



Senator Cathy Giessel

District N

Northeast Anchorage, Anchorage Hillside,
Indian, Bird, Girdwood and Portage

July 16, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

We continue to have beautiful weather in Anchorage. It's a perfect time to enjoy walks with your friends and family to soak up the sunshine. These long summer days offer us the opportunity to explore this beautiful state - our parks and scenic roadways will not disappoint! And don't forget your local farmers markets as they are the best places to get healthy, fresh, Alaska-grown veggies and other delights.



It's a busy time in Alaska; our days are full and fishing season is upon us, so practice patience, be safe and remember to social distance when around large groups.

This newsletter contains lots of information that I hope you'll find helpful.

In today's newsletter you'll find:

- [Request Your Absentee Ballot](#)
- [Alaska Coronavirus Response Hub](#)
- [Alaskans Can Access Training Funds to Address Employment Skills and Credential Barriers](#)
- [Seward Highway Summer 2020 Update](#)
- [FRONTIER Community Act to Expand Access to Mental Health Telemedicine](#)
- [Windy Corner Open Forum Public Hearing](#)
- [Oil Prices - Permanent Fund - Stock Market](#)

Kind regards,
Cathy

[Click here to email me.](#)



Request Your Absentee Ballot

With the current pandemic, it is important to make your voice heard by voting and one way to do that is by requesting an absentee ballot. **Anyone may request an absentee ballot for any reason.**



The deadline to request an absentee ballot for the primary election is August 8th, 2020. Primary election day is August 18, 2020.

[Click here to request your absentee ballot online.](#)

Alaska Coronavirus Response Hub

The Alaska Coronavirus Response Hub provides information, maps and resources about the COVID-19 response.

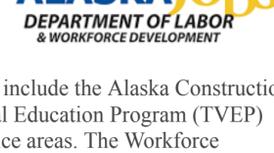
[Click here](#) to visit the hub and explore the latest COVID-19 data for Alaska.



Alaskans Can Access Training Funds to Address Employment Skills and Credential Barriers

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is promoting a variety of pathways that Alaskans can pursue to obtain needed skills and credentials to be competitive in their return to the workforce.

Alaska Job Centers connect Alaskans needing skills training and credentialing to appropriate training programs throughout the state. Job centers work with individuals to establish eligibility and to develop a career plan using a variety of federal and state-funded programs to defray training costs.



Grant programs administered by the department include the Alaska Construction Academies (ACAs) and the Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP) which provide training to Alaskans in their service areas. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth program provides training to youth and young adults ages 16-24 who experience barriers to finding a job. The State Training Employment Program (STEP) training programs also accept unemployed Alaskans for skills training.

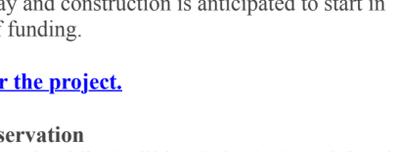
The department also operates the State of Alaska's Vocational Technical Training Center (AVTEC) in Seward. AVTEC offers a variety of training programs under one year in duration. Examples include welding, maritime, construction, industrial electricity, culinary arts and refrigeration. AVTEC will also work with employers to customize workforce trainings.

For more information on skills training, Alaskans can connect with their local job center at (877) 724-2539.

[Click here to read the full press release.](#)

Seward Highway Summer 2020 Update

Seward Highway: O'Malley Rd to Dimond Blvd.



The Seward Highway project team recently completed the Review Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (also known as the 95% design plans) and current design plans are posted on the website. The right-of-way appraisal and acquisition process is underway and construction is anticipated to start in 2022, depending on availability of funding.

[Click here to visit the website for the project.](#)

Seward Highway Pavement Preservation

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and Granite Construction are working to resurface the Seward Highway from MP 114 to the Dimond Boulevard interchange. This is a separate project from the Seward Highway: O'Malley Road to Dimond Boulevard project. Information on this project can be found on [Alaska Navigator](#).

FRONTIER Community Act to Expand Access to Mental Health Telemedicine

On Monday, July 13, U.S. Senators Dan Sullivan (Alaska) and Jacky Rosen (Nevada) announced the introduction of their FRONTIER Community Act, bipartisan legislation to expand access to mental health services through telemedicine in frontier states, and to make this change permanent. Companion legislation has been introduced in the House by Congressman Don Young.



According to a [recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#), nearly half of adults in the United States indicated a negative impact on their mental health stemming from concern and stress about the coronavirus. Under current law, Americans who wish to receive mental telehealth services are required to travel to an approved "originating site" to then call into mental health providers in urban areas. The originating site requirement was removed for individuals accessing substance use disorder services in the 2018 SUPPORT Act. The FRONTIER Community Act intends to expand that change to all mental health services in frontier states.

Under the proposed law, eligible states must have at least 50 percent of counties that have an average population density of six individuals per square mile or fewer. Currently, states meeting this criterion, classified as "frontier states," are Alaska, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Frontier areas have some of the greatest need for access to mental health services.

The bipartisan FRONTIER Community Act would:

- Expand access to mental health services through telehealth in frontier states, and make the change permanent.
- Remove the "originating site" requirement in existing law.
- Direct the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), to award grants for broadband infrastructure and provide additional telehealth flexibility for IHS facilities.

[Click here to read the full press release.](#)

Windy Corner Open Forum Public Hearing

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) invites you to a public hearing (virtual format as well as in-person access) to review and make comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and the Draft Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation relating to proposed safety improvements to the Seward Highway between Mileposts (MP) 105-107, known as Windy Corner. This is a rescheduled event after the originally planned event in March was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



All documents are available at [www.windycorner.info](#). Hard copies are available for review at DOT&PF Central Region Office (4111 Aviation Avenue in Anchorage) and the DOT&PF statewide office (3132 Channel Drive in Juneau) or upon request at [windycorner@dowl.com](#).

Meeting Information:

Date: **Thursday, July 30, 2020, beginning at 5:00pm**

Meeting Agenda:

- Presentation
- Project Q&A
- Review Options for Submitting Comments
- Adjourn Public Hearing

More detailed information about how to participate online, via teleconference, or in-person will be available on the project website by July 14, 2020:

[www.windycorner.info](#).

How to Comment:

The comment period began on March 6, 2020 and **ends at midnight Alaska Standard Time on August 14, 2020.**

Comments may be submitted by mail or email or by telephone voicemail. Visit [www.windycorner.info](#) for more information.

[Click here to view the online public notice.](#)

Oil Prices - Permanent Fund - Stock Market

July 15, 2020

ANS Crude Price: **\$44.35 bbl**

Fiscal Year 2020 to date:

-\$23.20

-34.34%

(ANS price, June 28, 2019: \$67.55)

Permanent Fund Value: **\$65.77 billion**

Fiscal Year 2020 to date:

-\$532 million

-0.8%

(PF value, June 30, 2019: \$66,300,267,000.00)

July 14, 2020

ANS Production: **495,280 bpd**

10 worst years for the SP 500 since 1928:

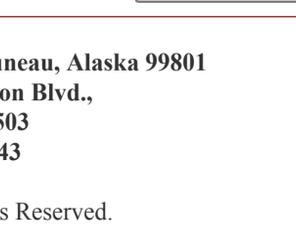
1. 1931: -47.07% (Great Depression)
2. 1937: -38.59% (Great Depression)
3. 2008: -38.49% (Great Recession / Housing Bubble)
4. 1974: -29.72% (Oil crisis)
5. 1930: -28.48% (Great Depression)
6. 2002: -23.37% (Dot-Com Bubble)
7. 1941: -17.86% (Great Depression)
8. 1973: -17.37% (Oil crisis)
9. 1940: -15.29% (Great Depression)
10. 1932: -15.15% (Great Depression)

2020: -0.13% (so far, 7/15/2020)

It's a pleasure to serve and represent the wonderful people of District N!

I look forward to hearing your ideas, suggestions and comments.

[To email me, click here.](#)



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