



January 2019

Monthly News & Updates

The first session of the 31st legislature started on January 15th with members taking the oath of office while family and friends gathered to witness the occasion. Following the ceremonial first day of the Senate, we had a full slate of standing committee hearings scheduled. Although the House has not yet organized, we understand that negotiations continue as January comes to a close.

Breaking with tradition, the Senate began considering Governor Dunleavy's cabinet-appointees early in session to allow plenty of time to work on the Governor's budget, expected to the legislature on February 13th. A draft budget was rolled out on December 15th, but with the new administration taking office only weeks earlier the budget presented was from the prior administration. The budget is the number one priority of the legislature, and I look forward to seeing how the administration aligns the budget with the priorities set forth during the State of the State speech delivered on January 22, 2019.

This legislative session I was invited to serve as Chair of the Senate Resources Committee, and to serve on the Community & Regional Affairs, Education, and Labor & Commerce committees. Each of these committees will be considering vital public policies that affect our state and economy. I look forward to fully vetting any legislation that moves the state forward.

I'm honored to serve and represent Senate District M in South Anchorage and excited about the future of our state. Please [email me](#), call my office at 907-465-4931, or visit us anytime to share your thoughts and concerns.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Birch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Taking the Oath of Office



Signing the Oath of Office with Lt. Governor Kevin Meyer, Kim Skipper (staff), Pam Birch, Betty Tangeman (staff), and Trevor Fulton (staff)

The Budget

The Senate Budget Subcommittees have been established and will begin the first week of February. I will serve on the Education, Environmental Conservation, Labor & Workforce Development, and the Community, Commerce and Economic Development subcommittees.

In preparation for the budget, I have followed the Senate Finance Committee presentations on the [Revenue and Oil Production Forecast](#), the [Office of Management and Budget - Policy Driven Approach to the budget](#), and the [FY 19 Supplemental budget - which includes disaster relief and adjustments to the current budget](#). Each presentation provided information on the challenging fiscal situation and projected general fund deficit. We will learn more when the Administration rolls

out the FY 20 budget on February 13th.

Senate Resources Committee Hearings Begin

With much of the focus of this legislative session being where it should be - on the budget - it is my intent, as Chair of the Senate Resources Committee, to explore topics aimed at helping the state diversify and improve our economy.

Over the coming months, we'll be exploring ways to encourage new industries and reinvigorate old ones, to resolve resource access issues, and to make practical improvements to the state permitting processes. In other words, we'll be looking for ways to show that Alaska is indeed "open for business."



Corri Feige, the Department of Natural Resources Commissioner-Designee speaks before the Senate Resources Committee January 23rd

Get Involved!

Have you ever thought of adding your thoughts and concerns to the legislative process? The [Alaska Legislature](#) is online and literally at your fingertips. You can view committee schedules and meetings at [AKLeg TV or Gavel to Gavel](#), search and track bills, and email your legislator with comments and concerns. In addition, you can view all documents associated with committee hearings and bills.

The Alaska State Legislature

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SPOTLIGHT FLOOR CALENDAR DAILY SCHEDULE MEETINGS LIVE NOW

CAPITOL UPDATES
January 22, 2019
State of the State
Gov. Dunleavy addresses the legislative body during the annual State of the State address

31ST LEGISLATURE SCHEDULE
1st Regular Session
Convened January 15, 2019
Contact Lists: Districts | Who's Who
Public Testimony Opportunities

From the *Glossary of Legislative Terms*
"Contractual services" - Within a budget request, a classification of proposed expenditure for services provided to an agency from external sources (may include postage, phone, communications, printing, advertising, repairs, rental of equipment, professional services, etc.).

★ POPULAR OF INTEREST

Governor Extends Earthquake Recovery Application Deadline to February 28, 2019

[Governor Dunleavy](#) received word on January 31st that President Trump approved the State of Alaska federal disaster assistance. The declaration activates the Federal Individual and Public Assistance disaster recovery programs in the Municipality of Anchorage, Mat-Su Borough, and Kenai Peninsula Borough.



State Individual Disaster Assistance

For Individuals and Families within Municipality of Anchorage, Matanuska Susitna Borough, or Kenai Peninsula Borough, with damaged homes, essential personal property, and transportation losses from the 2018 Cook Inlet Earthquake

**The deadline to apply for individual assistance is
February 28, 2019**

State Individual Disaster Assistance Hotline

1-855-445-7131

Online Registration:

Ready.Alaska.Gov

Applicants needing an interpreter, have a representative call 1-855-445-7131
Applicants with hearing disabilities can call TTY 1-855-445-7131

When you call or apply online please provide:

- Description of damages and/or losses
 - Damaged Property Address
 - Insurance Information
- Personal Identification Information

State Individual Assistance Damage Verifiers must have access to damaged property and/or photos, documents, and other proof of damage.

**TAKE PICTURES OF DAMAGE BEFORE CLEANING UP AND KEEP RECEIPTS
FROM ANY COST INCURRED!**

The deadline to apply for individual assistance is February 28, 2019.

Disaster assistance is available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or economic status.

Anchorage Transportation "Super Open House"

Anchorage Transportation Fair



anchoragetranspofair.blogspot.com

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and partners, including the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska Railroad, and Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility, invite you to participate in the 2019 Anchorage Transportation Fair.

The event is a "super open house" providing a showcase of walking, biking, and driving projects and plans within the Municipality of Anchorage. The Anchorage Transportation Fair is free and open to the public. There is no cost for parking.

**When: Wednesday, February 6, 2019
3 to 7 p.m.**

**Where: Alaska Airlines Center Auxiliary
University of Alaska Anchorage
3550 Providence Drive, Anchorage
Ride bus routes: 10, 20, or 55**

Project Hot List

- 3rd Ave Channelization
- Academy Dr/Vanguard Dr Area Traffic Circulation Improvements
- Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions
- Dowling Rd & Seward Highway Interchange Reconstruction
- Downtown Lighting & Signals Upgrades
- Glenn Highway Capacity Improvements, Southbound Eagle River Bridge
- Midtown Congestion Relief
- Minnesota Dr: Seward Highway to Tudor Rd Pavement Preservation
- National Highway Corridors: Seward, Glenn, Parks, Sterling Highways
- Public Transportation
- Seward Highway: Milepost 114 to Dimond Pavement Preservation
- Seward Highway: O'Malley Rd to Dimond Blvd Reconstruction
- Seward Highway: Rock Fall Mitigation
- Tudor Centre Dr/Diplomacy Dr Resurfacing
- W 32nd Ave and E 33rd Ave Upgrades
- And many more...

Contact

Event Organizers:

Anne Brooks and Camden Yehle
Brooks & Associates, Anchorage
Phone: 907-346-0506
Email: comments.brooksalaska@gmail.com

Partners



The DOT&PF operates Federal Programs without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Full Title VI Nondiscrimination Policy: dot.alaska.gov/tv-statement.html. To file a complaint go to: dot.alaska.gov/cvfrtu/titlesv.html. The DOT&PF complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special modifications to participate in this public meeting should contact Jill Reese at 1-907-269-0772 or TDD number 711. Requests should be made at least 5 days before the accommodation is needed to make any necessary arrangements.

Community Council Meetings

[Abbott Loop Community Council](#) meets the last Thursday of each month and will be holding their next monthly meeting is scheduled for **February 21st from 6:30-8:30pm. PLEASE NOTE** this third Thursday due to a scheduling conflict on February 28th.

MEETING LOCATION:

Abbott Loop Elementary School Library
8427 Lake Otis Pkwy

[Huffman/O'Malley Community Council](#) meets the third Thursday of each month and will be holding their next monthly meeting on **Thursday, February 21st** from 7:00pm.

MEETING LOCATION:

Trinity Presbyterian Church

[Hillside Community Council](#) meets the fourth Wednesday of each month and will be holding their next monthly meeting on **Wednesday, February 27th** at 7:00pm.

MEETING LOCATION:
O'Malley Elementary School - multi-purpose room
O'Malley/Rockridge Dr.

Meet Team Birch ~



Kim Skipper
Chief of Staff

Kim is from Eagle River and served over 30 years as an accounting and human resource manager in the private sector. She started her career in the legislature in 2007. She will assist with constituent relations, my personal legislation, and staff the Labor & Commerce and Community & Regional Affairs committees.



Trevor Fulton
Resources
Committee Aide

Trevor is from Anchorage and served 20 years as a wild land firefighter with the Dept. of Natural Resources. He started his career in the legislature in 2007 part time and is returning full time to staff the Resources committee.



Betty Tangeman
Administrative
Assistant

Betty is from Anchorage, is starting her second legislative session, after a 20 year career in the Dept. of Corrections. She will manage my calendar, assist with constituent relations, and staff the Education committee.

Senator Chris Birch, [District M](#) | 907-465-4931 | Sen.Chris.Birch@akleg.gov | [Website](#)

STAY CONNECTED:

