

From: pl hamlett [plhamlett@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 2:56 PM
To: info@communitycouncils.org
Subject: FW: From the Desk of Senator Johnny Ellis: Building Up Our State and Keeping It Running

Mark,

pls fwd to CPCC members

Thanks
PETER HAMLETT
CPCC President

From: Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us
To: Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: From the Desk of Senator Johnny Ellis: Building Up Our State and Keeping It Running
Date: Wed, 16 May 2012 17:56:35 +0000

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**SENATOR
JOHNNY ELLIS**
Working hard
Solving problems
Getting things

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May 16th, 2012

BUILDING UP OUR STATE AND KEEPING IT RUNNING
Governor Signs Operating and Capital Budgets
Friends and Neighbors,

Capital Budget Spurs Economic Growth and Creates Jobs

The Senate Bipartisan Working Group worked to set statewide priorities, and I am extremely pleased to report that this year, while putting savings before spending, we were still able to fund capital projects important to our neighborhoods. I worked hard with my Senate colleagues and Representatives Berta Gardner and Les Gara to secure funding for:

done

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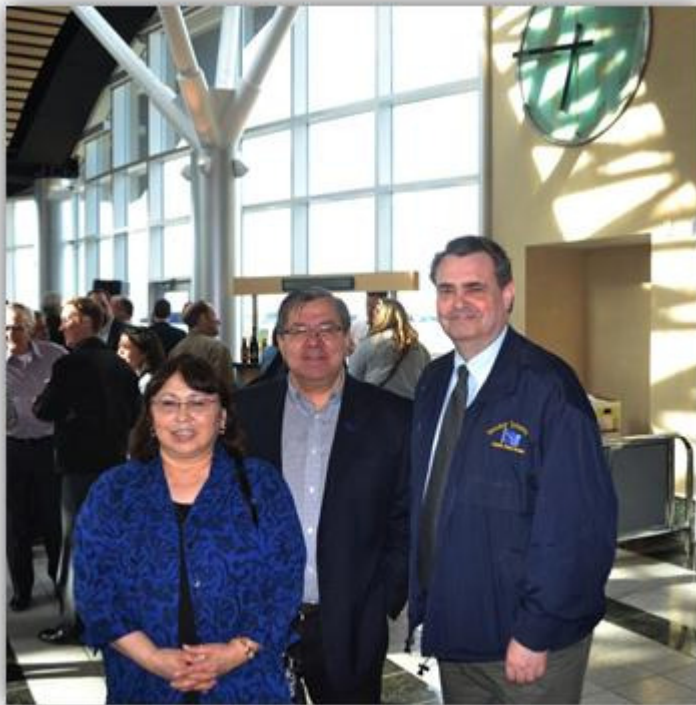
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- \$1,750,000 for neighborhood school upgrades
- \$4 million to purchase Waldron Lake
- \$4 million for Penland Parkway Rehabilitation
- \$250,000 to reconstruct Mulcahy Ice Rinks
- \$1 million for Cordova Street Improvements – 3rd Avenue to 16th Avenue
- \$6 million for pavement rehab for midtown and downtown roads
- \$200,000 to upgrade the Campbell Park Play Equipment and Safety Resurfacing
- \$200,000 to improve Campbell Creek Trail and Estuary
- \$1 million for Coastal Trail Surface and Safety Improvements
- \$12 million for Anchorage Fire Department and Anchorage Police Department Public Safety Equipment
- \$643,000 for Fairview Recreation Center Upgrades



Senator Ellis with Senate Finance Co-Chair Lyman Hoffman and Lillian Hoffman at the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute's Great Alaska Seafood Cook-Off

Keeping the State Running

I'm glad the Governor saw virtue in several items that the Senate Bipartisan Working Group added to the State's operating budget during this year's deliberative process, including:

A more equitable structure for funding needs-based grants and

performance-based scholarships

\$5 million for the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

\$1.4 million for expanded substance abuse treatment in the State's correctional system

\$650,000 for the Alaska Complex Behavioral Collaborative

\$360,000 for chlamydia education and testing

\$200,000 for Alaska Legal Services to provide legal advice to low-income families

\$300,000 for workforce training programs through the Alaska Works Partnership

\$250,000 for senior in-home services grants

\$250,000 for the Institute of Social and Economic Research to study K-12 education policy

\$200,000 for human services matching grants

\$85,000 for a new probation officer at the Anchorage wellness court

However, I'm disappointed that the Governor continues to underfund pre-kindergarten education in our State. The Governor reduced funding for voluntary pre-kindergarten grants to school districts by \$1.2 million—that money would have put a lot of our youngest learners into classrooms with good teachers to begin the early learning process. He reduced the popular "Parents as Teachers" program by \$2.86 million—a program that focuses on teaching parents how to be more effective at supporting their child's development. This comes after the report from the Alaska Crime Summit featured new research showing that a 20% reduction in the crime rate for low-income students who participate in pre-school programs, even into adulthood. A 20% reduction in the crime rate would yield huge savings in our State's prison costs. I believe we must stop building more and more expensive prisons, and start rebuilding our society with high-quality education. I'm disappointed that Governor Parnell does not agree.

Governor Parnell also vetoed a \$50 million payment to the retirement system for Alaska's judges. This money is owed to the system for the service of our judges, but the Governor vetoed it. In doing so, he is increasing the size of the unfunded liability of that system. I have consistently argued for paying down Alaska's debt by using a portion of our savings to eliminate these unfunded liabilities. Again, it appears Governor Parnell disagrees—preferring instead to withhold necessary State payments and allow

the unfunded liabilities to balloon.



U.S. Senator Mark Begich and the Senate Bipartisan Working Group secured \$5 million in the capital budget for the University of Alaska to establish a research and development program for Unmanned Aerial Systems. Unmanned Aerial Systems are already being utilized in Alaska in many ways and as the Arctic race progresses, they will become even more vital as a resource to our state and nation.

As always, it is my honor and privilege to serve you, and I am confident that if we work together Alaska's best days are still ahead.

Until Next Week,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johnny Ellis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Johnny Ellis