html.

[7] Nicole Demerath, Telecommuting in the 21st century: Benefits, issues, and a leadership model which will work, 2001 available at http://www.allbusiness.com/buying_exiting_businesses/3503510-1.html.

responders are on the same frequency, and by facilitating more comprehensive information sharing among agencies. Additionally, broadband can help senior citizens, people with disabilities, and those in remote areas live independently yet still ensuring opportunities to participate in economic and civil life.

The failure to build out broadband infrastructure no longer simply stifles Alaska's potential growth, but actually does a disservice to the public interest.

II. The United States Broadband Problem

Although the inventors of the Internet, America has fallen behind many countries in terms of adopting broadband. Today our European and Asian counterparts are outperforming us because they have policies that foster vigorous competition in the broadband marketplace, offering consumers more choice, faster speeds and lower prices.

When looking at broadband deployment it is essential to consider penetration, connectivity speed, and cost. Data recently released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) highlights the United States failure to provide all citizens with affordable high speed Internet, especially in comparison to other countries.

Broadband penetration is a measure of what percentage of the population has access to high-speed Internet. In the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2007 broadband penetration rankings the United States ranked 15th out of the 30 member nations, down from 4th place in 2001. **(See Appendix 3)** The OECD data also demonstrates that America is continuously falling further behind. Annual U.S. penetration growth ranked 20th, and semi-annual growth was 24th out of 30 countries. Each spot the United States slips represents billions in lost producer and consumer surplus, and potentially millions of real jobs lost to overseas workers.

Affordable broadband is an essential element necessary to ensure that every citizen can utilize broadband once a strong infrastructure is built. Yet, the United States is woefully behind other countries when comparing the cost of broadband. When comparing broadband prices across countries, the US ranks 13 out of the 30 member countries of the OECD.

Lastly, connectivity speed is essential to ensure that individuals can use broadband to run advance applications that lead to economic development, cost saving mechanisms, and increased quality of life. The broadband available to U.S. consumers is generally slower and more expensive than in other countries. In the U.S., telephone-based DSL broadband reaches speeds averaging 1.5 to 3.0 megabits per second (mbps) at a price averaging $30-$50 per month while cable modems in the U.S. generally reach speeds of 3-5 mbps for $40-$50 per month. In Japan, by contrast, the cost of an average connection with the speed of 26 mbps costs roughly $22 per

month, meaning the Japanese have 8 times the speed at roughly 1/2 of the cost.[8] **(See Appendix 4)**

In order for Alaska and the United States to stay competitive globally it is essential that governments implement policies to build strong infrastructures, capable of providing affordable, high-speed Internet access to all. **(See Appendix 5)**

III. What Other States Have Done

States have taken several common actions, adopted as a stand alone or in combination, to increase broadband deployment.[9]

- **Setting a goal for broadband adoption/availability**: California, Oregon, Kentucky, Maine, New York, North Carolina, and Vermont.
- **Creation of a new body focusing on broadband**: California, Oregon, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, and Vermont.
- **Funding broadband access with grants or low-interest loans**: California, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Vermont.
- **Regulatory bargains**: telephone companies have been required to deploy greater broadband in return for reduced regulatory requirements: California, Illinois, Maine, and Vermont.
- **Streamlining uses of rights-of-way** (both state and municipal): California, Maine, and Maryland.
- **Public-private cooperation**: California, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia.
- **Mapping of broadband facilities**: California, Kentucky, Ohio, Maine, and Tennessee.
- **E-awareness**: educating communities of the importance and/or availability of broadband to increase adoption: California, Maine, New York, and North Carolina.
- **Tax credits for investments in broadband facilities**: California, Oregon and Idaho.
- **Focus on extending middle-mile fiber connectivity**: Maryland, Ohio, and Virginia.

Not all states have implemented these policies in the same way, and certain implementations have had better results than others. **(See Appendix 6)**

IV. Proposed Alaska House Bill 388

The Progressive States Network celebrates Alaska House Bill 388 and the establishment of an Alaskan Broadband Task Force to conduct broadband mapping and discuss possible deployment strategies. This type of approach ensures that deployment of the broadband

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[8] Speed Matters: Affordable High Speed Internet for All, Communications of America Policy Paper, page 11.
[9] John Windhausen Jr., A Blueprint for Big Broadband, EDUCAUSE White Paper, January 2008.

infrastructure will provide increased access and smart utilization of the Internet. The growth of high speed broadband for a state like Alaska promises extreme economic and social benefits.

We do encourage legislators to consider slight changes that will better enable Alaska to meet its overall goals of increasing economic development, establishing cost saving mechanisms, and increasing residents' quality of life.

First, a more consumer-focused task force is more likely to come up with independent and unbiased assessments of the data. Therefore, any task force should make sure that representatives from the industry are balanced by representatives from public interest groups in the state. For example, the Oregon Telecommunication Coordinating Council, established in 2001, is comprised of 12 members that represent broad telecommunications interest groups including business and industry, telecommunications providers, state and local government, education, and health care organizations, as well as other interest groups.

Second, data collection needs to be at the census block level to avoid digital divides within zip codes that may not be known to exist. If data is only mapped by community or zip code then as long as one home in a region receives broadband, the whole area is counted as having broadband access. Since the goal of the task force is to provide affordable broadband to all homes, schools and businesses in Alaska, very specific data must be collected.

Third, it is important to note that advanced video conferencing and other emerging technologies that have the most economic and social benefits can only be used effectively on high-speed broadband. In order to avoid creating a new digital divide, between those who can run advanced applications and those who can only run basic applications, we need to track what providers, what speeds, and what prices users have access to and what speeds and prices users are actually utilizing.

Fourth, the underlying data collected through the task force must be made public to ensure the information is accurate and verifiable and for the government to be able to track specific progress once deployment programs are put in place. California, realizing the necessity of the mapping data to be made public, had private providers give the underlying mapping data to a public service commission who aggregated the information and then published comprehensive maps.

Lastly, the Alaska Broadband Task Force should not only concern itself with broadband mapping and deployment, but should also establish measures to ensure that all residents can utilize the technology. To participate in the increasingly digital world, citizens must be digitally literate - equipped with the skills, insights and savvy needed to fully exploit the benefits accruing from the convergence of telecommunications and information processing technologies and markets. Groups frequently disenfranchised in other parts of society, such as low income individuals and people of color, often have fewer opportunities to gain essential digital skills. By providing programs to ensure that all citizens are digitally literate, Alaska can make it easier for everyone to participate in this new digital world.

Thank you for your important work in this area and for considering my testimony. Should you have any questions, or if you would like to discuss the above in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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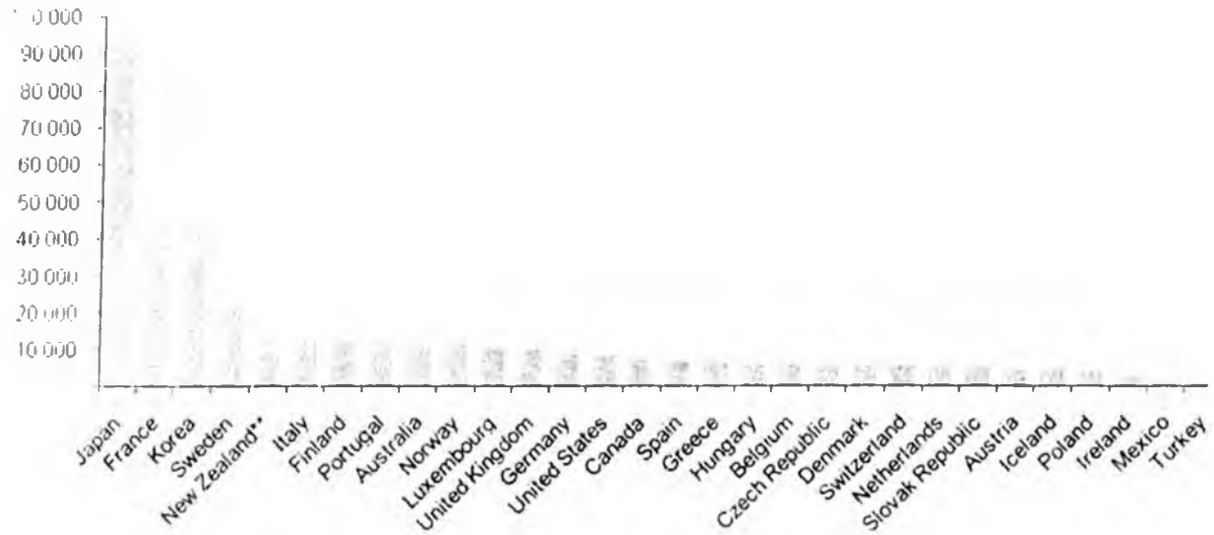
Cc:
Representative Fairclough, Co-Chair
Representative LeDoux, Co-Chair
Representative Dahlstrom, Member
Representative Neuman, Member
Representative Olson, Member
Representative Cissna, Member
Representative Salmon, Member

V. Appendix

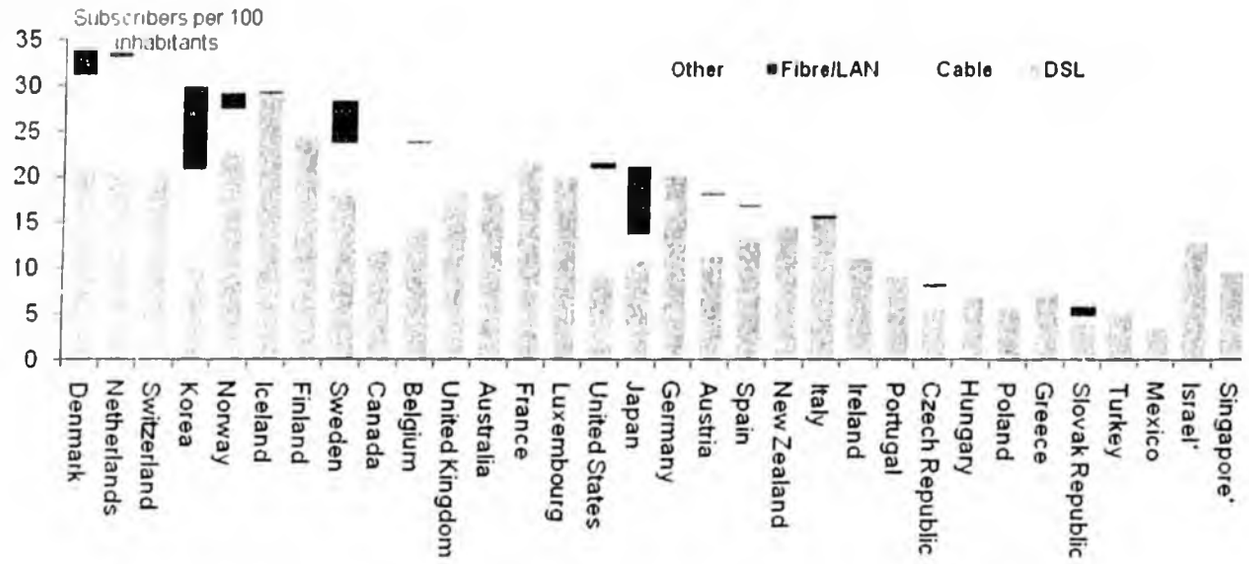
Appendix 1: Average advertised broadband download speed, by country, Mbit , 2007
Source Graph: OECD



Appendix 2: Broadband Application and Speed
Source: S. Derek Turner, Broadband Reality Check, Free Press, 2005

Download Speed	**Application**	**Technology**
56 kilobits per second	Low quality streamlining audio	Dial up
200 kilobits per second	Low quality video	DSL Lite (Minimal definition of broadband)
1 megabyte per second	Streaming video	Satellite, DSL, Cable
2.5 megabyte per second	High Resolution Neurological Testing	DSL, Cable
4 megabyte per second	Standard TV	DSL, Cable
6 megabyte per second	Videoconferencing	DSL, Cable
20 megabyte per second	High Definition	ADSL
100 megabyte per second	All	Fiber

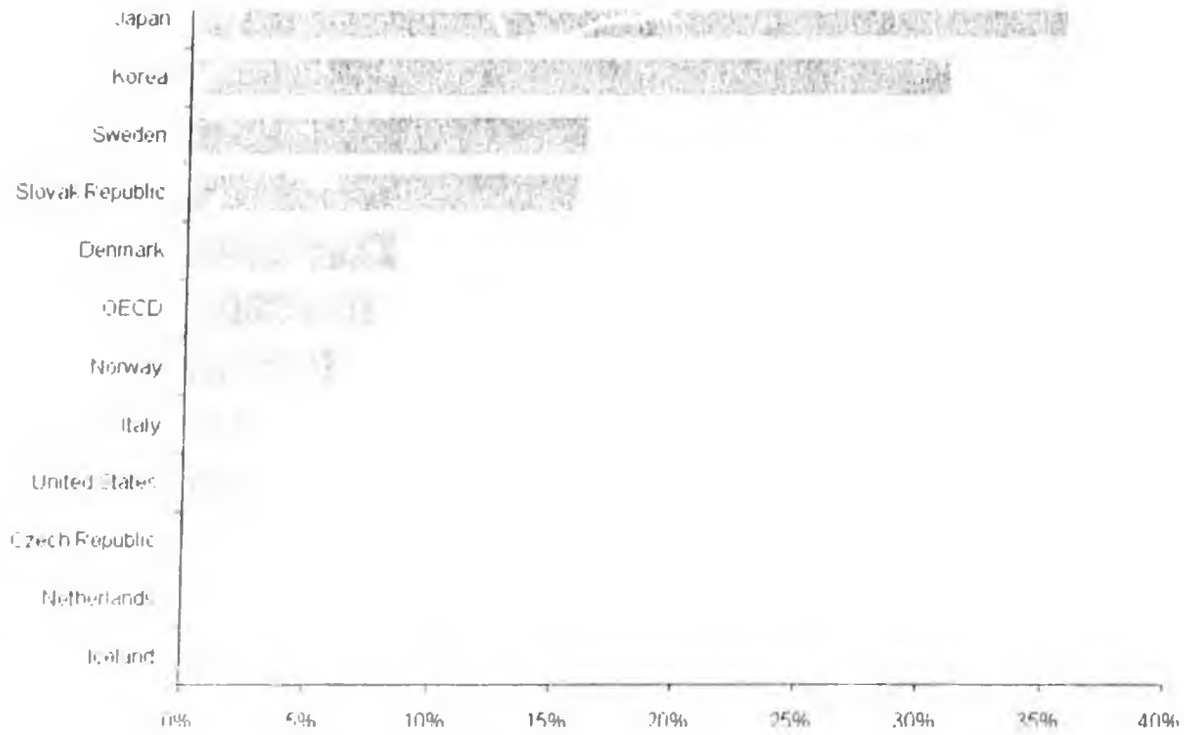
Appendix 3: Subscribers per 100 Inhabitants, 2007
Source Graph: OECD



Appendix 4: Average Broadband Monthly Price per Average Speed
Source Data: OECD

Country	Price ($/month)	Average Download Speed (mbps)
Finland	$31	13
United Kingdom	$33	10.6
Sweden	$34	21.4
Japan	$34	93.7
France	$37	44.2
South Korea	$42	43.4
Australia	$52	12.1
United States	$53	8.9

Appendix 5: Percentage of Fiber connections in total broadband subscribers, 2007
Source: OECD



Appendix 6: Case Studies: Examples of Successful Broadband Plans
California:

The California Broadband Initiative was created by Governor Schwarzenegger in October of 2006 and included The California Broadband Task Force. The task force was charged with creating a comprehensive report on the state of broadband in the state of California and directed to collect and analyze current broadband information so the state could accurately map where broadband is available and at what speeds . The data was collected at household levels and was aggregated by a public third-party.

The report, released on January 17, 2008, included recommendations on strategies to fund and deploy networks capable of 50 mbps. The task force recommended funding the proposal through both bond and grant programs. Additionally, California has an Emerging Technology Fund, a non-profit corporation, with an objective of bring to broadband to under-served areas with funding derived from conditions placed on merging telecommunications companies. The companies will contribute a total of $60 million over 5 years. Additionally, at least $460 million soon will be available for overcoming the state's "digital divide" with about $400 million coming from education bonds approved by voters last November.

Oregon[10]**:**

The Oregon Telecommunications Coordinating Council (ORTCC) was created by the state legislature in 2001. The Council's mission is "to provide all Oregonians with affordable access to broadband digital applications that will improve the quality of life in Oregon communities and reduce the economic gap between well-served and underserved Oregon communities." The ORTCC is comprised of 12 members that represent broad telecommunications interest groups including business and industry, telecommunications providers, state and local government, education, and health care organizations, as well as other interest groups. The council provides a coordinated approach to telecommunication investments by giving the ORTCC the authority to facilitate, through its recommendations, greater public/private partnerships and stronger state/local government partnerships. The Oregon state legislature also approved a tax credit for deployment of broadband equipment in 2001. The credit is equal to 20% of the cost of the facilities deployed.

Vermont:

In January 2007, newly elected Vermont Governor Jim Douglas proposed that Vermont become an "e-state" by 2010. To accomplish his goal of universal access to broadband Internet, Governor Douglas created a Vermont Telecommunications Authority, which would serve as a bridge between public sector efforts and private sector investments, intended to share in—but not eliminate—the financial risk of these projects, provide a longer-term investment horizon, and support projects that can become self-sustaining over time.[11]

The explicit goals of the Vermont Telecommunications Authority are to ensure Vermonters have: Affordable broadband access to every Vermont household by 2010, capable of delivering speeds of at least 1.5 megabits per second, and increasing speeds in the future and mobile broadband, Wi-Fi or equivalent in every community by 2010. The initial focus will be on delivering broadband services to currently underserved rural areas and to deploy wireless services throughout these areas.

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[10] Report by Alliance for Public Technologies, 2004, page 34.

[11] The state can provide the authority with its moral obligation of up to $40 million in bonds to back projects in the first year of construction and possibly more if needed and sustainable. The initial target is to leverage more than $200 million in private sector investment with the state's backing. Repayment of borrowing for the projects will be based on revenues generated from leasing access to the infrastructure, such as fiber-optic networks and space on towers, or the revenues from services provided over the network. The value of the assets controlled or created by the authority will also help to secure the value of any bonds.

STATE OF ALASKA

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF COASTAL AND OCEAN MANAGEMENT
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February 22, 2008

ACMP Participant

RE: Re-evaluation of ACMP

Dear ACMP Participant:

As you know, in 2003 the Alaska State Legislature mandated the reform of the ACMP that included revised statutes, regulations, district coastal management plans, and other ACMP processes, and included deadlines for those revision efforts. Though the reform effort is nearing its completion, it has not been without its difficulties. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has had a challenging time managing and implementing the change process and the reform efforts. During the process, DNR has heard from the various participants on the successes and failures of the changes, and on the efforts to implement those changes, most recently during public testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 161.

Although the State opposes SB 161 for a variety of reasons, DNR does support the concept of re-evaluating certain changes that were made to the ACMP. Specifically, DNR recognizes the need and is interested in re-evaluating the following statutory and regulatory provisions of the ACMP:

- Revisit the DEC carveout (i.e., coordination of review involving DEC authorizations, application of other ACMP enforceable policies to DEC authorized activities, etc.)
- Revisit the coastal district's authority and ability to write enforceable policies, revisit the requirements for designated areas to address certain coastal uses and resources
- Address the consistency review scope of the project (i.e., aspects of the project that are subject to review)
- Make other necessary clarifying and technical edits to the regulations

At the 2007 ACMP conference in Juneau, DNR Commissioner Tom Irwin announced DNR's intention to re-evaluate the ACMP changes. I re-affirmed DNR's commitment to evaluating these changes in my testimony on SB 161 on January 29, 2008. While we previously established an informal timeframe for this re-evaluation to begin in July 2009, it is obvious, based on the input that DNR has heard, that we need to begin the program re-evaluation sooner than originally identified. With this in mind, it is my intention to formally and openly re-evaluate the ACMP changes identified above by inviting input from the networked participants (coastal districts, state agencies, industry, and members of the public). Based on that input, DNR will prepare a responsive statutory

proposal for consideration during the 2009 legislative session, and a subsequent regulatory package for implementing the changes. The proposed schedule for this re-evaluation and development of proposed changes to the ACMP laws is as follows:

- June 2008 – Complete the review of the *List of Expedited Consistency Reviews and State Authorizations Subject to the ACMP* (i.e., the "ABC List")
- July 2008 – Initiate a 30-day comment period to solicit input and suggested statutory and regulatory revisions
- August-October 2008 – Develop proposed statutory revisions
- November 2008 – Hold workshops to go over proposed statutory revisions; initiate a comment period to solicit input
- December 2008 – Finalize proposed statutory revisions
- January 2009 – Introduce bill addressing proposed statutory revisions.
- March through August 2009 – Promulgate and finalize regulatory revisions implementing the revised statutes (as appropriate) and addressing other identified regulatory revisions.

The DCOM has identified this re-evaluation of the ACMP within the *2006 Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy*, meaning DCOM has prioritized this initiative and identified it as eligible for federal funding under the ACMP. This effort is important to the success of the ACMP, and will be completed within the timeframes described above.

This re-evaluation is intended to identify and develop additional changes to the ACMP that will strengthen the ACMP as a State program, that will benefit applicants and the public in the coordination of projects, and that will enhance the coastal district participation and input into State decision-making regarding activities occurring in the coastal area and on the outer continental shelf.

I look forward to initiating the re-evaluation of the ACMP. Your participation in this effort is important to the future and success of the program.

Sincerely yours,

Randy Bates
Director

cc: DCOM Staff
Legislators
Coastal Districts
Coastal Currents "e-list"

Lake and Peninsula Borough
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King Salmon, Alaska 99613

Telephone: (907) 246-3421
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March 18, 2008

The Honorable Representative Gabriel LeDoux
State Capitol, Room 412
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Subject: HB 243, an Act relating to the Alaska Coastal Management Program; and establishing the Alaska Coastal Policy Board

Dear Representative LeDoux,

The Lake and Peninsula Borough would like to provide the following comment regarding the proposed HB 243, an Act relating to the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP); and establishing the Alaska Coastal Policy Board that is currently in committee in the Alaska Legislature.

The Lake and Peninsula Borough supports HB 243 because it requires the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to participate in consistency reviews that affect air, land and water quality, clarifies the criteria for the approval of district enforceable policies, establishes the Coastal Policy Board, eliminates the requirement for designated areas, and reestablishes the protection of subsistence as an objective of the Alaska Coastal Management Program as well as the recognition of subsistence values concerning land usage adjacent to the water. I will try to address each issue below and how these topics have affected the program since the passage of HB 191 in 2003.

AIR AND WATER QUALITY

1. **Background:** The ACMP statutes were amended by HB 191 (Chapter 24 SLA 03) to remove Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) authorizations from individual ACMP reviews. Removal of ADEC authorizations from ACMP reviews has resulted in a number of unanticipated problems:

    a. Confusion about what specific activities are included in the scope of review. This lack of clarity occurs when a project requires an ADEC authorization or an Environmental Protection Agency authorization or when it involves Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) activities.

b. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) is not following guidance it issued regarding its review of activities not regulated by federal NPDES or 404 permits (i.e., the guidance states that such activities not addressed by the ADEC or Army Corps of Engineers must be part of coordinated ACMP review).

c. As a result of this change districts can no longer comment on activities regulated by ADEC that affect other coastal uses and resources. For example, effects from an oil spill or other discharges on subsistence uses and resources can no longer be considered because this activity is excluded from the coordinated ACMP review, and the agency has no regulations or statutes that address effects of discharges on subsistence.

2. CLARIFIES CRITERIA FOR ENFORCEABLE POLICIES

This bill better clarifies the intent in Section 19, which addresses AS 46.40.070 in several paragraphs by being more specific on policy approval. This is critical to the coastal districts as it will allow the districts to establish local control through policies that were previously denied by DNR Staff when plans were reviewed. It amends three criteria for approval of enforceable policies to better clarify what policies may address. It clarifies the legislative intent of Chapter 24 SLA 03 (HB 191) to allow districts to establish enforceable policies for activities that may affect a coastal use or resource.

3. ESTABLISHES THE COASTAL POLICY BOARD

The establishment of the Coastal Policy Board is the key to the success of this bill as it returns control of the approval of district coastal management plans back to the districts. This will happen because the members of the Coastal Policy Board will be appointed from the coastal districts of Alaska who are much closer to local issues and will more closely understand and relate to the unique issues districts face when writing policies for plan approval. This bill also establishes the Board's role in the mediation of decisions on the approval of district plans as well as gives the Board approval authority for plans mentioning areas meriting special attention.

4. SUBSISTENCE IS NOW INCLUDED IN THE ACMP

Subsistence is very important to the culture of the citizens within the Lake & Peninsula Borough. This bill adds subsistence to the values included in the Alaska Coastal Management Plan objectives.

In summary the Lake and Peninsula Borough is in support of HB 243 as it requires the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to participate in consistency reviews that affect air, land and water quality, clarifies the criteria for the approval of district enforceable policies, establishes the Coastal Policy Board, eliminates the

requirement for designated areas, and reestablishes the protection of subsistence as an objective of the Alaska Coastal Management Program. We encourage all committees to please hear this bill and move it along as soon as possible.

Finally the Lake and Peninsula Borough does not support any recommendations that suggest a working group or committee be formed to resolve the problems created by HB191 from 2003. This move is simply a stall tactic by those making that recommendation. However, we encourage the legislators to act on this bill as it will not require districts to re-write their plans but specifically requires DNR/DCOM to make the regulations more specific and puts local control back where it belongs.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important bill. If you have questions please contact Marv Smith at 907-246-3421.

Sincerely,

Glen Alsworth
Mayor/Lake and Peninsula Borough

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March 13, 2008

Rep. Anna Fairclough, Co-Chair
Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, Co-Chair
House Community & Regional Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature

RE: Testimony in support of HB 388

The Alaska Telephone Association sets out in the first paragraph of its Bylaws its goal of advocating **"for uniformity and efficiency in accounting, operating, maintenance and construction for supporting the continuance of telecommunications service to the public."** That was purpose for the Association when it was founded in 1949 and it remains the purpose.

Identifying barriers to broadband access and identifying opportunities for increased broadband deployment are stated reasons for creating the task force which is the intent of this bill. That is in concert with the goals of ATA. We would be one of the not-for-profit organizations in the state that would look forward to working with the Task Force and hope that a cooperative effort and diverse support for this endeavor will make broadband access more available and more affordable for more Alaskans.

This topic and a separate presentation by a representative of Connected Nation, Inc., referenced in the sponsor statement, will be on the agenda of the 2008 ATA Annual Meeting which will be in Girdwood May 19-21. Details of that conference may be found on the ATA website at www.alaskatel.org and we'd welcome any of you as our guests.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Jim Rowe

Jim Rowe

HB

404

Alaska State Legislature

Representative Anna Fairclough – House District 17

House Bill 404

"An Act establishing an Alaska Renewable Energy Task Force"

House Bill 404 would create a Task Force on Renewable Energy to allow members of the Legislature to get involved in developing a much needed Energy Plan for the State of Alaska.

The goal would be for the Task Force to thoroughly assess the needs of the state and then to make recommendations, based on those needs, which could be incorporated into a statewide energy plan.

Renewable energy is an issue in the forefront nationwide. With fuel prices at an all time high, and no relief in the foreseeable future, Alaska needs to consider its options. Our varying climates and terrain make wind and geothermal energy alternatives that could be employed in our state and it is necessary to determine what our energy needs are in various regions of the state and also what options would be viable in which areas.

The intent of House Bill 404 is to bring members of the Legislature together to meet with the energy stakeholders around Alaska and take measurable steps toward preparing the state for the future.

Session: Alaska State Capitol • Juneau, AK 99801 • 907-465-3777 • Fax 907-465-2819
Interim: 10928 Eagle River Road, Suite 238 • Eagle River, AK 99577 • 907-694-8944 • Fax 907-694-8945
Representative_Anna_Fairclough@legis.state.ak.us

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number:
Bill Version: HB 404
() Publish Date:

Identifier (file name):
Dept. Affected: University of Alaska
Title: Alternative Energy Task Force
RDU: University of Alaska
Component: Sysbra
Sponsor: Rep. Fairclough, Edgmon, Thomas, Wilson, et al.
Requester: Community and Regional Affairs
Component Number:

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information					
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	**FY 2009**	**FY 2009**	**FY 2010**	**FY 2011**	**FY 2012**	**FY 2013**	**FY 2014**
Personal Services							
Travel							
Contractual							
Supplies							
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )							

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF							
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2008) cost:

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*

The University of Alaska would participate in the Alaska Renewable Energy Task Force. To the degree projects are proposed that require additional expertise, facilities, equipment or other resources, additional funding would be required.

Prepared by: Michelle Rizk
Phone: 907-450-8187
Division: University of Alaska
Date/Time: 2/29/08 2:30 PM
Approved by: Pat Pitney
Date: 2/29/08 2:30 PM
University of Alaska