



Interim Report
By
Senator Gary Stevens

Just about three months remain in the legislative interim. As always is the case, much is happening as we prepare for the start of the next session on Tuesday, January 21, 2020. Included on this list is consideration by Senate Republicans of Anchorage Representative Josh Revak, who is the governor's nomination to fill the District M vacancy created by the passing of Senator Chris Birch in August. Chris was a close friend and his death was a great loss to the Senate. Josh and I, as Army veterans, have much in common. He is an excellent candidate who can well fill the position representing his district.

An interview by Senate Republicans and a vote on Representative Revak's nomination are expected in early November. Should Representative Revak join the Senate, his House seat will be filled through a gubernatorial nomination, pending an affirmative vote by House Republicans.

Coming Up in 2020

Looking ahead to next session, you can expect the budget to again dominate debate in the Capitol. Governor Dunleavy's proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget will be unveiled by mid-December, a little over a month before session begins.

During the recent Alaska Federation of Natives meeting in Fairbanks, the governor touched upon some of his budget plans, including hiring 35 state troopers to serve rural communities, and an intention to work with tribes on education issues. Earlier this year, the governor and the University of Alaska Board of Trustees reached an agreement to scale back state funding by \$45 million in FY '21 and FY '22. Cuts to many other state agencies and programs are expected to be included in the next year's proposed budget.

Realizing that some cuts are inevitable, and our need to balance the budget, I will continue to work diligently with my legislative colleagues to fund the important services our rural, coastal communities rely upon. I look forward to hearing from you as we work on the budget and the many other issues that will come before the legislature in 2020.

Fish Tax Credits Bill Coming

Next session, I will be introducing legislation to extend the state's salmon and herring product development tax credit, which is set to expire in 2020. I sponsored the original bill creating the Alaska Salmon Product Development Tax Credit in 2003. The program is attributed as a major

factor in the increase in commercial value of Alaska salmon. Successful legislation in 2014 extended the salmon tax credits and expanded the program to include tax credits for herring value-added processing.

We are exploring offering similar tax credits for value-added processing in the pollock and cod industries. The goal is to create more and higher paid jobs here in Alaska, as well as increasing the value of the product we produce.

I will have the bill ready for induction at the start of the 2020 session. Committee assignments will be made at that time.

Opportunities in the Legislature

The House of Representatives is seeking interested applicants to serve as Legislative Pages in 2020. These are full-time positions running from mid-January to the end of session. The starting salary for a page position is \$3,343 per month. All monthly paid employees receive full medical, retirement, and leave benefits. Housing accommodations are not included.

Legislative Pages are hired by the Rules Committees of each Chamber and serve under the supervision of their respective Sergeant-At-Arms. They are on call in the Chamber each day of the legislative session to provide services and support to members.

Working as a page is a great way to learn about the legislative process and build a resume. Many pages have later gone on to work in Senate and House offices.

Interested individuals should send resumes and their Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) driving record to the House Sergeant at Arms' office at:

Micaela Bradner
House Sergeant at Arms
Micaela.Bradner@akleg.gov

Information on requesting a driving record can be found at: doa.alaska.gov/dmv/akol/record.htm.

Recruitment for next session's Senate pages will begin soon.

PFD Payment Schedule

Another round of Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) payments will be made on Thursday, October 24th. This includes payments for those who filed applications by mail, those who filed online but requested a check be mailed to them, and for those applicants deemed eligible as of Friday, October 11th.

Direct deposits will be in bank accounts on the 24th. If you are expecting a check, please give the postal service a few days to get your payment to you.

You can verify your PFD status online at pfd.alaska.gov. If you are still in an undetermined status, the website also provides a link to any forms Permanent Fund Dividend Division personnel need to complete their review of your application.

For questions, please contact the PFD Division at (907) 465-2326.

Next year's PFD application period begins January 1st and runs through March 31st.

Real ID on the Way

Under federal law, beginning October 1, 2020, you will not be able to board a commercial airline, enter a federal building, or gain access to a military base without a federally compliant ID. This includes a REAL ID, Passport, Military ID, and other options.

A complete list of acceptable travel documents is available at: www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification.

REAL ID compliant licenses, permits and identification cards are available through state DMV offices. Find out more online at: doa.alaska.gov/dmv.

If you intend to use a REAL ID to fly in 2020, you are advised to visit the DMV office near you as soon as possible to avoid delays in processing your application.

Proposed Changes to Essential Air Service

The federal government's proposal to reduce Essential Air Service (EAS) in Alaska may affect some local areas. The EAS program provides subsidies for flights to eleven sites in the Kodiak area.

According to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT), six sites around Kodiak Island do not currently have residents and may be cut from the program. These include Alitak, Amook Bay, Moser Bay, Olga Bay, Port Bailey and Port Williams.

Before making a recommendation to the federal government during the next contract renewal process, DOT will be seeking input from residents and businesses in Kodiak regarding EAS at these sites in the coming months.

Help With State of Alaska Matters

Senate District P's offices are available year-round to assist you with issues involving state agencies.

Contact us in Homer at (907) 235-0690.

Call us in Kodiak at (907) 486-4925.

My State Capitol office in Juneau can be reached at (907) 465-4925 or toll free at 1-800-821-4925.

My email is: Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov

My interim address is:

Senator Gary Stevens
305 Center Ave, STE 1
Kodiak, AK 99615

(Please note that we are unable to assist you with legal matters. If you have a case involving a lawsuit or pending litigation and need help finding an attorney, I recommend contacting the Alaska Bar Association at www.alaskabar.org.)

Thanks again to our local media for their assistance in sharing this information, and to you for reading this month's report.