



Donny's Ulu News

Senator Donald C. Olson

Mail: State Capitol, Suite 510 Juneau, Alaska 99801

E-mail: Senator_Donny_Olson@legis.state.ak.us

Phone: (907) 465-3707 Fax: (907) 465-4821

Website: www.akdemocrats.org

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Representing the Diverse Population of District T

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Donny's view on Education Funding

There are at least four major issues surrounding education funding for the next year. The first is a result of a legislative study recommending adjustments to **all school districts' area cost differential factor**.

This is a factor in the school foundation funding formula that is supposed to account for the variation in education costs because of geographic location, such as increased transportation or energy costs for remote sites.

There could be a large positive or negative effect on many schools' funding, if the new area cost differential factors are enacted. For example, under this current year's funding Nome schools would have

\$700,000 less and Bering Straits would gain \$350,000. And further north, the North Slope Borough would gain \$1,000,000 while Northwest Arctic Borough would lose \$1,000,000.

It is estimated that to enact the new factors and put new money into the formula so that nobody loses in next year's funding would cost in the neighborhood of \$100,000,000.

Two bills, HB 26 and SB 1, would just increase the basic unit factor in the formula. They would spread \$25,000,000 and \$17,000,000, respectively, through the formula to all



Senator Olson and Staff

education system or how new federal education funds can be allocated.

Related to this federal legislation is our own state's initiative to measure students' performance and assign "at-risk" schools. Undetermined at this stage, is what the state's response should be in both program assistance and financial aid once a school is determined to be at risk.

Perhaps a fifth education issue is funding for the university. The last four legislative sessions have been generous to the U of A with substantial increases to their overall budget. The university can be expected to bring forth increased funding needs again this year.

schools for increased funding.

Another issue much in discussion is the implications of recently passed federal legislation. This is the so-called "**Let no child be left behind**" education act. It is uncertain at this time what new requirements are imposed on the state's

Legislature Supports ANWR

The Senate passed SJR 4, which is a resolution to the U.S. Congress urging the opening of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas exploration, development, and production. This resolution expresses the legislature's stance that no additional

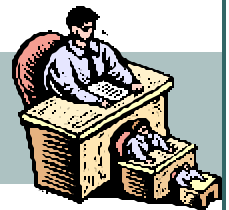
lands near the coastal plain be placed under designations that would be restrictive to development. Also included are statements that the state will not accept less than 90 percent of the royalties from the oil extracted from federal lands in Alaska, as was stipulated

when Alaska entered statehood. This resolution has been brought before the House and Senate many times in the past, and passed every time with resounding success.

This resolution is very important to me because of

the opportunities it would allow the members of my district, in particular the people of Kaktovik.

The opening of ANWR would be a liberating experience for the people of Kaktovik to allow them to explore and develop their private lands.



The New Administration is Still Unfolding

We are now three weeks into the 23rd Alaska State Legislature. Gov. Murkowski has yet to finalize his appointments and his recommendations for the capitol and operating budgets. The budget recommendations are expected in early March. The Commissioner of Department of Education, Transportation, and Fish & Game appointments should be coming soon.

The Board of Fisheries received four newly appointed members from Governor Frank H. Murkowski. They are Art Nelson, John Jensen, Rupert E. Andrews and Melvan E. Morris Jr.

His appointments to the Board of Game are Pete Buist, Michael Fleagle,

Ted Spraker, Ron Somerville, Cliff Jukins, Sharon McLeod.

The new Commissioners that have been appointed are:

- **Ernesta Ballard** - Dept. of Environmental Conservation.
- **Bill Corbus** - Dept. of Revenue.
- **Joel Gilbertson** - Dept. of Health and Social Services.
- **Marc Antrim** - Dept. of Corrections.
- **Greg O'Claray** - Dept. of labor and Workforce Development.
- **Col. Craig Campbell** - Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs .
- **Tom Irwin** - Dept. of Natural Resources.
- **Mike Miller** - Dept. of Administration.
- **Edgar Blatchford** for the Dept. of

Community and Economic Development. Mr. Blatchford was born in Nome and is a life long Alaska resident.

- **Gregg Renkes** for the Department of Law.

Denali Commission Offers Internships

The Denali Commission is looking to award four internships for graduate and undergraduate students for the summer of 2003. The Denali Commission has emphasized Energy and Rural Primary Health Care Facilities as their two main themes for 2003.

The criteria that will be used when selecting the interns are the following: personal statement, letters of recommendation, grades and merit, presentation of application packet, written skills and computer skills, and involvement with Rural and Denali Commission themes. The four internship positions will involve the following areas: Rural Workforce Development/Training, Health Care and Health Clinic Construction, Government Coordination and Economic Development, and Rural Energy Development.

The Denali Commission has been a major factor in upgrading the life style in rural Alaska. The Commission has provided funding for health clinics and bulk fuel storage containers throughout the state. These internships will expose students to the four themes listed above.

Additional information and applications can be found on the Denali Commission website at www.denali.gov or by contacting my office at (800) 597-3707. Tessa De Long is the internship coordinator for the Denali Commission can be reached at (907) 271-1624 or by e-mail at tdelong@denali.gov.

Suspend Permanent Fund Dividend Offenses

There are two bills, **SB 58** and **SB 59**, which will suspend permanent fund dividend payments to Alaskans with certain motor vehicle traffic violations. In the first case, the suspension is for being convicted of driving without having liability insurance. Most uninsured motorists are usually caught at the time of an accident. The second bill would suspend the dividend for Alaskans caught driving un-

influence of alcohol or drugs (DUI laws) In each case the dividend would be suspended for one year for the first offence. For a second offense; however, the dividend would be suspended for five years.

These bills will have a Senate Judiciary Committee teleconferenced hearing on February 19th. I will probably see both of these bills in Senate Finance Committee later on in the session.



Senator Olson Visits the District

At the beginning of February, Rep. Joule, Rep. Kookesh and I traveled to Kotzebue for the Arctic Economic Summit. I participated in the summit from February 4 - 6th. During this time we were able to discuss ways to try and make sure the boroughs work together to financially benefit the people of the districts through jobs and investments. In this way we hope to diminish the unemployment

difficulties in Rural Alaska along with other issues that cost money. On Tuesday, February 25th, I will be traveling to Kotlik for the 13th Annual Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association Meeting. On the following day I will travel to Nome for the Bering Straits Regional Conference. The theme for the conference is "Wearing Culture and Commerce." I look forward to seeing you and listening to your concerns.