From the President: Defeat of initiative a reason for optimism

By Curtis W. Thayer
Alaska Chamber President & CEO

Two weeks before the November election, I sent out a letter asking Alaskans to stand together against Ballot Measure 1. And boy, did we ever!

Many elections across the state were closely contested. In fact, as I write this, several important races remain too close to call. Still, I'm proud that Alaska Republicans and Democrats, liberals, conservatives, and progressives all know bad business when they see it.

In an election that had statewide voters narrowly defined along party lines, Alaskans united to oppose the latest poorly conceived resource initiative. I can't remember seeing an initiative fail by such a wide margin. Thank you.

But ballot measures and public office weren't the only thing Alaska voted on recently. This October, Fairbanks hosted business representatives from across the state for the Chamber's fall events. One important agenda item was establishing our 2019 advocacy platform. See page 6 for a full recap of new policy positions.

2019 presents an interesting opportunity for leadership and responsible management of state government. One party leads the administration with majorities in both legislative houses; failure to successfully restructure state spending will be a serious indictment of that control.

The Alaska Chamber doesn't pick sides or endorse candidates for public office. Obviously, we hope that every elected official works to advance Alaska's economic health, irrespective of party affiliation or ideology. Regardless of who is in office, the work of the Chamber goes on.

It's undeniable that voters have charged one party with a rare opportunity to right Alaska's fiscal ship. We should all support them in making that happen quickly and efficiently as possible.

On the federal level, we are continuing to work with our congressional delegation to realize the resource obligations promised to Alaska at statehood. While politics in D.C. increasingly polarize parties and incite pandemonium, work quietly proceeds on securing access to our natural resources and much-needed regulatory reform.

There is a lot of good work being done, and there is even more left to do. Today we have better access to state and federal mineral reserves. After years of education, advocacy and effort, we have legislation to begin reformulation of our workers' compensation system. We have young people who are increasingly interested in creating their own Alaska companies.

The future is bright for Alaska. If this election season shows us anything it is that Alaskans understand the importance of our economic resources, and we know how to manage them.

Thank you all for a successful 2018. I look forward to working with you and our incoming administration and legislature on all of our policy positions.

Curtis W. Thayer is lifelong Alaskan and serves as president and CEO of the Alaska Chamber.

From the Chair: Ballot measure process needs reform

By Cory Baggen
Board Chair, Alaska Chamber

Is it healthy for Alaska when public processes can tear apart communities? Should special interest petitions threaten our representative process? A recent example is the 2014 tax initiative process.

The Chamber opposed the ballot measure because of the weaponized our beloved fisheries in an attempt to redefine access and development throughout the state. It was designed to place well-intentioned Alaskans against each other in an emotionally misleading way.

The latest attempt to rewrite Alaska's permitting process in the ballot booth has failed. And it did so by a startlingly dramatic margin. So what did the initiative accomplish? It weaponized our beloved fisheries in an attempt to redefine access and development throughout the state. It was designed to place well-intentioned Alaskans against each other in an emotionally misleading way.

It's very possible that some of our beautiful port cities are still recovering from the economic harm of that measure. The latest attempt to rewrite Alaska's permitting process in the ballot booth has failed. And it did so by a startlingly dramatic margin. So what did the initiative accomplish? It weaponized our beloved fisheries in an attempt to redefine access and development throughout the state. It was designed to place well-intentioned Alaskans against each other in an emotionally misleading way.

The initiative process as its used now provides interest groups with a rare opportunity to redefine access and development throughout the state. It was designed to place well-intentioned Alaskans against each other in an emotionally misleading way.

The initiative process as its used now provides interest groups with a rare opportunity to redefine access and development throughout the state.
Welcome
New Members

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Block Advisors is tax preparation company that offers all the tax services you need. From simple to complex, individu-
ual, to business, they guarantee the accuracy of returns pre-
pared by their tax professionals, who have experience with the following: Bankruptcy, Corporations, Estates, Farm,
Itemized Deductions, Partnerships, Sole Proprietorships,
State Returns, Trusts, Sale of business, home or stock, Ca-
nadian Returns, Foreign currency, investments plus many
more. Visit them online at hhblock.com.

Blumer & Associates
Blumer & Associates provides consultation in gov-
ernmental affairs and lobbying services. Dianne Blumer,
principal of the company, is a homegrown Alaskan with 26
years of executive and legislative experience. She
brings an array of professional experience with executive
and legislative branches of state government. Dianne has
successfully provided professional governmental relations
consulting and advocacy for 13 years. Areas of expertise
include public policy, municipal government, healthcare,
finance, and taxation. As a lobbyist, she represents nu-
merous Alaskan cities and suburbs on capital projects,
municipal issues, taxes, local planning, and educational
issues. She is skilled in analyzing public policy issues
and implications when working with clients to achieve the
c best outcome.

Holland & Hart LLP
Launched at the start of 2017, Holland & Hart LLP
opened their latest office in Alaska's legal, commercial,
and political hub of Anchorage. They advise clients on a wide
range of transactional, litigation, and governmental legal is-
issues, with particular emphasis in the energy and natural re-
sources industries. A full-service law firm, Holland & Hart
LLP has approximately 470 lawyers across eight states and
in Washington, D.C. Visit them online at hollandhart.com.

The Dome
Located in Anchorage, the Dome is a sports complex
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Pilot Freight Service/Transmark Cartage Services
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dedicated to moving your freight in, around, and out of Alas-
ka. Their Anchorage office opened in May 2017 to provide
a local one-stop shop for all of Alaska. With over 46 years
of combined experience their Alaska based staff has shipped it
all, from fish to snowmobiles and everything in between. No
shipments are too small or too large, we've got you covered.
We provide ocean, air, and ground transportation throughout
Alaska and the world.

University of Alaska Foundation
Established in 1974, the University of Alaska Foundation
is a private nonprofit corporation, operating as a public Foun-
dation to solicit, manage, and invest donations for the exclu-
sive benefit of the University of Alaska. The Foundation has
experience assisting donors in making gifts through trusts, be-
gquests, life insurance policies and similar instruments and has
the ability to provide such instruments to donors depending
upon their needs. Visit them online at alaska.edu/foundation.

Q. What is the term limit of an Alaska
Chamber membership?
A. Membership begins in the month that
it is activated. It is good for a period of 12
months and is renewed each year.

Q. Who make up the membership body?
A. Chamber membership is as diverse as
Alaska itself. Members range from large
corporations to small businesses with one
or two employees. They include non-profits,
Alaska Native regional corporations, oil and
mining companies, as well as environmental
businesses. To view a list of current
members, visit our Member Directory at
alaskachamber.com.

Q. How is the Chamber organized?
A. The Chamber is governed by a volunteer
Board of Directors who elect a Chairperson.
There are four standing committees: Board
Development, Executive, Finance, and
Legislative Affairs. In addition, there are
an Events, Local Chamber Outreach, and
Membership committees.

Q. How can I become more involved in
the Chamber?
A. The Chamber offers a variety of events
throughout the year for business leaders
from all corners of Alaska to connect. From
the Legislative Fly-In to our Fall Forum,
we bring together a broad cross-section
of business leaders and statewide policy-
makers to our events. These events are great
for networking, business development, and
uniting policy issues important to business.
You may also volunteer for a committee.

Q. What are the Chamber legislative
priorities?
A. The Chamber's legislative priorities are
voted on by the membership at the annual
Policy Forum. There are continuing positions
both state and federal that are renewed
each year. View a list of our current priorities
and positions at alaskachamber.com.

Pete Nolan is the Member Services Director for the Alaska Chamber. He can be reached at (907) 278-2733 or at pnolan@alaskachamber.com.
“Health insurance.” Just reading those words can result in an audible sigh and elevated blood pressure, especially for small businesses.

Small businesses have a notoriously longstanding frustration with health plans due to the high costs and limited plan options associated with having a small risk pool.

What if I told you that small businesses may soon have access to a variety of affordable and comprehensive health plans? Enter Association Health Plans. Association Health Plans (AHPs) are offered through employer groups and associations, which permits small businesses, including sole proprietors, to band together to form a larger risk pool. This allows those businesses to see lower rates and a wider variety of plans that are typically only available to large employers. In addition to lower rates and more plan flexibility, there are other benefits associated with AHPs.

AHPs can pay primary over Medicare, eliminating the struggle of finding a doctor’s office that accepts Medicare. Plans offered within AHPs can also be more stable year to year than plans traditionally available to small businesses.

This is because members of the AHP are able to provide direction and influence in how they want the plans to change. Finally, because AHPs allow small businesses to offer their employees comprehensive benefits, those businesses can compete with larger employers.

Under the Department of Labor’s new rule, AHPs can be formed based on a common geography as well as industry. This means that AHPs could be offered to employers in a specific industry or based in a city, county, or state. In other words, a law firm and a fishing charter located in Alaska can join the same association and both be qualified to participate in an AHP even though they are in different industries.

What does this mean for you? The Alaska Chamber is partnering with RISQ Consulting and Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alaska, and is in the early stages of forming an AHP. Small business members of the Chamber will be potentially eligible to join this AHP. More details will be available in early 2019, so stay tuned!

Association Health Plans: What are they and why is everyone talking about them?

Smart planning opens up new possibilities

You’ve got a lot to think about as a small business owner — managing cash flow, funding business plan, and marketing your services. You’ll find the guidance and solutions you need to start, grow, or run your business better at wellsfargoworks.com.

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Last month the Alaska Chamber hosted its annual conference in Fairbanks, Alaska. An important, historic year for the Chamber, 2018 marks our 65th Anniversary and we thank everyone who joined us in the Golden Heat City to celebrate it.

This year's event brought business professionals of all industries and from across the state and beyond together to advance the economic health of Alaska. Conference attendees received updates on Alaska industries, the State’s fiscal situation, and attended one of the final gubernatorial debates before the November election. The large group sessions combined with smaller breakouts provided diversity of content and opportunity to connect and meet new people.

Additional highlights of the conference include the Pre-Awards Gala Reception, which was held at one of Fairbanks’ premier attractions, the Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum, which showcases the heritage of the automobile in Alaska. Following the reception was the Chamber’s annual awards ceremony, the Top Business Awards Gala.

By Alaska Chamber staff

Celebrating 65 Years: Annual Conference and Awards a success in Fairbanks!
The annual Fall Forum is a chance for Alaska Chamber members to gather and mingle with like-minded peers, and celebrate the year’s best businesses and professionals. The event also provides a venue to reaffirm the Chamber’s policy platform during the Policy Forum. The Policy Forum is the culmination of months of input from Alaska businesses and hardworking Chamber members. Each position is advanced by a chamber member, vetted through the Legislative Affairs Committee and adopted by vote of Chamber membership.

### Positions Added
Chamber members adopted three new positions for 2019.

- **Support a meaningful cap on operating budget expenditures**
- **Support comprehensive workers’ compensation reform**
- **Support the Port of Alaska and its strategic importance**

#### The Alaska Chamber Supports a Reduction in State Spending from the General Fund, excluding both the capital budget and Permanent Fund Dividend, from the previous fiscal year’s spending level until the State reaches a sustainable level of spending. The Chamber board of directors also chose position as one of the Chamber’s 2019 priorities.

#### Support U.S. Congressional efforts to secure viable, long-term solutions for the Federal Airport & Airway Trust Fund (Aviation Trust Fund)

The Alaska Chamber supports a way in which a viable, long-term solution can be found to secure FAA funding for the Aviation Trust Fund. If allowed to expire without extension, the FAA would be unable to spend any revenues allocated from the Trust Fund for aviation safety and essential air services.

#### Support the Port of Alaska and its strategic importance

The Chamber supports the Port of Alaska as a piece of vital infrastructure for the economy of Alaska as well as its importance to our national defense.

#### Positions Removed
Chamber members elected to remove one position from the 2019 advocacy platform.

- **Support clarifying Alaska’s credit scoring law**
  
  This was a state position that has been resolved by House Bill 195 passed during the 2018 legislative session. House Bill 195 was an act relating to insurer actions based on credit history and insurance scores at insurance policy renewal. It provides for insurer consideration of consumer requests for exceptions of credit history or insurance scores.

#### State and federal priorities

The Chamber board of directors has selected five top priorities from the 2019 policy positions – three state priorities and two federal priorities.

A full listing of the Chamber current policy platform is available online at alaskachamber.com.

The 2019 Alaska Chamber priorities are as follows:

- **2019 State Priorities**
  - Support reduction of spending to sustainable levels. The Alaska Chamber supports a reduction in spending from the General Fund, excluding both the capital budget and Permanent Fund Dividend, from the previous fiscal year’s spending level until the State reaches a sustainable level of spending.
  - Support a meaningful cap on operating budget expenditures. The Alaska Chamber supports a meaningful cap on operating budget expenditures. With an ever-grewing State operating budget, the business community will live in constant fear of large tax increases. Either a spending cap or a tax cap allows elected officials to make tough calls on spending. They work relatively well in many communities at the local level.

#### Support comprehensive workers’ compensation reform

The Alaska Chamber supports enactment of systemic changes to the Alaska workers’ compensation insurance statutes to reduce the cost of insurance for employers while emphasizing effective treatment programs that promote injury recovery and return to full employment of injured workers.

#### 2019 Federal Priorities

- **Support oil and gas exploration and development in Alaska’s federal areas including the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A), Cook Inlet, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The Alaska Chamber strongly supports oil and gas exploration and production in Alaska’s federal areas including the Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, NPR-A, Cook Inlet, and the 10-02 area of ANWR.**

The Chamber encourages Congress to enact revenue sharing for Alaska and local communities. The Chamber also encourages the Alaska Congressional Delegation, the Alaska Legislature and Governor to support and strongly advocate for responsible development of these valuable resources, while the Chamber commits to actively support and participate in the education and advocacy efforts to open these areas.

- **Support reform of the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The Alaska Chamber supports reform of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.**

The Chamber thanks all of the speakers, sponsors, and attendees at the 2018 Fall Forum. In particular, we would like to especially thank the hard working members of the Legislative Affairs Committee and the members that advanced critical advocacy issues of statewide impact.

There are many tasks ahead, and regaining control of State spending remains Alaska’s most pressing issue. The November election is a clear referendum on Juneau.
The Alaska Chamber would like to recognize the following Chamber investors celebrating milestone anniversaries this quarter. We appreciate their ongoing commitment to Alaska and their investment in the Chamber — together we are the voice of Alaska business!

30 YEARS
Alaska Forest Association
Dawson Construction, Inc.

20 YEARS
Associated General Contractors of Alaska

15 YEARS
Caelus Energy Alaska, LLC
Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alaska
Samson Tug & Barge
Southcentral Foundation

10 YEARS
Design Alaska
Gallery Lodge

5 YEARS
Alaska Native Medical Center
Arctic Slope Native Association
Bettisworth North Architects and Planners Inc.
Delta Leasing LLC
Greater Fairbanks Community Hospital Foundation
Hecla Greens Creek Mining Company
NEA - Alaska
North Star Behavioral Health System
Reid Brothers Construction

1 YEAR
HDR Marine, LLC
International Seafoods of Alaska, Inc.
Little Italy
Pt Capital

With nearly a century of experience in the Last Frontier, no one knows the challenges and opportunities of Alaska’s changing economy better than First National Bank Alaska.

Our expertise and fast, local decision-making deliver reliable banking solutions to move your business in the right direction.

From Online Banking and expansion loans to payroll disbursement and merchant services, we’re here to help you succeed.
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