

**Senator Gray-Jackson's Notes  
Spenard Community Council  
June 3, 2020**

**Dear friends and neighbors,**

**I hope you and your family are doing well. It is that time of the year where everything is in full bloom and as we approach summer, later this month, we all are anxious to be out and enjoying the fresh air. I am hopeful that everyone is still taking the necessary precautions in keeping the spread of COVID to a vast minimum. It is still very important to continue social distancing and wearing your protective face coverings. I wanted to share a few things with you of what is taking place in our great State of Alaska.**

- **On May 22, 2020, Phase Three of the Reopen Alaska Responsibly Plan went into effect, allowing all businesses to open at 100 percent capacity.**
- **A pilot program in Anchorage has been started to help small businesses and nonprofit organizations.**
- **Grants can be used for expenses, including rent or mortgage, payroll, taxes or paying vendors.**
- **Eligible businesses must have seven or fewer employees and a gross revenue of less than \$1 million.**
- **The Municipality of Anchorage has partnered with Cook Inlet Lending Center to run the program.**

**Small businesses in Alaska can begin applying for grants through the [AK Cares Grant Program](#).**

- **Applications can be filed online through the Credit Union 1 [website](#).**
- **The program has been capitalized with \$290 million in CARES Act funding set aside for the State of Alaska.**

**People Mover buses returned to service on June 1.**

- **Bus capacity will be limited with partitions between bus drivers and the public.**
- **Bus drivers will be routinely screened.**
- **Cloth face masks are recommended.**

**Spruce beetles are emerging across much of Southcentral Alaska.**

- **The beetles normally emerge when temperatures reach 60 degrees.**

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- The summer flight period continues into July.
- Southcentral Alaska has experienced a spruce beetle outbreak since 2016.
- Over 1.1 million acres of forest impacted.
- Property owners are encouraged to take steps to reduce infestation of green spruce trees.
- Information available at [www.alaskasprucebeetle.org](http://www.alaskasprucebeetle.org).

**The Legislature still has work to do. The Capital budget needs to be approved, and we need to address the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline on moratoriums for renters and landlords. I anticipate a special session in the near future.**