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SUSITNA DAM
State to move aggressively for hydroelectric project
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- Sand and Gravel
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**Correction:** Salgu Wissmath took the photos on pages 54 and 55 of the Fall 2010 edition.
Winning Bids

Note: Winning Bids and Construction Trends
1) Source from projects advertised in the AGC of Alaska Bulletin
2) Calculations based on date of bid
3) Supply/Service; Non-Construction bid results are not always advertised in the bulletin
4) RFP results are not always advertised in the bulletin

Arctic & Western

Chefornak Airport Relocation
$17,443,650
QAP

Kotzebue Airport Safety Improve PHS I
$14,397,590

Knik Construction Co. Inc.

Kobuk Des/Blld K-12 Reno/Add
$8,989,989
Bethel Services Inc.

New Stuyahok Fuel/Dispensing Upgrades
$3,479,900
STG Inc.

Bethel Hospital Roof Replacement
$2,863,837
Interior Alaska Roofing

Barrow Tuzzy Library Expansion
$2,546,000
SKW/Eskimos Inc.

Barrow Gas Field Ops Scada Install
$1,879,685
Tikigaq/Conam Construction Co.

Stevens Village Sanitation Road
$1,250,600
Cruz Construction Inc.

Interior

FBKS Steese Hwy Surface Treatment
$20,807,849
Great Northwest Inc.

Tol Cutoff Mpo-2/MP5-24 Resurface
$9,258,998
Cruz Construction Inc.

FBKS Geist Road Rehab
$2,139,892
Great Northwest Inc.

Tol Bike Path Rehabilitation
$2,034,860
H C Contractors Inc.

FBKS CC Boiler/Heating Upgrades
$2,027,300
GBC Inc.

FBKA UAF Utilities Steam Capacity Expansion
$1,767,231
Alaska Mechanical Inc.

Denali Water/Wastewater Systems
$1,339,346
Twin Peaks Construction Inc.

Southcentral

Anch Glenn Hwy Resurfacing
$9,847,455
Granite Construction Co. Inc.

Anch Seward Hwy MP115-MP124 Resurface
$7,310,434
Granite Construction Co. Inc.

Seldontna Sterling Hwy MP62-MP90 Resurface
$3,750,599
Alaska Roadbuilders Inc.

Seldontna Funny River Rd Relo/Improve
$3,146,361
Southcentral Construction Inc.

Homer Kachemak Water/Sewer PHS II
$2,572,927
Herndon Construction LLC

Anch Lake Hood Bank Stabilization
$2,111,535
Granite Construction Co. Inc.

Anch Spenard Area Road Reclaiming
$1,446,771
Granite Construction Co. Inc.
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<td>$1,419,111</td>
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<td>SEWARD Z FLOAT INSTALLATION</td>
<td>$1,389,214</td>
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<td>ANCH AIA N TERMINAL JET BRIDGE IMPROVE</td>
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<td>Craig Taylor Equipment Co.</td>
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**SOUTHEAST**

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<td>$8,398,446</td>
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<td>McGraw’s Custom Construction</td>
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<td>$3,881,945</td>
<td>Western Marine Construction</td>
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<td>PETERSBURG RUNWAY SAFETY PHS IV</td>
<td>$2,773,280</td>
<td>Bering Pacific Construction</td>
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**THORNE BAY POW RD BRIDGES PAINTING**

- $1,820,440
- Pool Engineering Inc.

**KETCHIKAN THOMAS BASIN PHS II IMPROVE**

- $683,750
- Western Dock & Bridge

**KETCHIKAN KNUDSON BOAT LAUNCH RAMP**

- $860,915
- Ketchikan Ready Mix & Quarry Inc.

**KLAWOCK CAUSEWAY FISH PASSAGE**

- $705,731
- Ketchikan Ready Mix & Quarry Inc.

**WRANELL NEMO ROAD REPAIRS**

- $657,858
- Rock N Road Construction Inc.

**HOONAH TONGASS BRIDGE PHS I**

- $655,777
- S & S General Contractors

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Get America back to work is a statement you hear a lot these days ever since the crash of the United States economic system in 2008. The focus has been on how we can create jobs to get Americans back to work. Here at AGC we believe the very quickest way to create jobs is to continue to grow our construction industry and that means create funding for more new construction projects. It is important to realize that until the economy does recover we will need to look to government funding of projects, either federal, state or local. The Associated General Contractors, both our state chapter and nationally, has done a great job of letting our elected officials know how important the construction industry is to the American economy. We have been a strong voice and have made a unified effort to get the message on the front pages of the American press, about how efficiently we can create jobs to get America back to work.

The cry to get America back to work has been heard loud and clear in Alaska. We need to be thankful that Alaska has weathered the storm in a dignified fashion. This fact becomes quite apparent when you take a look at the status of construction jobs in the rest of America. While the overall unemployment rate nationally hovered around 10 percent in 2009, the unemployment rate in the construction industry peaked at almost 25 percent. More recently construction unemployment has recovered to around 18 percent.

Recently I was privileged to attend the 2010 AGC of America National and Chapter Leadership Conference in Washington D.C. where we were made to realize how important our industry is to America’s economic recovery. There were many outstanding speakers who presented facts and figures validating the many efforts of our industry to create jobs. Yet one statistic stood out from among the others and made a strong impression on us Alaskans - of the 50 states only seven have increased their construction employment statistics. Alaska was one of the seven who managed an increase. In 2010 we developed a 2 percent increase in new construction jobs, while the national average was a loss of 6 percent of their jobs.

This increase in jobs did not come by accident or coincidence. It was the result of good planning, resourceful financing and good fiscal policy by our many strong leaders and elected officials who govern us. They recognized that we cannot just sit around and wait for a gas pipeline rather we need to continue to invest in Alaska and that we need jobs now. They had the wisdom and intestinal fortitude to find funding for construction projects to start work now. I would like to offer thanks and I hope that you will join me to show appreciation to our leaders and their supporters for a strong construction industry and for many of our jobs.

To our Alaska congressional delegation for their efforts to continue to fight for Alaska jobs. They have successfully obtained strong financial support of federal funds even in these tough economic times and an often unpopular national public opinion. Their efforts include “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act “ (ARRA) funding and federal financial support for our military bases and their many construction programs ($670 million FY10).

To our governor and legislators for successfully developing and approving a strong capitol budget, investing in Alaska and supporting the construction industry.

To the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for their hard work and good planning to make projects “shovel ready” allowing them to be eligible for ARRA funding. Alaska received $250 million in ARRA funding for transportation projects as a result of their efforts. It should be noted also that they were the only state agency ready to receive those funds when they became available.

To our voters who strongly supported the Alaska Bond Package Proposition B. In spite of fearful messages about hard economic times, they recognized that this bond funding means almost $400 million dollars for new good-paying Alaska construction jobs.

There has been much criticism of the Federal Stimulus Program (ARRA) and some of it well deserved. However, more than $100 billion of the $787 billion went to infrastructure investment and Alaska benefited well by some of it. Getting America back to work requires an investment in the American people. As we’ve learned in Alaska, the best way to achieve it is to support infrastructure development and construction jobs.
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Rethink Possible
The average Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a federally funded highway project today takes five years to reach a Record of Decision. From that point, the project sponsor, usually DOT, can then complete the design and begin to get the dozens of required local, state and federal permits. The average time for a major highway project that requires an EIS, from beginning the EIS to completion of construction is 13 years. Since most of Alaska’s road construction program is federally funded, is it any wonder why transportation is one of the biggest impediments here? Forty years ago, the biggest obstacle we had to getting a project going was scraping the money together. Today, the biggest obstacle we have is getting permission.

I recently attended one of 10 regional summits across the country sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on an initiative called Every Day Counts (EDC). EDC resulted from questions raised two years ago when Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez was meeting U.S. Senators on the Environment and Public Works prior to his confirmation — it is that committee that confirms his appointment. The common question asked by committee members was, “Why does it take so long to deliver a road project and what can be done to speed up the time it takes?”

Instead of saying what the real problem is, the FHWA designed EDC to identify and deploy innovation aimed at shortening project delivery. Innovative methods the FHWA presently has the ability and authority to do. We know what methods and techniques we have available. We use them regularly. The real problem is the 800-ton gorilla in the room — it is the crushing weight of more than 165,000 pages of federal regulations written by people who were not elected. Regulations that were written to enforce the laws passed by Congress.

The graph on this page clearly illustrates this and should be a wake-up call. It shows the cumulative number of laws and amendments passed by Congress over the past 120 years, from the Rivers and Harbors Act (RHAA) of 1899 to SAFETEA-LU in 2005 and recent amendments to the Clean Air Act.

Well intended laws at the time — who would argue that we didn’t need the Clean Water Act after the Cuyahoga River caught fire in 1969? We have corrected our environmental problems and we have the cleanest country on earth. But a self-perpetuating bureaucracy and regulatory system has taken each of these laws and stretched them way beyond their original intent. And a seemingly oblivious Congress keeps adding more. Ronald Reagan once said, “The tendency of government and its programs to grow is the closest thing to eternal life we have.” Unfortunately this eternal life is strangling this country.

Can we deliver projects faster than at the glacial pace under which we presently do? Yes we can. The most recent and probably best example is the I-35 bridge in Minneapolis which suffered a catastrophic collapse in August 2007, killing 13 people and cutting off a major transportation corridor. The State of Minnesota, the Administration and Congress made this a priority. Within two months, a design-build contract was let and in one year almost to the day, the new $234 million concrete structure opened to the public. It can take up to a year to just get the bridge permit from the Coast Guard. Yes, a Coast Guard bridge permit is buried in one of those dots on this graph.

We mustered a similar response to rebuild the ravages of Hurricane Katrina. We’ve shown we can do it and without harm to the environment. We just need the Administration and Congress to make transportation and rebuilding our economy a national priority. Our competitors in the world economy have, but Washington continues to place a mountain of process and permits ahead of progress and the economy.

As Pogo once said, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

Federal Environmental Requirements Affecting Transportation Projects
Alaska has never been a “business as usual” state. Throughout our history, we’ve met changes with innovative thinking and quick responses. During district and territorial days, at statehood, in the fast-paced days of the TAPS construction, and in our increasingly diverse economic environment in 2011, Alaskans have embraced incommensurate opportunities.

A key focus for Alaska in this decade is the State Energy Policy’s target of reaching 50 percent renewable energy by the year 2025. To get there, we’ll need to invest now to develop major hydropower capacity for Southcentral. The state will aggressively move for a hydroelectric project on the Susitna River at Watana, about halfway between Anchorage and Fairbanks, a project that can provide half of Southcentral’s electricity demand.

This year, I will introduce legislation empowering the Alaska Energy Authority to finance the Susitna dam. And we will ask the Legislature to appropriate the funds to jumpstart this project. Now is the time to conduct planning, design, and permitting.

Additionally, we will continue fostering exploration and development of Alaska’s geothermal and wind energy potential, evaluating every avenue to better grow the economies of rural and urban Alaska with more abundant energy.

With the development of a gas line that provides take-off points for Railbelt communities, we will be able to further reduce energy uncertainty for businesses. A major gas line can stimulate private sector investment, entrepreneurialism, and job creation. The gas line development process remains on schedule and will be an important focus for 2011.

With so much promise in our future, we still face a big challenge, which is to maintain the constitutional limit on federal agencies.

Unlike any time in our state’s history, federal agencies are expanding their reach into decisions traditionally made by individuals, local governments and state governments. Our state sovereignty is being eroded and federal regulations are putting the squeeze on private sector innovation.

Take, for example, the battle to get Army Corps of Engineers permits to open the Kensington Mine. The Department of Law played a vital role, joining a challenge by Coeur D’Alene Mines Corp., to take that matter to the U.S. Supreme Court, after the federal regulatory agency with jurisdiction over the project declined to do so.

Fortunately, the court ruled in favor of the state’s interpretation of the Clean Water Act. After a 16-year battle, the Kensington began operating in the third quarter of 2010, creating dozens of good-paying, year-round mining jobs in Southeast Alaska.

We also successfully challenged a ruling by the U.S. Forest Service and helped free up the “Logjam” timber sales, keeping doors open at the last surviving sawmill in Southeast, where more than 30 Alaskans work.

As with Kensington, ConocoPhillips worked for years to get a drilling project west of the Colville River, only to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ignore its own permit process and deny the application for a drilling pad. The project represents roughly 5 million barrels of lost domestic oil production a year, 400 construction jobs, 100 operating jobs and an infrastructure line that would likely lead to more exploration and development within the NPR-A.

These are just three instances among many demonstrating why we cannot allow bad federal decisions to go unchallenged. As governor, restoring and maintaining our state’s jurisdictional authority remains a high priority, not as a constitutional exercise, but as an economic imperative.

Alaska can grow jobs responsibly and protect our natural environment—these goals have never been mutually exclusive. Our strategy to unlock our resource economy is to be vigilant, use science and reason first, and to litigate as a last resort. In nearly every instance where we have sued the federal government, we have submitted comments first to help federal authorities reach an informed decision, so a court decision wouldn’t be necessary.

We will continue to communicate our position to Washington and facilitate ongoing information exchanges between agencies, always working to ensure federal agencies have timely access to Alaska’s comprehensive data on wildlife, as well as our expertise when regulators conduct status reviews, designate critical habitat, or conduct consultations.

When federal decisions are wrong we’ll pursue every legal means to get sensible rulings based on sound science and good public policy.

While we implement this strategy to defend and recover our state’s rights, growing Alaska’s economy will require more. We will continue to develop access to resources. Alaska is in the preliminary stages of building roads to Umiat and the Ambler mining district. Both projects will bring good-paying, year-round jobs in the mining sector and provide greater access to future energy exploration. These and other infrastructure investments are critical to our future, especially during a time when we can expect fewer federal dollars.

As the conditions of the world are neither static nor predictable, Alaska will continue to adjust its approaches to economic development. If there is a “business as usual” in Alaska, it is to be more nimble, to be open for business and to remain focused on private sector job creation.
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C

onsidering the vastness of Alaska, the exis
ting transportation infrastructure of the state is
inadequate and requires continued planning,
upgrades and expenditures to assure Alaskans are
provided with essential services. A state-funded trans-
portation program that is adequately and predictably
funded, provides continuity between succeeding ad-
ministrations and considers all modes of transporta-
tion is needed to realize Alaska’s potential.

Most of the current spending on Alaska’s transpor-
tation program comes from federal sources. The state
receives significantly more from the Federal Highway
Trust Fund than it contributes, and the Alaska motor
fuel tax of 8 cents per gallon is embarrassing – it is the
lowest in the nation (average state tax is more than 18
cents). When combined with the magnitude of past
legislative earmarks, the “bridges to nowhere” contro-
versy that continues to haunt us and a Permanent Fund
more than $37 billion, these factors bring a great deal of scrutiny to Alas-
ka’s federal transportation program and funding.

The outlook for the federal program is concerning. Many
people believe Alaska’s share of the federal “highway trust fund pie” will
decrease in the future. We believe we have got to, as a state, step-up and
start paying more of the share. There are many strings, rules and regula-
tions attached to a federal dollar that decrease its purchasing power - we
can get more accomplished faster with state dollars. Recent experience
has shown that for a transportation project, a federal dollar is worth only
about 75 cents, compared to a state dollar, and there is strong agreement
that the economic benefits derived from the investment in Alaska’s transporta-
structure far exceed the cost of the investment.

Because of Alaska’s size and limited transportation
options, meeting the needs for the future requires a
strategy which goes beyond just “more of the same.” It
requires a multi-modal approach to our invest-
ment, which preserves what has been built to date,
 improves system performance, and adds substantial
new capacity and routes. For our economy and our
future, just taking care of what we have is not enough.
The challenge we face is how to deal
with these issues so that current
and future generations of Alaskans
can tap the vast riches that exist in
our state.

The efforts of the House Trans-
portation Committee in last years’
legislative session gave considerable
encouragement that many lawmakers
fully understand and support the
concept but there remain many details
to work on.

A bill would establish the state-
funded program, create a board to
oversee the project prioritization
and provide a funding mechanism.
In addition to a direct appropria-
tion, that mechanism would direct
revenue from state motor fuel tax
and motor vehicle registration fees
as user fees to an endowment fund
that would manage and distribute annual funding into
the transportation program on a percent-of-market-
value (POMV) basis. This year we continue our efforts
to work with the administration and legislature and
support efforts toward this goal, a longstanding legisla-
tive priority for AGC of Alaska.
WHY AGC?


These and many other benefits of AGC membership can be yours whether you are a general contractor, a specialty contractor or you do related work for the construction industry. Here is what our members say about the reasons to join one of Alaska’s leading associations.

**Carol Skinner**  
_F M Stremel, CPAs_

I believe the biggest value for us is the networking opportunities. We can introduce clients to bankers, contractors and bonding companies and vice versa. We get to know each others’ needs and help solve problems. AGC is also able to provide us with information on current events or changes in the construction industry and that is helpful.

**Mike Miller**  
Granite Construction Company  
AGC Past President

One of the advantages of AGC is the chance to work with your competitors on AGC committees to help solve industry problems together for the good of the industry. You can learn so much from such a positive networking opportunity.

**Ron Pichler**  
Denali Drilling

There are a variety of benefits—being part of an organization that can lobby in Alaska or Washington DC for our interests. That is a good thing. And the camaraderie of AGC has allowed our personnel the chance to meet a lot of people statewide that we wouldn’t have been able to do otherwise.

**Christine West**  
The Business MD

AGC offers so many different opportunities to connect with other members, to help expand their businesses, and offer business services to the membership whether or not you are in the construction field. AGC touches more than just construction—it has the ability to help build relationships as well as an understanding of what is happening in the industry.

Be a part of Alaska’s third largest industry, paying the second highest wages, with more than 21,000 in the workforce.  

**AGC: 650 members strong**
The goal of the Alaska Construction Academies is to serve the industry by providing knowledgeable, motivated, entry-level employees, and to serve students and job seekers by allowing them to explore their aptitudes and interests under the guidance of experienced, hands-on instructors from within the industry. An integral part of this strategy is to increase the likelihood that trainees will find jobs by tailoring instruction to the needs of local employers and providing referrals for actual job opportunities, often directly, but also through the Alaska Job Centers.

The Construction Academies in Juneau and Ketchikan began in 2008. They are funded through the Construction Education Foundation (CEF) by grants from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. Both academies have an adult and a high school component.

The Juneau Construction Academy’s (JCA) in-school program provides courses for high school students in construction and related trades at the district high schools and an alternative school during the school day and through after-school courses for interested and motivated students. The adult program includes classes that teach basic construction techniques and often include information on weatherizing homes in the wet southeast weather. The JCA began “House Build” last year, a project in which students design, build and sell a home. This year’s...
home was designed by Caitlyn DeRocher, a senior student at Juneau-Douglas High School taking architecture and engineering courses. She designed the home with help from high school instructor Craig Mapes, UAS Professor Robin Gilchrist and Tamara Rowcroft with the Juneau Housing Trust.

The Ketchikan Construction Academy (KCA) combines classroom instruction and on-the-job training with local contractors. KCA’s adult program instructors are licensed local contractors, and during the classes they become familiar with potential employees. KCA offers students help with resume writing and interviewing skills to prepare them for jobs. At a special graduation celebration, KCA added “speed interviewing” as a way for multiple employers to meet and interview course graduates in five-minute sessions.

Ketchikan High School partners with Southeast Alaska Builder Industry Association (SEABIA) members to offer opportunities for students in construction trade classes to make site visits and “help” as a concrete foundation is poured or watch as beams are set into place. And welding classes give students the skills needed to work in the Alaska Ship and Dry Dock industry.

There are also Construction Academies in Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula. In 2010, rural Construction Academies were started in the Bethel, Nome and Kodiak regions funded by the Denali Commission.

For more information about Academy classes or how to hire AkCA course graduates, contact your local Construction Academy, visit www.alaskaca.org or call AkCA Director, Kathleen Castle at (907) 222-0999.
MANAGE YOUR FLEET
BOTTOM LINE FROM
HOME. OR, FROM THE

Introducing Fleet Management from Alaska Communications, a smarter way to remotely monitor vehicle locations, optimize dispatch and routing, automate tracking and reporting and even start your cars or trucks from almost anywhere you happen to be. So you can keep an eye on your fleet and your bottom line from virtually anywhere in the world. To learn more, or to request a free demonstration, visit alaskacommunications.com/fleet.
AND YOUR
THE COMFORT OF
COMFORT OF HAWAII.
When you think about an associate member of The Associated General Contractors of Alaska, you imagine a company working in the construction trade—a plumbing outfit, a lighting business or a supplier. You do not, for example, immediately imagine a downtown law firm. Yet the law offices of Holmes, Weddle & Barcott, P.C. (HWB) have been associate members with AGC of Alaska since 1982, and are proud to say that membership has enormous benefits for the construction and legal trades, and the laws that surround both.

Since 1914 the firm has represented the cornerstones of Alaska’s economy—initially in mining, timber and fishery interests. Currently, it embodies a broad and complete coverage of maritime, fisheries, insurance, service industries, and employment and construction law, in addition to other areas of representation.

The firm’s focus, relative to the construction industry, is provided by David Freeman and Grant Watts, who both emphasize construction law as one of their practice areas. HWB provides legal services for a wide range of construction clients including owners, architects, engineers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and other vendors.

“We are involved in construction claims and litigation before the Alaska State and Federal Courts, the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals, and the U.S. Court of Federal Claims,” said Freeman. “Among other areas of practice,” he added, “the firm’s attorneys also handle workers’ compensation and insurance defense, including clients in those areas who are AGC members.” Freeman also represents construction industry employers in labor and employment relations cases.

“We deal routinely with contract preparation, contract review, bid protests, claims, collec-
Alaska contractors build on law firm's construction industry experience

“Mostly construction matters, mediation, arbitration, litigation, employer and labor law matters,” added Watts, “as well as lots of other federal/state/local matters which require a knowledge of construction law.”

HWB boasts a long and distinguished involvement in the legal affairs of Alaska as well as the Pacific Northwest and California. The original predecessor to HWB (Faulkner, Banfield, Doogan & Holmes) dates back to 1914 in Juneau. In 1998, the firm’s name was officially changed to Holmes, Weddle & Barcott to reflect its principals at the time. In 2003, the principals of the law firm of Freeman & Watts (formerly known as Wade & DeYoung) joined HWB and brought their combined experience and emphasis in construction, contracts and labor relations law, thereby both broadening and complementing the firm’s diverse range of legal services. Thus, after several name changes—a common practice for developing legal firms—the AGC membership was transferred to the current firm title in 2003.

In 2010 the firm opened offices in San Diego, Calif., and Portland, Ore., which expanded its maritime law practice from its Seattle office down the West Coast. In Alaska, the firm is based in Anchorage, but also represents clients in Fairbanks, Juneau, Dutch Harbor and other locations across the state.

Former members of the firm have served as chief justice and justice of...
the Alaska Supreme Court, judge of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, and as attorney general of the State of Alaska. HWB personnel have also served as members of the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association, the Alaska Judicial Council and the Commission on Judicial Conduct; on the governing boards of the Alaska Bar Foundation and Alaska Legal Services Corporation; and as legal counsel to the campaigns of the Alaska congressional delegation.

HWB is also a member of MERITAS (formerly Commercial Law Affiliates), which is a multi-firm, international affiliation of independent law firms who serve the needs of institutional clients seeking cost-effective, quality representation by medium-sized firms. Membership in MERITAS is based on peer evaluation and is only extended to a single firm in each city (nearly 200 across the U.S.). For Anchorage, HWB was the selected representative. “Our membership in MERITAS gives our firm’s clients immediate access to top-notch attorneys in the Lower 48 and around the world, which also makes HWB unique in Alaska,” said Freeman.

As an associate member, HWB finds benefit in AGC membership as it allows their staff to interact with the AGC team and other AGC members in a variety of ways. Freeman, for example, has been on the AGC legal committee for many years and has led lunch seminars and legal presentations at the annual conference. These activities allow HWB to supply important legal information to the membership in ways that a non-member firm might not be able to accomplish. On the fun side, HWB also annually sponsors the first hole at the AGC golf tournament in Anchorage.

“He’s an enthusiastic participant,” said AGC Membership Coordinator Barbara Rowland of Freeman. “They [HWB] want to make sure AGC members know what’s going on. When there is an issue, they’ll bring it up at the legal affairs session at our annual convention.”

Freeman and HWB have also been enthusiastic about providing legal advice to members, Rowland said. “Always happy to recommend a member of AGC to another, I have felt confident referring our contractors to Holmes, Weddle and Barcott, knowing they specialize in the
areas of the law concerning them, such as construction and design, business, and labor. I’ve received great feedback from our members,” she added.

“Membership also gives us daily access to the AGC’s publications, e-mails about construction industry events and bulletins about topical interests of the membership,” said Freeman. “This information is truly beneficial in our firm’s representation of clients working in the construction industry.”

HWB’s primary goal, said Freeman, is to provide effective, efficient legal services to all clients. “Whether it involves longtime clients or new clients that have a need for legal services,” said Watts, “the most positive part of representing our clients is providing high quality legal services to them which benefits the clients and which contributes to the clients’ success.”

With more than 50 years of combined experience practicing construction law in Alaska, both Freeman and Watts “believe we are highly qualified and can meet that goal for our construction clients,” said Freeman. “Our construction industry clients also receive the benefit of two lawyers who have both worked in the industry and correspondingly know how projects should come together for a successful result,” said Freeman. “That unique perspective allows HWB to provide quality legal services for our construction clients in a way that ensures the best possible result.”

Jessica Bowman is a writer who lives in Anchorage, Alaska.

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**Scholarship testimonials**

**Rory Egelus**
AGC of Alaska has assisted me financially throughout my college career, which has allowed me to experience valuable construction internships in the summers. The people of AGC not only assisted me financially, but also provided enthusiastic support throughout my academic life at Montana State University. I look forward to returning to Alaska to begin my career in the construction industry, and anticipate future involvement with AGC. Thank you AGC for your community involvement and kind generosity.

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**Travis Weist**
The AGC of Alaska’s scholarship has motivated me to maintain my Dean’s List status in the Construction Management Program at UAA. Growing up in the Alaska construction industry has emphasized the importance of continuing education, whether it is a skilled labor apprenticeship program or traditional schooling. Thank you for supporting the education of so many students, including myself. I look forward to the day when I can give back to the AGC community.

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**Bob Coopchiak**
I worked as a union carpenter for the past six years before entering UAA’s Construction Management Program as a full-time student. I would like to thank AGC of Alaska for its financial generosity in awarding me a scholarship. As a family man, this financial help means a lot. I didn’t think I had a chance of being chosen for a scholarship, but filled out an application anyway at the urging of someone else. Thank you AGC.

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**Jamie A. Smith**
AGC of Alaska’s scholarship programs have made education more readily available to myself and other students. Thank you AGC for improving not only my future job performance, but enhancing the potential quality of construction in Alaska in the decades to come.

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The Construction Education Foundation is involved in all levels of construction education in Alaska – from students in secondary schools to older university students, to students looking to change careers or to take short courses to upgrade their skills. The foundation’s goal is to provide the next generation of construction workers in Alaska. To that end, CEF works with the Associated General Contractors of Alaska to offer scholarships to students taking (or will be taking) classes toward a degree that will support the state’s construction industry.

To apply, download the forms at www.alaskacef.org/scholarships.html and return by deadline to the CEF office at 8005 Schoon St., Anchorage, AK 99518. For more information, call (907) 770-1826.
The greens are the colors of the wheelchair the hospital had custom ordered for him,” said Mrs. Senecal as she stood in the kitchen with Sgt. Senecal during the open house to celebrate renovations made through Operation Opening Doors (OOD), a program sponsored by The Associated General Contractors of Alaska (AGC) and its members.

The Senecal home is the first in Fairbanks to receive an OOD makeover. Jim Walter of GHEMM Company Inc. took on the task of identifying the necessary renovations,
soliciting volunteer manpower and material donations, and coordinating efforts during a two-month period. Walter met with AGC, the Senecals and Sgt. Senecal's physical therapist to brainstorm ways to improve mobility and usability in and around the home.

In addition to a traumatic brain injury that has made speech difficult, the accident left a bone growth in Sgt. Senecal's hip that creates problems with flexibility and pain. This makes everyday activities like scooting chairs around and walking difficult, so Operation Opening Doors focused on mobility improvements that will help to alleviate such problems.

Brice Inc., Exclusive Paving and Great Northwest Inc. supplied site work and materials to regrade and resurface the driveway and backyard.

Materials for a new back deck, railings for the front and basement stairs and window casing trim were donated by Spenard Builders Supply. Sherwin Williams contributed paint supplies with labor provided by Bush Painting Inc. and Dynamic Painting Inc.

The home's renovation includes new carpet and vinyl flooring by Florcraft Inc. Aurora Construction Supply Inc. provided grab bars for the bathrooms and Denali Mechanical Inc. supplied and installed ADA raised height toilets.

A metal handrail at the garage stair was supplied by Griffard Steel and

Textured carpet in the home that created mobility issues for Sgt. Senecal was replaced with vinyl flooring or loop-pile carpet.
SimplexGrinnell donated smoke alarms. GHEMM employees also finished installing a previously purchased exterior door.

The renovations took place in two stages. Work on the home’s exterior started in August before the temperatures dropped, and then moved indoors in late September. Paul Edstrom, GHEMM’s superintendent, credits Walter for making sure everything ran smoothly.

“This is something really important that we do for our community,” Edstrom said while working on the rear deck in September. “Jim has put in a lot of time and effort to make sure everything gets done.”

Walter said he is impressed by how willing people were to assist with the Senecal’s renovations.

“People in Fairbanks really stepped up to the plate,” he said.

The project’s completion was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the front porch of the Senecal home. AGC of Alaska Executive Director John MacKinnon, cut the ribbon, donated by Santina’s Flowers, alongside Sgt. Senecal, his 5-year-old daughter Kiley, and Meg Nordale of GHEMM.

Afterward volunteers toured the home to see the completed improvements. In the coming months Sgt. Senecal will transition to civilian life and begin working on a business venture the family purchased last summer.

“This has helped so much with the recovery and the transition,” said Mrs. Senecal, “not just for Tony, but for me as well. It’s made getting used to the changes that much easier.”

Rachael Kvapil is a writer and photographer who lives in Fairbanks, Alaska.
This project, located just off the new Martin Luther King Drive near Tudor Road, broke ground in May 2010. Neeser is presently focused on getting steel erected and the exterior envelope enclosed. The new two-story lab will replace the 18,000 square-foot-facility built in 1986 whose caseload exceeds its capacity. The lab provides forensic support to all law enforcement agencies in Alaska.

Norton Sound Regional Hospital

Location: Nome
Cost: $91 million
Size: 150,000 sq. ft.
Estimated completion: 2012

Work began in September 2010 and now the roof is on and the exterior is enclosed for winter. The walls are progressing on all three floors with framing nearly complete on the first floor, at 75 percent on the second floor and 25 percent on the top floor. The electrical and mechanical work are moving along well. The mechanical penthouse’s exterior siding panels are being installed and electrical rough-in is nearly complete on floor one. HVAC/plumbing rough-in is underway throughout the facility.

The new building will replace the community’s 61-year-old hospital and will be owned and operated by Norton Sound Health Corp., a tribal-owned nonprofit. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided the project’s funding.

Goose Creek Correctional Center

Location: Point MacKenzie
Cost: $240 million
Size: 425,000 sq. ft. encompassing five buildings on a 135-acre cleared compound
Estimated completion: June 2011 (six months ahead of schedule and on budget)

In April 2009 construction began. The walls and roofs of all five buildings (support/visitation, outside administration, warehouse, vehicle maintenance and general housing) are now complete and weather-tight. All buildings, except general housing, are fully on permanent power with interior walls installed. Finishes and final touches are underway and painting is nearly completed in three buildings.

Male Alaskan felons serving long-term sentences who are currently incarcerated in Arizona will return to Alaska to occupy the 1,536-bed medium-security facility upon completion.
At the most basic level, the work of safety is to identify and control hazards. My previous column reviewed such methods for identifying hazards as inspections, checklists, job safety analysis and auditing, to name a few. Now the focus is on controlling hazards.

Safety professionals use the concept of the hazard control hierarchy. The concept’s control methods are listed below in order from most desirable/effective to least desirable/effective.

1. Elimination
2. Substitution of less hazardous materials, processes, operations or equipment
3. Engineering controls
4. Warnings
5. Administrative controls
6. Personal protective equipment

Obviously, eliminating the hazard is a much better solution than putting a barrier around it. But putting a barrier around a hazard is much more effective than simply providing PPE to reduce the impact of the hazard. The first three control methods work to eliminate or reduce the amount of hazardous energy that employees are exposed to. The other controls seek to mitigate or reduce the consequences in the event of an exposure.

The underlying intent of OSHA law requires employers to first attempt to remove hazards through the use of feasible engineering controls because they have the potential to totally eliminate hazards in the workplace. If an engineering control eliminates the hazard, it may also remove the need to control employee behaviors through the use of administrative controls.

However, because it is cheaper, easier and takes less time many employers simply issue PPE or provide some training without going through the entire process of hazard control, leaving major gaps in the safety system. It takes some time (and potentially some cost) to control hazards from the top, but in the long run this will save money through reduced losses.

The following example illustrates how a contractor might apply the hazard control hierarchy to a commonly recognized hazard, falls from height. Each situation may be different, but working through the process will help to understand the concept.

Hazard control hierarchy for fall protection in construction

1. Eliminate the hazard
   • Put materials or equipment in place using a crane or forklift to eliminate the need for personnel to be at height.
   • Assemble components on the ground and lift them into place to eliminate working at height.

2. Substitution or isolation
   • Mark off hazardous areas and deny entry.
   • Use elevated work platforms (e.g. aerial lifts or scaffolding) to reduce exposure to falls.
   • Prior to work be sure the area below the worksite is isolated to prevent entry by others who could be exposed to objects falling from above.

3. Engineering controls
   • When feasible use permanent protective systems such as fixed ladders, hole covers, guardrails fencing and edge protection for open landings, stairways and fixed platforms.
   • When permanent protective systems are not feasible use temporary protective barriers, such as scaffolding, safety nets, hole covers and temporary guardrails.
• Use short securing lanyards to prevent a person’s center of gravity from reaching the fall hazard.
• Install static lines and anchor points for fall-arrest systems.

4. Warnings
• Use a person as a edge guard
• Use tape or markings to show safe/unsafe work areas

5. Administrative controls
• Develop a site-specific fall protection plan that includes controlled access zones, evaluation and control of hazard, and a rescue plan.
• Ensure all employees are properly trained
• Use policies for safe and unsafe work practices, and disciplinary actions for non-compliance.
• Conduct audits and seek supervisor involvement in the process.

6. Personal protective equipment
• Use a personal fall-arrest system to reduce the energy in a fall.

It should be noted that the ANSI recommended control hierarchy is a bit different for fall protection, but the concept remains the same — to control hazards in the most effective method possible, not necessarily the cheapest or easiest.

It is important to consider that unsafe conditions account for less than 3 percent of all workplace incidents, with unsafe behaviors accounting for nearly 95 percent of all incidents. Therefore, it is critical to incorporate a process for establishing, monitoring and providing feedback and consequences for safe work behaviors.

Knowing, using and applying these concepts will result in fewer worker injuries, reduced claims and lost time, more effective work methods and higher productivity. In other words, an investment of time and attention during planning will pay big dividends in the long run.

Chris Ross, CSP, CPLP, is president of The Engagement Effect, which offers solutions in organizational results, safety and health, leadership, talent management and culture change. Learn more at www.theengagementeffect.com or e-mail the author at chris@theengagementeffect.com.
Contractors say the state’s recent decision to regulate storm water discharge instead of relying on federal regulators is leading to better projects and a more positive working relationship between regulators and contractors.

“(State regulators) showed up with a spirit of cooperation, they made suggestions for things we could do better and they complimented us when they saw us doing things they had not seen before,” said Sean Fitzpatrick, president of KL Pacific Construction Inc.

KL Pacific worked on a utility upgrade project at Eielson Air Force Base this year.

Fitzpatrick said his and other contractors’ experience with storm water regulators from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, was sometimes adversarial and the federal regulations frequently didn’t fit working conditions in Alaska.

The rules required runoff prevention tools like straw wattles and hay bales be installed through the winter, for example, he said.

“Those types of devices don’t survive the freeze-thaw cycle and it doesn’t make sense (to use them), especially when you can put in something that is more effective,” Fitzpatrick said.

“Now it’s Alaskans monitoring Alaskans,” said Michael Travis, principal and environmental engineer with Travis/Peterson Environmental Consulting.

“They have a better idea of our climate and best management practices,” he said. “All my clients said, universally, this was a breath of fresh air.”

William Ashton, storm water and wetlands section manager for Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, or DEC, said that’s why the Alaska Legislature sought control of storm water.

“They thought Alaska permittees could be more cognizant and helpful, and could tailor the permits to Alaska conditions better than someone in Seattle,” he said.

Under the administration of former Gov. Frank Murkowski, the state began the process of taking over authority for storm water discharge permits from the EPA.

The change has been implemented over the past two years, with each year bringing more state control. This year, the Department of Environmental Conservation added “construction general permits” to its field of review.

“Construction general permits” apply to any project that disturbs more than an acre of land or involves city and some community sewer systems, according to state regulations. Ashton said his department handled about 350 such projects this year, for everything from shopping malls and airports to subdivisions.

Alaska isn’t alone in assuming local regulation; we are the 46th state to seek local control, Ashton said.

The EPA will remain involved in the permitting, although mostly in the background. According to information on the DEC website, the federal agency will continue to comment on permits the DEC develops and review the state’s compliance and enforcement actions.

Ashton said most of the permits his department handled this year were processed electronically. State workers delev-
oped an online permitting process similar to the one used by the EPA, with a seven-day waiting period before construction.

In an effort to keep costs low, Ashton said state employees created the permit software and accompanying “FAQs” or frequently asked questions. To offset costs, the state also collects a $490 permit fee.

As with any new program, a few kinks needed to be worked out. Travis, whose company worked on about 50 projects requiring permits this year, said most of the errors were cured early on.

“In the first three months, ADEC rallied and made the changes,” he said. “Now I think it’s working pretty well.”

Ashton said about 5 percent of the permits are selected for site visits. Inspections can also be prompted by citizen complaints. Those on-site inspections are typically most worrisome to contractors, however, because the inspections frequently resulted in fines or notices of noncompliance.

While fines and noncompliance notices are still possible under state control, contractors said they found state regulators were more focused on the end goal: using the best available tools to protect surrounding habitat.

Pete Kinneen, general manager of Erosion Control of Alaska, said he believes state regulators are striving to improve best management practices and make them better fit on-site conditions.

“What works on one site might not be what is best on another,” Kinneen said.

Fitzpatrick said the cooperative relationship between regulators and contractors may boost compliance in a field where regulations are sometimes resented.

“The industry has come around now and is less resistant to the rules and regulations we have to work with,” he said. “I think people have come to understand that there are benefits … it’s not just a salmon issue or a pollutant issue, it’s a maintenance of topsoil issue; a green effort to maintain viable vegetation.”

Rindi White is a writer who lives in Alaska.
What two things do the Million Dollar, Susitna River and old Tanana River bridges have in common?

The three old spans are located in rural parts of Alaska. And, Mowat Construction Company superintendent Denise Sanborn has been on hand to coordinate and supervise repair projects for all three of the bridges.

“Retrofitting a bridge is very different from building a new one,” said Sanborn, who has worked for Washington state-based Mowat for nearly 20 years. “Mentally, it’s more challenging and diverse. Every job is different and you really have to use your brain to figure out how to attack the task. That’s what I like about retrofits, it doesn’t become repetitive.”

Constructing concrete structures of all types and sizes has been Mowat’s core work product since 1964. The company is equally qualified in the erection of all precast/prestressed concrete members, according to a written statement from Janiece Christian, director of business development for Mowat.

In its Alaska operations Mowat specializes in bridges. With companywide knowledge and resources to deliver cast-in-place concrete structures, massive subterranean structures, retaining walls and unique formed-arch bridge substructures, Mowat works on a wide range of bridge improvements.

By adding cathodic protection, placing bridge deck overlays, making selective structural repairs or removing and replacing decks, Mowat has preserved and restored many bridges. Improvements also include seismic retrofits, upgrades to mechanical systems, bearing replacements and rail replacements to meet design and traffic standards. Many of the company’s projects require temporary shoring or permanent piling as part of the construction process including timber pile, soldier H-pile, sheet pile and pipe pile.

Mowat Construction Co. employees worked through a Cordova winter — with more than 30 feet of snow, 100-mph winds and 20-below-zero temperatures — to rehabilitate the Million Dollar Bridge. The 1964 earthquake shook the now-100-year-old bridge’s northernmost span off its concrete pier.
Structural steel bridges, including steel truss and steel plate girders, are also among the company’s project portfolio.

“With the right people and the right equipment for heavy lift demands, Mowat is comfortable with erecting or launching all types of steel bridge designs,” Christian wrote.

In 2003, Sanborn went to Tok for two months to oversee the $1.5-million repair of the old Tanana River bridge, a through-truss steel structure built in the 1940s at Mile 1303.3 of the Alaska Highway.

In November 2002 a 7.9-magnitude earthquake liquefied the bridge’s foundation enough that it shifted several inches on its bearing plates and one aspect of Mowat’s job was to jack it up and reposition it.

“The bridge was made of 4-by-6s on edge, wood timbers,” Sanborn recalled of the old bridge. “It was pretty cool.”

She returned to Alaska in 2004, to work as superintendent on Mowat’s two-year, $16.9-million repair of Miles Glacier bridge — better known as Million Dollar bridge — which spans the Copper River between Miles Glacier and Childs Glacier and is located nearly 50 miles northeast of Cordova.

The catastrophic Great Earthquake of 1964 had knocked one of the former railroad trestle bridge’s four spans off a pier and into the Copper River below. The bridge rehabilitation, like other similar Mowat projects in Alaska, was done for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

The work involved a variety of difficult tasks including constructing temporary lifting bents; raising the fallen span while supporting the adjacent span; removing and replacing the damaged members in two of the truss spans;
removing the failed pier; constructing foundation piles and a new footing and pier wall; providing seismic enhancements; and replacing the damaged bridge deck and rail.

Workers also had to contend with a Cordova winter — 30 feet of snow, 100-mile-per-hour winds and minus 20 temperatures — six or seven days a week, during 10- to 14-hour shifts. They built a cofferdam island through boulder-filled soil in the middle of the Copper River.

The most significant challenge came in the early spring of the first season when the bridge was almost ready to jack. The consulting structural engineer/designer determined that once lifted, the existing trusses would be vulnerable to excessive wind loading.

A significant quantity of new bracing had to be procured and installed prior to the jacking, which threatened to shut down the project and push construction into a third season.

But the experienced Mowat crew responded with modifications to methods and equipment to accelerate the project and complete it on time.

Then, in 2007, Sanborn again returned to Alaska to oversee the $9.7-million rehabilitation of the Parks Highway’s Susitna River bridge. The project involved retrofitting the bridge: replacing existing rocker bearings with
pot bearings, structural steel modifications, repainting the entire structure, replacing the existing bridge rail and constructing a polyester overlay.

All phases of work for the entire season had to be planned for prior to loading at the docks in Seattle, because moving freight to the job site took approximately three weeks.

And staying on schedule was critical for this and other rural Alaska projects.

But it isn’t just bridges that show off Mowat’s unique concrete work. Urban parks and projects with such demanding aesthetic requirements as sculpted concrete, decorative stairways, granite pavers, waterfalls and water features also keep the company busy. Specialty subcontractors deliver the finishing touches of landscaping, lighting, seating and artistic sculptures for these Mowat projects.

Light rail transit expansion and mass transit station projects are also among the company’s success stories and required structural concrete, site improvements and new building facilities.

Mowat Construction Company’s highly respected and dedicated team has delivered quality projects safely and on time since 1964.

“Membership in the Alaska chapter of Associated General Contractors has provided our team with many of the resources required for our continued success. We have taken advantage of the many forums that AGC sponsors to network with subcontractors, suppliers and professional service organizations,” John Sandstrom, president of Mowat, wrote.

“With our experience, depth of talent and substantial resources focused in the Northwest and Alaska, Mowat has the capabilities to rival larger companies, but the commitment and knowledge of a local contractor in the states where Mowat performs.”

Tracy Kalytiak is a writer who lives near Palmer, Alaska.
WHY JOIN AGC OF ALASKA?

AGC offers pension plan for members only

Do you have a retirement or 401(k) plan for your employees? Are you bidding prevailing wage and public works projects that require a bona fide benefits program? Did you know you can save on Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) and Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) taxes by contributing fringe benefit money into a pension?

Although we presently live in an economy where the average American is simply grateful to have a job, employees know a job that offers them a good benefits package is one of the reasons to stay long-term with a company. Employers know that they should do what they can to retain their productive, dedicated and trained workforce, especially once the economy improves. Companies also know that in order to be competitive in these lean times, any business tax deductions are helpful. Anything that can be done to minimize the payroll tax burden improves a company’s cash flow.

One of the many reasons why associations exist is to offer various group benefits for their members. In our case, the Northwest chapters of AGC have combined efforts to offer a retirement and 401(k) plan exclusively for our members. This is no ordinary off-the-shelf plan; it is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of the construction industry. The Northwest AGC Chapters Retirement and 401(k) Plan may be the solution you need! If you already have another plan in place, consider comparing your current fees and plan flexibility to the Northwest AGC plan. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Open to all AGC member companies from the Oregon, Washington, Inland Northwest Idaho and Alaska chapters, the association plan has nearly 4,000 participants from more than 100 employers, with more than $70 million aggregate plan assets.

Options for employers include 401(k), Davis Bacon (prevailing wage) and profit sharing contributions. Employers have the ability to award various classes of employees with different levels of profit sharing contributions and participants may take advantage of a multi-fund approach that offers a full range of investment options. Employers can create a program for office and salaried employees or project-specific employees with no set-up fees or employer cost outlays. A support team provides individualized plan and fund design and employee education. The professional plan administration offers easy online or telephone access to account information.

Individual participants can pick and choose among 25 participant-directed investment choices, including 10 “target date” funds, and can make changes and control their portfolios as they wish. The investment choices are...
The investment fund expenses vary by mutual fund, ranging from 0.2 percent to 1 percent. Administrative expenses depend on several factors such as the investment choices, the overall employer balance in the program and a set participant fee of $15 per quarter. The total target for administrative expenses is less than 1 percent, and fees are generally deducted from participant accounts so there is no direct employer outlay.

Each AGC chapter in the Northwest region has staff and member seats on the Board of Trustees that oversees the Pension Trust. Trustees meet regularly along with the third-party administrators, Northwest Plan Services, investment advisors at Reliant Consulting and legal counselors Zalutsky, Klarquist & Reinhart to deliver a superior and competitive program to our members and their employees.

This plan is a breeze for your company to participate in! The professional plan support team makes it easy as can be to get started and to maintain. The Form 5500 tax filing is done for you, the trustees take responsibility for the fiduciary duty and oversight of the administration, and your accounting department won’t have to deal with monthly billing of employer and employee fees.

The Northwest AGC Chapters Retirement and 401(k) Plan is a fantastic AGC membership benefit that we encourage you to participate in.

For questions about new enrollments, contribution processing, distributions, website, passwords and employee terminations, please contact:

NORTHWEST PLAN SERVICES INC.
Tim Wulfekuhle
(206) 588-4618
twulfekuhle@nwp401k.com

For questions about investment funds, asset allocation/diversification, employee meetings, use of target date funds and how to use 401(k) features, please contact:

RELIANT CONSULTING
Daniel Clark
(877) 855-8172
danc@reliant1.com
Doing the dirt work
Fairbanks contractor pounds the pavement near and far

H C Contractors President William Hoople was drawn to The Last Frontier in 1974 with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Washington State University in hand. He went on to complete his master’s degree at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and remains a state-registered professional engineer.

Hoople began his career focused on big building design but the higher paying, hands-on work on building sites proved more attractive.

When a former employer asked him to relocate it inspired him to start his own business. “They had asked me to move to Bellevue (Wash.) and I didn’t want to do that,” he said.

Hoople founded H C Contractors, an Associated General Contractors of Alaska member, in 1993. At first, H C specialized in site work as a subcontractor for building contractors and then expanded to include roadwork.

The company takes pride in completing worthwhile projects that improve community safety and have a positive affect on the lives of residents.

One such project is the North Pole overpass completed in 2009. “It was our largest project to date,” said Hoople. “It had a lot of impact on the community of North Pole.”

The approach to the town of North Pole in Interior Alaska used to mean contending with unsuitable roads in traffic from Fairbanks and the Army base at Fort Wainwright. But that was before H C crews coordinated work on city streets, a four-lane highway, a bridge, a sound barrier, drainage...
and even landscaping to complete the complex job creating a new overpass.

Now driving in and out of Santa’s famous hometown has become safer for commuters, quieter for residents and more visually pleasing for visitors.

Although roads make up the largest part of the company’s work, in terms of volume and income, H C still does a large number of jobs in site work as well.

Bud Marshner, senior project manager with Fairbanks North Star Borough, said the borough can rely on H C to submit fair proposals at reasonable prices, and described working with the company as a “no fuss, no muss” experience.

“They say what they’re going to do and then they do it,” Marshner said.

And around Fairbanks that can mean moving a lot of dirt. The area’s silty soil changes shape radically when it freezes which means to build something as seemingly simple as a running track can require excavating 15 feet deep to create a stable bed.

The frigid winter in Interior Alaska creates a lot of road maintenance work for H C during the construction season.

The company’s large projects for the summer of 2010 included $11.5 million in roadwork at the Canadian border and a new $6.5 million weigh station in Tok.

In the summer, job superintendent Garrett Lien sometimes runs several jobs at once using two H C asphalt plants – one in Fairbanks and one mobile facility.

The company’s payroll boasts 150 employees during the peak season and workers normally put in six 10-hour days a week, with double shifts to take advantage of round-the-clock sunlight.

Lately the construction season has continued even after the end of
summer. Speaking in November from a site where an H C crew was installing a 120-inch culvert under 260 feet of highway, Lien said, “It’s been going longer and longer each year, it seems like.”

When the season ends crewmembers disperse to winter jobs like interior carpentry and work on the North Slope oil fields. Hoople thinks his employees’ diverse work experience keeps H C fresh. “They come with some different ideas and improvements we can work with,” he said.

H C Controller Sam Trotzke believes Hoople’s genuine concern for his employees helps draw them back each season. “He’s a good man to work for,” he said. “His door is always open.”

The company president tries to keep work interesting while improving equipment and facilities. “I like to challenge the people every year,” said Hoople.

The variety inherent in big civil projects, like the North Pole overpass, helps Hoople to continue challenging his employees.

“You never come to work and do the same thing,” said Trotzke, who joined the firm in 2007.

“You get experience in all kinds of jobs, everything from moving buildings to building mailboxes,” Lien said.

During the winter the partly office-bound workforce numbers 14 and stays busy working on bids for the next season. And while warmer autumns may extend the construction season in Interior Alaska, the recent national economic chill might be prompting Outside firms to look north for work.

“We’ve noticed a lot of contractors coming up from the Lower 48 and bidding here,” Trotzke said.

But Hoople feels generally confident about the construction climate around Fairbanks, although it has called for some adjustments. H C expanded its focus to encompass all of Interior Alaska and the State of Alaska DOT Northern Region to offset potential decreases in state Department of Transportation and Department of Defense projects near Fairbanks, Eielson Air Force Base and Fort Wainwright.

“There’s more than enough work in the Interior to keep me busy, so I’ve never looked farther,” Hoople said.

He credits The Associated General Contractors of Alaska with helping the state’s construction industry through the current critical time and into the future. He relies on AGC to keep a finger on the pulse of legislation and spending, and to provide members with crucial access and information.

Since 1993 H C has built a reputation for quality work despite the increasing competition and competitive pricing. Hoople said it is the dedication of his employees and their focus on increasing efficiency that helped him grow H C. “We are continually looking to improve our operations,” he said.

“It started out small and it’s grown every year since. We’re a heavy civil road construction contractor. Earthwork and road building is what we do,” said Trotzke.

Drew Herman is a freelance writer and editor in Kodiak, Alaska.
Pacific Alaska Freightways
Celebrating 50 Years

Finding a family business surviving from one generation to the other is a rarity but Pacific Alaska Freightways, formerly Pacific Alaska Forwarders, continues to strive after 50 years.

It all began 1961 when Rex and Dorthy Sears started PAF out of a small warehouse in the SODO district of Seattle. Five years later Joe Smith joined the team to run the company while spearheading new business resulting in expanding the company to full-service trucking/consolidating operation. Eventually Smith took over and consolidated business from Alaska throughout the Lower 48 making PAF one of Alaska’s premier freight haulers and logistics providers.

PAF began to focus on the Last Frontier and go after the plumbing, construction and electrical distributors. The success resulted in opening its first freight terminal on South Holgate Street in Seattle. Smith expanded his team and provided freight services via the Alaska HydroTrain, Alaska Trainship and SeaLand (now Horizon Lines) to Central, Southeast and Kodiak, Alaska.

With Smith taking on more work he began incorporating his sons into the business by having them clean the warehouse and drive the forklift on weekends. As they grew, the boys started to take interest in the business and became part of the PAF team and modernized the way the company does business.

As the business began to grow and freight volume increased, PAF collaborated with Sealand and Tote to move cargo directly into the Port of Anchorage from Tacoma, Wash. By the late 1990s, PAF built a larger Washington facility on East Fife, which now houses its corporate offices. PAF also built new terminals in Anchorage and Fairbanks, while upgrading other terminals and computer systems throughout the state.

“In the transportation business, we just don’t move boxes. We develop solutions and custom-designed programs for clients questioning how to best move their valuable commodities,” Joe Smith said. “PAF has the ability to maintain tight quality controls at every touch point, pickup, line haul and delivery.”

In early 2000, PAF provided a “Midwest Gateway” when it opened a consolidation center in Chicago to more efficiently move freight and reduce handling to Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. Today PAF maintains a network of terminals, hundreds of trucks and containers, an in-house freight management system and full-service truckload brokerage with the finest workforce in the industry.

“The bottom line is that everyone needs to move their freight safe and secure without incident, we have the experience and know-how at PAF. Several of our team members have over 35 years of dedicated service providing our clients with choices to organize and move their products efficiently and cost-effectively,” said PAF CEO Ed Fitzgerald.
AGC Celebrates 2010 Achievements

The Associated General Contractors of Alaska celebrated the many achievements of Alaska’s construction industry with awards for excellence and safety at their annual conference November 3-6, 2010.

A sellout crowd at the annual dinner dance at the Captain Cook Hotel honored members’ achievements in 2010 as the association announced its Associate of the Year, Supplier of the Year, Stan Smith Volunteer of the Year and the Hard Hat Award winners.

The Associate of the Year award went to Fountainhead Development, Inc. of Fairbanks, developers and owners of a number of Fairbanks hotels. The AGC Executive Board selects the winners in this category, choosing an Associate Member who has been active in AGC’s activities throughout the year. Diane Johnson, Fountainhead’s Sales Manager, said “I really enjoy being involved with AGC; the staff and the members are great! The key to getting the most out of your membership is to be involved; I don’t feel like I do that much, but I like to help with the Annual Fairbanks Golf Tournament and other events at the Fairbanks office. I help distribute membership information, directories and membership awards—this gives me a chance to stop by members’ offices giving them their AGC materials and to make sure they know about the services that our hotels can provide.”

AGC awarded Dave Johnson of Anchorage Sand and Gravel as Supplier of the Year. For this award, nominations come from the general and specialty contractor members of AGC, who also vote for the winner.

The Stan Smith Volunteer of the Year award went to Trisha Stockinger with Willis North America. The AGC staff selects
Kiewit/Cornerstone JV takes honors in the “Over $15 million” category for the VA Outpatient Clinic and Regional Offices.

Alcan General Inc. wins in the $5–$15 million category for the Anchorage Museum Expansion, including Planetarium, Imaginarium and Re-roof.

the recipient of this award. Kimberley Gray of AGC said “We can always count on Trisha to help out at events—she’s a great asset on the golf course.”

AGC presented its prestigious Hard Hat Award to Terry Fike, who retired after 14 years as the owner of Alcan General Construction. Fike was “totally surprised” and pleased to receive the award. Fike reflected on his long career in the construction industry. “It’s changed dramatically in the past 40 years,” he said. “Owners are better educated and they understand what they want—they are looking for qualified companies to work with, rather than the lowest bidder.” Partnering is a relatively new term in the construction industry, but as Fike says of Alcan General, “We were ‘partnering’ before it was cool.”

At a luncheon on Thursday, November 4, the Marsh & McClennan Excellence in Safety Awards were presented to five Alaska companies:
- Small contractor, PCI Construction Services, Inc., Anchorage
- Medium contractor, Kiewit Building Group, Anchorage
- Large contractor, Davis Constructors and Engineers Inc., Anchorage. Davis Constructors was also the recipient of this award in 2009.
- Individual, Kirk Foster, American Marine Corp., Anchorage. In 2009, another American Marine employee, Steve Stuart, received this award.

On Friday, November 5, Alaska USA Insurance Brokers sponsored the 2010 Excellence in Construction Awards, with several Alaska companies returning to the winners’ circle after receiving awards in 2009 for “Meeting the Challenge of a Job.”

Kiewit Building Group, Inc.

Above, American Marine Corporation takes the honors in Sustainability for the Ship Creek Dam In-Service Inspection, Repair and Dredging. Right, Hard Hat winner Terry Fike, former owner of Alcan Construction and past AGC president receives the prestigious award from Mike Swalling.
and Cornerstone Construction Company (dba Kiewit/Cornerstone JV) were selected for the award for Buildings Over $15,000,000 award for the Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic and Regional Offices. The 190,000 s.f., two-story project was constructed for the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and houses the VA’s regional offices and the benefits administration in addition to medical, dental, mental health, radiology, laboratory, and pharmaceutical services. Located immediately outside the Elmendorf AFB security gate, major portions of the clinic required tie-ins to the existing third medical group at Elmendorf Air Force Base Hospital’s central plant facilities. The clinic will rely on the existing central plant boilers, medical gas systems and cooling well pump system for utilities. The tie-ins required well-coordinated work with minimum shutdown periods. The $70 Million facility was designed to meet the needs of Alaska’s rising veteran population, which is expected to increase 3 to 5 percent annually over the next decade.

For the Buildings Between $5 million and $15 million category, Alcan General won the award for their work on the Anchorage Museum Expansion Planetarium and Imaginarium and reroof project, which were Phases 2 and 3 of the overall Museum expansion. The nearly $12 million worth of follow-on work showcased Alcan General’s ability to perform high risk work in and over operating

Top, AGC Vice president Tony Johansen engages activity in the Vendor’s Room. Center, Executive Director John MacKinnon and his friend Jake Askren of First National Bank Alaska welcome you to the All About AGC lunch featuring Jake’s award winning chili. Left, Kathleen Castle of CEF talks at the High School Students session.
facilities. The project included substantial demolition and construction of existing spaces into offices, classrooms, and the Imaginarium without disrupting ongoing museum operations or damaging any artifacts and exhibits. The existing roof and cupola were demolished and replaced in winter conditions following the same protocol. The Anchorage Museum project was an outstanding achievement in high-risk construction while protecting and maintaining the operation of an occupied facility.

The winner for Buildings Under $5,000,000 was Roger Hickel Contracting, Inc. (RHC) for Walgreen’s Dimond and Creekside Stores. In early 2008 RHC was invited by a Washington State developer to provide budget numbers for two 15,000 s.f. Walgreens stores to be built simultaneously at Dimond and DeBarr (Creekside). One of the main challenges of the project began with the discrepancies between the “criteria” documents and the initial bid documents provided. There were significant delays in receiving “final” drawings for the projects. With only a month of construction left on the Creekside store, RHC at last received a final set of final redline drawings from Walgreens. The delays in final drawings and last-minute changes resulted in change orders to the owner to modify work that had been done. Several of these scope of work changes resulted in a review by the Municipality and utility companies. Due to the efforts of RHC’s Superintendent and excellent subcontractors, the store was completed safely, within schedule and budget.

Quality Asphalt Paving (QAP) received the Over $3,000,000 Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving award for the Tudor Road and Lake Otis Parkway intersection improvement. The new lane configuration at Tudor Road & Lake Otis Parkway added left-turn lanes northbound, southbound and eastbound. Modifications were made to center raised medians and sidewalks. Intersection islands were constructed and right-turn lanes were added. This required utility relocations, landscaping, lighting, signal modifications,

Top right: Kevin Welker of Kiewit Building Group accepting his safety award. Center, it’s all business with AGC and the Corps of Engineers Alaska District. Right, AGC America President Ted Adland (center) Dave Cruz (left) and Wells Fargo host Andy Riddell welcome AGC members to the President’s reception.
bus stop pullout modifications and pedestrian accommodations.

Petroleum contamination was discovered and excavated as part of the intersection improvements and utility relocations. The DEC-approved corrective action plan outlined measures to mitigate the impacts including the treatment and disposal of groundwater and media contaminants. QAP completed the project three months ahead of schedule with minimal impact on traffic.

Roger Hickel Contracting received the award for the Meeting the Challenge of a Job, Under $3,000,000 Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving category for the Anchorage School District Mears Middle School Site Improvements. The firm also won the 2009 award in this category.

The Mears Middle School project, administered by the Anchorage School District, included mass grading of more than six acres, installation of a new running track, over-excavation of the existing parking lot, more than 205,000 s.f of new paving, electrical upgrades, and construction of new storm drain systems. A major challenge overcome during this project included an exceedingly tight construction window in order to achieve substantial completion prior to school resuming in mid-August. Despite this tight schedule, and the fact that the project scope increased drastically after award due to an owner initiated change in which a running track was added to the project, through post-bid partnering the company

**Top, Barbara Huff Tuckness and Leslie Anders at the Ladies Brunch where they spoke on Women’s Wellness. Center, Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan and AGC president Dave Cruz swap stories from their youth. Left, just “Dancin’ in the Rain” by stalwart AGC singers and dancers.**
was able to complete the project on schedule and within the owners’ budget. Scott Dunlap was the project manager for the Mears job, and he credits Roger Hickel Contracting’s long relationship with the Anchorage School District for this project’s success. “We’ve done a lot of work for ASD, and they trust us,” said Scott. “Their staff has a partnering approach with contractors that’s a win-win for both parties.”

Denali Drilling (DDI) was selected for the Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving with Specialty Contractor as Sub-Contractor award for the Port of Anchorage North Expansion. DDI was awarded a contract to provide construction and geotechnical drilling services for a vibrocompaction project at the Port Of Anchorage. DDI was a subcontractor to West Construction and assisted them by drilling 3200 x 30 inch diameter holes. The work was started in February and completed in May, ahead of schedule, with zero lost man-hours due to accidents and no delays to West Construction due to DDI schedule conflict or equipment breakdown. To keep up with the project’s aggressive schedule, which at times had crews operating three cranes, DDI management team provided additional crews, drilling equipment and operated around the clock when necessary to stay on schedule.

The award for Excellence in Construction Award for a Specialty Contractor: Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmov-
ing with Specialty Contractor as Prime Contractor went to Coldfoot Environmental Services, Inc. for exterior abatement and painting to the Alaska Command Building. This project consisted of 15,000 square feet of asbestos contaminated materials (ACM) and lead based paint abatement on exterior walls and roof and the exterior painting of 45,000 square feet. Coldfoot’s challenges were to safely remove both ACM and lead based paint under negative pressure containments measuring over 300, monitor for possible exposures or releases of ACM and lead to both employees and the environment and complete these tasks while the building was occupied by Command and administrative staff. More than 90% of the work on the project was completed at heights over six feet using scaffolding and aerial lift systems. The client had a critical timeline and in order to meet deadlines, the building was split into phases and upon completion of each phase, areas were cleared for hazardous materials and turned over to the repair and paint crews. This project was completed in less than two months, ahead of schedule and with no work related injuries.

The Specialty Contractor—Vertical Construction with Specialty Contractor as Subcontractor award went to Alaska Trailblazing, Inc. for the Anchorage Museum Expansion. The museum’s new landscape plans which were designed by the ASLA award winning landscape architect, Charles Anderson with local consultation from Elise Huggins at Earthscape Design in Anchorage. The inspiration of the design was to mirror the landscape of an Alaskan birch forest, allowing visitors who come to see the exhibits on display inside the museum the experience of being in a rural Alaskan setting surrounded by its metropolitan beauty. The work transformed a two-acre parcel of grav-
el surrounded by asphalt and concrete to beautiful forested commons with large grassy lawn area, walkways and benches where people can have lunch, chat with friends and enjoy the summer light. Alaska Trailblazing completed the project on time with a condensed schedule due to other conflicts that affected the work. The company completed the project for bid price with no change orders or increased costs to the owner or general contractor, and no lost time incidents or injuries of any sort on 5000 hours of labor.

American Marine Corporation, a company with a long track record of AGC awards, received the Sustainability in Construction award for the Ship Creek Dam in-service inspection, repair and dredging. The project was designed to address environmental concerns, by ensuring that water from the dredging process was diffused into the forest, and no sediment-laden water was discharged into Ship Creek. Part of American Marine Corporation’s (AMC’s) Mission Statement is Excellence in Operations. The company successfully completed this project, despite the challenges and scope and scheduling changes. After compensating for the resulting changes in scope, task assignment, schedule, and budget, the project was still completed well within time and budget allowances; in conformance with all permit and regulatory requirements; and without harm to people or the environment. In addition, the special equipment was designed, mobilized and demobilized in a way that there was zero adverse environmental impact.

Conference photos by Danny Daniels

AGC AWARD WINNERS FOR 2010

**Hard Hat Award**
**AGC’s Top Award**
Terry Fike
AGC President 2005
Former owner of Alcan General Inc.

**Stan Smith Volunteer of the Year**
Trisha Stockinger, Willis, Anchorage

**Associate of the Year**
Fountainhead Development, Inc., Fairbanks

**Supplier of the Year**
Dave Johnson, Anchorage Sand and Gravel

**Marsh and McLennan Excellence in Safety Awards**

**Alaska USA Insurance Brokers Excellence in Construction Awards**

“Meeting the Challenge of a Job”

**Buildings Over $15 Million**
Kiewit Building Group, Inc. and Cornerstone Construction Co. DBA Kiewit/Cornerstone JV for Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic and Regional Offices

**Buildings Between $5 million and $15 Million**
Alcan General, Inc. for Anchorage Museum Expansion, Planetarium, Imaginarium and reroof

**Buildings Under $5 Million**
Roger Hickel Contracting, Inc. for Walgreen’s Dimond and Creekside stores

**Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving Over $3 Million**
QAP for Tudor Road and Lake Otis Parkway intersection improvement

**Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving Under $3 Million**
Roger Hickel Contracting, Inc. for ASD Mears Middle School Site Improvements

**Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving with Specialty Contractor as Sub-Contractor**
Denali Drilling, Inc. for Port of Anchorage North Extension

**Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving with Specialty Contractor as Prime Contractor as Specialty Contractor—Vertical Construction with Specialty Contractor as Sub-Contractor**
Coldfoot Environmental Services, Inc., Exterior abatement and painting of Alaska Command Building

**Sustainability in Construction**
American Marine Corporation for Ship Creek Dam in-service inspection, repair and dredging
AGC’s Successful 2010 Conference

Left, top to bottom: The ExxonMobil table, where they claim this is the best party of the year; even the Scouts like Family Fun Night; AGC Board of Directors meeting; past Hard Hat winners; two old pros in AGC entertainment, Dick Engebretson and Kevin Norton.

Right top to bottom: Barbara Rowland, Sam Parker and Madonna Combs into the swing of things; Brian Horschel during the All About AGC session next to John Mackinnon going tropical; all smiles from Ron Pichler and Hal Ingalls on award from Bob Shake; more Marsh party-goers at the dinner/dance; Margaret Empie and Mandy Beaulieu, AGC staffers, conduct another door prize drawing.

Below: Let the Sun Shine In.
Prepare for legislation’s impact on HR policies

This column provides information about the law to help users competently cope with their legal needs. But legal information is not the same as legal advice – the application of law to an individual’s specific circumstances. Although we go to great lengths to ensure accurate and useful information, we recommend consulting a lawyer for professional assurance and your interpretation of a particular situation.

In previous articles we have discussed changes in legislation affecting employers, as it relates to their human resource function. There are additional changes occurring employers should be aware of. Okay, don’t throw up your hands yet. Understand the changes and make sure your HR policies comply with the new laws. Stephen R. Woods, an attorney with Ogletree Deakins, provided the following information during a seminar I recently attended.

Reasonable Breaks for Nursing Mothers

Breaks are allowed for nursing mothers until their child turns 1 year old. This law affects all employers subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act with limited exception for certain small employers if the requirement would impose “undue hardship.” The employer may not schedule the break time, and the nursing mother may take a reasonable break time each time she needs to do so. Compensation is not required for mothers taking reasonable breaks during work time unless the employee uses paid time off. The employer is required to provide the employee with a place for nursing that is separate from the restroom and private.

HIRE Act

Congress enacted legislation of $17.6 billion to stimulate employment. In order to qualify the employer must hire a currently unemployed worker and the new employee may not replace an existing employee. The employee may not have worked 40 hours for 60 days prior to being hired. The law exempts the employer from paying 6.2 percent payroll tax, and provides the employer with a tax credit up to $1,000 on their 2010 tax return for each new employee. This legislation is intended to create as many as 300,000 jobs.

Health Care Reform

This legislation was signed into law in late-March of 2010, so many employers are already aware of the changes. As with any legislation, the most recent election may change the outcome of what is in place today. These changes alter the current model for employer-sponsored health coverage. It places an obligation on most individuals to obtain coverage for themselves and their dependents beginning in 2014, and places financial responsibility on employers to subsidize employees’ coverage. I predict the outcome will change substantially in the coming months.

Proposed Changes to DOL’s Plan/Prevent/Protect

All employers must prepare, implement and share with employees comprehensive compliance programs for wage and hour; workplace safety; health; affirmative action; and pensions. Under the plan the employer is responsible for identifying and remediating potential violations and other risks to workers and the employee should be able to participate in the creation of the plans. Under prevention the employer must thoroughly implement the plan in a manner that prevents legal violations. Under protect the employer must ensure the plan’s objectives are routinely met.

FMLA Changes

Expand Military Leave Entitlement - The amendments extend the law in two ways: Qualifying exigency leave is now available to eligible family of members of any branch of the military, and the new law eliminates the requirement that the active duty be in support of a contingency operation.

Extend Definition of Son or Daughter - As long as the individual intends to assume the responsibilities of a parent, the individual need not provide both day-to-day care and financial responsibility.

Ensure your company policies reflect these changes. Train your managers and supervisors, communicate the changes to your employees and be sure to use the most current DOL FMLA forms.

Independent Contractor Misclassification

The DOL and IRS are on the hunt for employers who violate either the FLSA or the IRS code. The DOL 2011 budget has $25 million set aside to detect and deter independent contractor misclassification. Due to the size of their budget it would appear no industry or employer, regardless of size is immune. If you are an employer that hires independent contractors, you would be wise to review the IRC 20 Factors test to ensure you are not in violation.

Barbara Stallone, SPHR is a partner in The Human Resource Umbrella LLC, an Anchorage-based human resource consulting company and AGC member. Send questions about this column or suggestions for future columns to Barbara@HRUmbrella.com, or call (907) 727-2111 or (888) 470-0903 Visit the website at www.hrumbrella.com.
The one thing coastal towns in Alaska need to stay afloat is people — and lots of them. Enter in the tourism market that demands state-of-the-art visitor and governmental facilities and you have some new, architecturally unique construction projects that broke ground in 2010 and a project dreamed of for years finally comes to fruition.

Access to Gustavus and finally, Glacier Bay

The first Alaska stimulus project of the Obama administration’s legislation, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act went to the tiny 451-person town of Gustavus, where its state-owned pier and causeway have been in poor condition for some time.

Approximately $7.7 million in economic stimulus funds and previously appropriated National Park Service funds have been used to replace the old pier and causeway with a 1,300-foot, two-lane causeway connected to a 6,000-square-foot dock and a pontoon-supported, tidally operated transfer bridge and ramp provide roll-on and off access for all kinds of vehicles, freight and equipment.

Located about 50 miles west of Juneau and adjacent to the spectacular Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, the town is a much-desired destination. And because of this project, Gustavus is no longer the largest roadless community in Southeast to not have Alaska Marine Highway System ferry service.
Residents now have better access to Juneau, and when the M/V Aurora pulled out of Gustavus Nov. 23, 2010, space was limited due to the high volume of passengers and vehicles aboard the first ferry to serve the community.

A day earlier, Gustavus Councilmember and City Administrator Melanie Lesh said by cell phone, “I’m going to be on it. I’m in Juneau right now shopping. It’s exciting!”

Gustavus is served by the ferry once a month until May 2011 when it sails twice weekly.

The project is shut down for the winter until April, said Bill Kerzie, chief financial officer of Western Marine Construction. “Weather permitting, it will be completed in six weeks,” he said.

So far the project has cost $18.9 million with all the add-ons, Kerzie said.

A welcoming port

Juneau, with its brisk cruise ship business, has also kicked up dirt for two buildings that will serve the 850,000 tourists expected to arrive by sea in 2011— a combined U.S. Customs and Homeland Security facility and City and Borough of Juneau Port office, and a separate visitor center at a total cost of more than $8 million.

“This is a complex project with many difficult tasks requiring a time-sensitive schedule,” said Chris Gilberto, project manager for North Pacific Erectors headquartered in Juneau. “The pile driving for the dock to be built and have it open by April — that’s a short time. There are a lot of little strenuous tasks including all metal panel siding, PVC roofing, exposed wood ceilings and this is only Phase I.”

“We broke ground October 1 (2010) and should be done with the first phase (Port- Customs Building) by May 1, 2011 and then we go away next summer, with the Visitor Center to begin construction Oct. 1, 2011,” said Gary Gillette, City & Borough of Juneau port engineer and project manager.

Gilberto said pilings work started Oct. 29, 2010 with most of the uplands work still to be completed. Work on each phase comes to a halt during the cruise ship season which runs from early May to late September.

To speed the building, “We’re going to start prefabricating walls so we can snap it all together,” Gilberto said. “Laying everything out in advance will save us time.”

Joann Lott, principle architect for the project from the Juneau firm Jensen Yorba Lott Inc., said the buildings’ exteriors will be a combination of metal flat-panels and diamond-shape metal shingles whose color will change with the light, mimicking the luminescence of fish scales.

“It’s going to be a really nice building and they are using some very high-grade materials with exposed glulam beams, cedar trim and metal siding,” Gilberto said. “I really think this is a good project for the community and it’s in a great location.”

Both buildings will sit at the base of the Mount Roberts Tramway with the U.S. Customs building on one side of the tram building and the visitor center on the other streamlining the flow of travelers off the cruise ships, through Customs and into the shopping district.

It’s a well thought-out approach to guiding large numbers of people in a small space. And the construction process is progressing well, according to Gilberto.

“It’s going great so far, we really don’t see any problems,” he said. “We are using some great subcontractors.”

A speedy road project

Juneau’s Mendenhall Glacier attracts thousands of locals and visitors every year, so the road leading to its visitor center must be in tip-top shape.

SECON, a heavy civil contractor company for more than 20 years, completed the $1.1 million Glacier Spur Road pavement rehab project in lickety-split time.

The state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities put the project out to bid in May 2010 and by the end of
summer, it was done.
“Yep, it was a pretty quick couple of weeks work,” said Bryce Kidd, project manager for SECON.
The state-funded project rehabilitated the roadway from Back Loop Road to the visitor center, including cold planning (resurfacing the top 2 inches of asphalt); spot repairs and an overlay; curb and gutter reconstruction; signing; and striping.
“It is complete except for paint,” Kidd said in late October.

Juneau’s first major interchange
As an expert grading, paving, drainage, water and sewer contractor based in Southeast Alaska, SECON also helped to build the first major interchange on the Egan Expressway in Juneau.
The Sunny Point interchange required building four bridges over two underpasses, the installation of two 19-foot diameter multi-plates for Switzer Creek, and various stream diversions and fish pipes for migrating salmon. SECON installed 50,000 square feet of reinforced earth retaining walls and 600,000 tons of embankment. The completed road opened in November 2008 and provides improved access to retailers located between Egan and Glacier highways.

The future is golden
Another thing Southeast Alaska communities need to stay afloat is jobs. And when the Kensington Mine went into production in June 2010, ahead of schedule, it delivered.
The hard rock venture 45 miles north of Juneau is owned by Coeur d’Alene Mines Corp. of Idaho. The mine is expected to have yielded 50,000 ounces of gold in 2010. At mid-November’s price of $1366.09 per ounce, that is equal to more than $68 million. If the precious metal holds onto its historic high prices and if Kensington meets its annual goal of 125,000 ounces for its estimated 12 years of production, that’s a $2 billion lifespan.

The Aurubis Group, Europe’s largest copper producer and the world leader in copper recycling, agreed to use Kensington copper. Additionally, the mine’s gold concentrate is shipped to China National Gold Group Corp., a state-owned corporation of the People’s Republic of China, and Aurubis AG based in Europe, and will be divided equally between the two companies over the course of the project.
Tony Ebersole, Coeur’s director of corporate communications, said approximately 200 people are employed at Kensington in high-paying family wage jobs.
The mine also puts Alaska contractors to work. Alaska Interstate Construction built the mine’s tailings...
treatment facility, said Fred Hargrave, project manager. “Somewhere between 60 and 70 people worked on it,” he said. “And we hired out of our Juneau office.”

Kensington’s electrical and communications systems were installed by Alcan Electrical & Engineering Inc.

“We employed at least a dozen, and there are still some guys down there wiring the Comet Beach Water Treatment plant and generator #6, along with some code upgrades right now,” said Kevin Degler, manager of Alcan’s outside line division.

Gilberto of North Pacific Erectors, figures the company did about $4 million worth of work on Kensington over the last year.

“We’ve done numerous buildings — a 165-bed mancamp, the KDR (kitchen and dining room), two water treatment facilities for mine tailings and waste water,” he said. “It went quick. We went nonstop through last winter, even though snow removal was a challenge.”

The company also did all the work, including shotcreting and installing concrete slab in the underground shop.

For Alaskans and Alaska contractors, the Kensington Mine has proven to be a real mother lode of work.

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Dimitra Lavrakas is a writer who lives in Skagway, Alaska.
In May of 2010, the Anchorage Museum unveiled an eye-catching enigma in downtown after completing an extensive, expansive renovation. At a cost of $106 million, the completed project revealed a reinvented museum now able to host world-class exhibits.

“This is a project that was 10 years in the works,” said Anchorage Museum Public Relations Coordinator Sarah Henning. “We’re proud to say that it’s finally complete.”

The expansion consisted of two main components – the four-story addition and the renovation of the existing galleries (which date back to the 1960s) to incorporate the new Imaginarium. It also involved reorienting the museum’s entrance to face C Street, so the front is more open to the downtown area (the previous Seventh Avenue entrance is now a fire exit).

Cantilevered staircase.
The museum contracted British architect David Chipperfield, an award-winning guru of contemporary design, for the project. “He understood our mission as a museum,” Henning said. Chipperfield’s ideas were unique and modern, which was a key element in the design. For example, said Henning, the building includes no cut tiles – each tile was laid whole.

“If you’ve ever remodeled a bathroom, you know what sort of challenge this is,” Henning said. “It’s the sort of detail your average visitor isn’t going to notice specifically, but it gives an overall impression of a very united building, a building that has a certain design harmony and precision to it.”

Chipperfield gave the new building a distinct edginess by creating a glass-covered exterior that draws light from all corners of the city. “The glass is a key part of the design,” said Henning. “Most museums don’t have a lot of windows, largely because you don’t want to expose fine art to light, which can potentially create damage. These glass panels are fantastic because they are two-layered, with about a foot in between, so we have different shades we can bring down depending on what we’re exhibiting.”

So, for an exhibit of fragile Alaska Native artwork – the glass windows can be completely blacked out. For an exhibit of archival copies or durable sculptures, the shades come up and visitors can enjoy the view.

“We felt the building injected a needed cosmopolitan flair for downtown,” said Henning. An extensive landscaping project complements the renovations to create a soothing “commons” featuring locally harvested birch trees and native Alaska flora. “We wanted to provide a kind of urban respite for those who work and play downtown,” Henning added.

“People ask us why we didn’t just demolish the original museum and start over,” said Henning. “With this addition we wanted people to understand that we’re going somewhere new, we’re looking toward the future and really wanted to contribute to Alaskan architecture.”

“However, we didn’t want to just bury our past,” she added. “We felt it was important to use the building as a symbol that we’re building on what we’ve already accomplished.”
Alcan General Inc. (AGI), a member of The Associated General Contractors of Alaska since 1999, provided the general contracting work for the project. It was a unique job for the company – from the “glass sandwich” exterior to the cantilevered or “floating” staircase. “Careful planning of stair and slab construction, crane size and type, and precise scheduling were some of the elements needed for the stair installation to be successful,” said Alcan General Owner and President Stephen Jelinek. And though the glass exterior was attached in a “somewhat” standard fashion, the coordination of the installation of the integral heating system within the façade was tricky.

Creating a building that has a very detailed design but is meant to look simple was a big task. In general, the concept of lining up all of the surfaces was a challenge, Jelinek said. This included aligning the tile grout to the door jamb, to the joint in the metal wall panels, to the lighting and diffusers in the ceiling, to the corners of columns, to the lines in the façade, to the control joints in the exterior concrete – largely without published dimensions for rough in.

“Parts for the one-of-a-kind form system for the exposed concrete columns had to be meticulously shop constructed and carefully field assembled,” said Jelinek. “Tolerances for all cast in place concrete including slabs were extremely tight. Slab edges and embeds could not vary one-fourth of an inch in 200 feet in order for the proprietary glass façade system to align properly,” Jelinek said.

“Columns up to 24 feet tall had to all be within one-fourth of an inch plumb to assure the ceiling systems would fit properly and align with the adjacent surfaces,” he said.

Still, AGI relished the opportunity. “The chance to work with so many competent professionals from the architect and owners representatives, to the consultants, exhibit contractors, hand-picked subcontractors and very able-and-connected museum staff was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” Jelinek said.

The original museum, built in the 1960s, wasn’t big or secure enough to host large, world-class traveling exhibits. Funding from philanthropist Elmer Rasmuson (51 percent...
of the budget), federal and foundation grants, the state, donors and corporations allowed for the decade-long expansion to take place. When the project ended in May 2010, the original space of 80,000-square-foot had doubled.

“We have the space, we have the security to provide Alaskans with some of the best exhibits in the world,” Henning said. And those exhibits are coming in strong, such as last winter’s “Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination,” the November “Andy Warhol Manufactured” show, and in March, the debut of “Mammoths and Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age.”

With the new, larger exhibits, the incorporation of the Imaginarium, new planetarium and overall spiffy new look, the museum has seen an increase in buzz, attendance and membership as well. “Our membership attendance rate is up over 400 percent from what it was last year,” said Henning.

Specifically, said Joy Atrops-Kimura, Director of Advancement at the museum, “since the museum opened its new wing in May 2009 membership has more than doubled from 2,800 to 5,700 households. We are absolutely thrilled with this growth.”

“What’s wonderful about that,” Henning said, “is that as much as we want to be an attraction to visitors to the state, we really aspire to be a vibrant community center. And to use, the membership numbers and rates are telling us that we are providing reasons for people to keep coming back, and that was our goal.”

Jessica Bowman is a writer who lives in Anchorage, Alaska.

Scholarship testimonials

**Ryan Hammel**

In fall 2010, I will be returning to Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, for my final year of undergraduate classes. I greatly appreciate this generous scholarship from the Associated General Contractors of Alaska. This award helps to make it possible for me to finish my college career. As a civil engineering student, with a focus in structural design, I hope to eventually return to Alaska and enter the construction industry. Thanks again to AGC for helping to make this goal a reality.

**Pete Clements**

The decision to return to college and work toward my goals has been challenging in many ways. With the help of AGC, I was honored to receive a scholarship to help ease the financial burden synonymous with higher education. The Construction Management Program at UAA is providing me with the knowledge and skills for success in the construction industry.

**Jacob Mathiesen**

As far back as I can remember, I’ve enjoyed attending the AGC Family Fun Night and I still find it irresistible to cut the rigid insulation with a plastic saw! I am in my second year in the Construction Management Program at UAA. When I graduate, I will be the third generation of my family involved in construction in Alaska. I look forward to building Alaska along with AGC.

**Lyle Axelarris**

After working as a carpenter for several AGC of Alaska contractors in Fairbanks, I decided to study civil engineering at University of Alaska Fairbanks. Working on a civil engineering degree and raising a family is tough work. But AGC’s assistance has made it easier for me to focus on my studies and receive a 4.0 GPA. I am very excited to continue working in Alaska’s construction industry after I graduate. Thank you, AGC!

The Construction Education Foundation is involved in all levels of construction education in Alaska – from students in secondary schools to older university students, to students looking to change careers or to take short courses to upgrade their skills. The foundation’s goal is to provide the next generation of construction workers in Alaska. To that end, CEF works with the Associated General Contractors of Alaska to offer scholarships to students taking (or will be taking) classes toward a degree that will support the state’s construction industry.

To apply, download the forms at www.alaskacef.org/scholarships.html and return by deadline to the CEF office at 8005 Schoon St., Anchorage, AK 99518. For more information, call (907) 770-1826.
Alaskans can thank the Denali Commission for more than 100 health clinics and $440 million in bulk-fuel storage facilities, power system upgrades, power line interties, and renewable, alternative and affordable energy programs.

They can thank it for new and upgraded roads, boardwalks, schools, airports, bridges, boat harbors and solid waste facilities, and nearly $300 million invested healthcare facilities ranging from primary care clinics and medical labs to senior centers and women’s shelters.

And they can thank the late Sen. Ted Stevens for creating and championing the commission as a way of channeling energy into Alaska infrastructure and development.

Since its inception more than a decade ago, the commission has touched virtually every rural community in Alaska from Southeast to the North Slope, including projects in urban centers and regional hubs. Concrete examples of the

The Denali Commission’s future at stake

BY DAWNELL SMITH

Denali Commission funded Dahl Memorial Clinic in Skagway, Alaska.

Denali Commission funded Gulkana community roads reconstruction.
The commission’s work include the upgrade of interior plumbing for low-income homes in Point Hope, the remodel of an old school into teacher housing in Toksook Bay, the construction of a new bulk fuel facility in Klawock, and the acquisition and construction of therapeutic foster homes in Fairbanks.

Since fiscal year 1999, the commission has provided more than $1 billion to energy, health, transportation, community facility, training, and economic development programs, yet the people who helped craft and manage this Alaska-centered independent federal agency see the real value as the process, not the cash.

“It was never about the money, it was about collaborations,” said Jeff Staser, a former federal co-chair of the commission and one of the staff members in Sen. Stevens’ office who helped write the Congressional act that created it in 1998. “When I worked for Sen. Stevens in 1994, we had a challenge. How do we get people to work on long-term sustainable projects?”

Sen. Stevens wanted decisions made in Alaska and the work done by Alaskans, said Staser. That meant carefully crafting language to establish a federal-state partnership that includes representation from the AFL-CIO, The Associated General Contractors of Alaska, the University of Alaska, the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Alaska Municipal League.

“We wanted everyone to have skin in the game because we wanted to benefit communities,” said Staser.

One of the strengths of the commission centers on its ability to work outside
of other federal agencies while taking advantage of those agency’s expertise, he said.

The commission’s current federal co-chair Joel Neimeyer got involved with the agency in 1999 while employed by the Indian Health Service. Trained as an engineer, he helped build the energy program and later used that experience to extend into health facility projects. The act stipulates that the commission complement, not duplicate other programs, he said, and this limitation requires that the commission bring communities and organizations together to identify solutions.

“The act is amazing,” he said. “To me, the magic happens when we work with other agencies, tribal partners and stakeholders to help rural communities realize their dreams. That’s the magic and real value of what we do.”

**Enduring relationships that meet the challenge**

The commission’s work in Alaska permeates the state through improved facilities, better access to medical care, economic and educational opportunities, and upgrades to transportation and energy systems, but funding has dropped from a high of more than $140
million in 2005 to $61 million in fiscal year 2010. Projections for 2011 indicate a funding decrease to around $45 million, well below 2001 levels.

The loss of Sen. Stevens’ position in the Senate, along with an economic downturn nationally and political emphasis on fiscal restraint means federal funding will decline or hold flat for the foreseeable future. One of the commission’s challenges involves maximizing what it can accomplish with reduced funding.

“We’ve got 10 to 12 years of relationships built up,” said Neimeyer, “and though we can’t invest as much as before, we can still go to partners and funding agencies – maybe several hundred of them – and leverage those relationships to improve rural development.”

He noted that the agency spent $1 million to train weatherization crews to enhance the state’s $300 commitment to reduce heating costs for Alaskans. Understanding the state’s role and participation is integral to the commission’s purpose, and important to inform Congress and other stakeholders for reauthorization and continued funding.

“Self-sufficiency was always the goal,” said Staser. “There’s no entitlement. The only thing you’re entitled to is potential...The intent of Congress was to have Alaska take care of its own damn self.”
Karen Rehfeld, the state co-chair of the commission, said the state “is very much a real partner in this effort. It has put money into these programs, and the commission is a small, but cost effective way to leverage dollars to advance and improve rural infrastructure without costing the feds a lot of money.”

Of nearly 900 Denali Commission projects since 2006, the state has invested in 250 of them through $106 million in direct support, said Rehfeld, also the director of the Office of Management and Budget for the State of Alaska. Other funders, including government entities and nonprofits, have contributed $461 million. The State has also provided project-level management for 412 projects at a value of $136 million.

According to a joint analysis by the Denali Commission and the State of Alaska, the state appropriated $4 for every $1 the commission put into Alaska’s rural communities, since 2006. “The State of Alaska appropriated over $2.4 billion dollars to rural Alaska projects that complemented the Denali Commission’s similar investment of $618 million,” the report states.

The partnership between the commission and the state has made inroads throughout Alaska, said Rehfeld. “The commission was initially focused precisely on bulk fuel storage because of the Coast Guard’s concern over coastal communities,” said Rehfeld. “We started by replacing and upgrading those facilities, and upgrading rural power systems to make them more efficient. Here, you’re really making a difference on the cost of power. All of this we’re doing in partnership with the state, which is making a big investment in renewable and alternative energy.”

Local and regional involvement also means that projects gain local wisdom, advice and labor, said Staser, and that communities included in the planning and decision-making process respond with pride and a sense of ownership. By enabling and nurturing these relationships, and having the expertise in both Alaska and the federal bureaucracy, the commission makes things happen, generates jobs and education opportunities, and expands infrastructure, he added.

Contractors in particular should care about the commission’s work and funding because the commission generates and promotes construction projects and training, Staser continued. “Contractors are extremely competitive,” he said, “but they know the necessity of collaborating to get things done. And that’s what the commission was created to do.”

**Telling its story**

Telling the commission’s story and accomplishments demands more than words. “People from Outside don’t understand the notion of getting on an airplane to do everything,” said Rehfeld. “We have logistical challenges with remote, small communities not linked by the road system. Other states just don’t have the same challenges.”

Neimeyer regularly encounters federal employees who don’t comprehend the cost and logistics of developing and managing programs and services in Alaska. Bringing them up here invariably enlightens them, he said. A few trips to small communities help show the scope of the state’s geography and the isolation of many towns and villages.

Bringing policy makers and members of Congress to Alaska is the best way to argue for continued federal support, but not every member of Congress or policy maker will make the trip. When pushing for reauthorization of the Denali Commission Act of 1998, the agency will need to overview its successes over the past decade, said Rehfeld, and explain how it can continue to make Alaskans safer, healthier and more accessible to the facilities necessary for cultural, economic and educational growth – all while minimizing overhead and maximizing efficiency.

The commission “has had a tremendous impact on the culture, quality of life and sustainability of communities in rural Alaska,” said Rehfeld. “There has been great progress, but the commission has a lot more work to do.”

Indeed, the state has more work to do. Communities have more work to do. And businesses, leaders and Alaskans have more work to do.

What this effort yields, she said, is collaboration that brings “all our communities to a place where they’re sustainable, where there’s economic development, and where there’s opportunity and growth.”

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Dawnell Smith is a writer who lives in Alaska.
AGC is proud to help Home Builders of Alaska with The Shoebox Program. The program delivers holiday cheer to approximately 600 homeless children. Each child gets a backpack filled with such goodies as pajamas, jeans, T-shirts, socks, coats, hats, gloves, fruit, candy and toys.

AGC and staff sponsored 20 kids from across the Anchorage School District for the 2010 holiday. The AGC staff enjoys this project and works together to help as many kids as they can, AGC then matches staff contributions to boost the number of kids supported.
Cordova, a fishing town still recovering from the effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, put shovel to dirt in August of 2010 for the $8,305,653 Phase I of the multi-faceted Cordova Center, a development with a total budget of $21,385,709. “It’s going to be a very nice project, a LEEDS project,” said Gaylin Stiner, project manager for Dokoozian Construction, an Anchorage-based company. “This is Phase I of two phases — Phase I is the structural where the building will be enclosed with windows, doors, concrete roofing and siding. The bid for Phase II comes out in early 2011 for all interior materials and fixtures.”

The Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Standards (LEEDS) program is a green building certification program of the U.S. Green Building Council that encourages adoption of sustainable green building practices to ensure energy conservation and a healthy building environment.

The design has a lighthouse influence, said Paul Voelckers, MRV Architects president and main architect for the center. “It does give the sense of a beacon above the harbor for the fishing fleet which sails back right toward it,” he said. With a 70-foot elevation gain between Main Street and the harbor, the center provides a connection between the two and has a low profile on the main district with just one floor that does not dominate the street, he said. “It is a powerful site, and we used that height and drama,” Voelckers said.

The 34,700 square-foot Cordova Center project includes conference facilities for up to 250 people, a public library, a museum, a theatre, city administrative offices, community meeting rooms, education and project rooms for the Discovery Room Science program.

The community wanted to maintain a sense of local traditions and included specific design features like steel siding similar to the canneries lining the harbor, cedar and copper trim to highlight the structure. The copper detailing refers back to Cordova’s history with the Kennicott Mine and the railroad that ran from the mine right to the dock.

MRV is aiming for a LEED Gold certification for the project.

“We’ll be getting rid of two old buildings that sucked up energy,” said Cathy Sherman, information services director for the City of Cordova.

The 34,700-square-foot structure will have four levels stepped across bedrock that will house a beehive of activity — a public library, city administrative offices, a museum, community meeting rooms, a theater with a stage for performing arts programs, conference facilities for as many as 225 people, community meeting rooms and space for the Discovery Room Science Program sponsored by the U.S.
Forest Service and Prince William Sound Science Center.

It offers something for everyone from locals to visitors passing through for Cordova’s renowned annual events — the Iceworm Festival and the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival.

The complex has been nine years in the making. “Discussion started in 2001, and in 2002 we chose an architectural firm,” said Sherman. “What we did was close in on the architectural team for the conceptual phase because we really didn’t know what we wanted, or what would or wouldn’t work, or what components it would have, or who would be in the building, or even where it would be.”

A very public process began which Sherman said allowed the community to buy into the project. It turned out to be the right approach and with surprising results.

“At one public meeting where we discussed sites, the city proposed five or six different locations,” she said. “Then someone from the community said, ‘Yeah, but how about Main Street and that would solidify the public area downtown connecting the walkway through the business district to the harbor.’ And it has a really good view, so that’s what we went with.”

The center started out simply, she said, but through the public discussion it grew and now has all the components the community wanted and needed.

“Our goal was to make a facility that would be used and be useful.”

Construction is rolling right along and the city is poised to offer residents and visitors a truly unique experience. Moe Zamarron, who took the position of project manager for the city in September, said the earthwork has been completed and it now moves to another stage.

“We’re just now getting out of the ground, putting in fill and beginning to put in the concrete,” Zamarron said. “It’s a very complex project.”

It’s on track, Zamarron said, and Stiner agreed.

“This project is on schedule as of today,” said Stiner. “It is a fantastic project that is going to be something that the people of Cordova and all of Alaska will be proud of.”

Dimitra Lavrakas is a writer who lives in Skagway, Alaska.
Expense and financial structure improvement opportunities

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omewhere overshadowed by the endless news of an economy still working to gain positive traction, and American voters demanding accountability from all levels of government during this past year, many small businesses across the nation will close their 2010 books reporting much better results than anyone anticipated at the beginning of the year.

These gains were not achieved by riding an economic boom or benefitting from windfall programs. Rather 12 and 18 months ago, small business owners took tough steps and endured serious hardships to position their companies to move forward through the economic turmoil.

This is no more apparent than the battering endured within the construction industry, as almost $400 billion in construction spending has disappeared over the past two years.

Evaluations and eliminations were garnished against asset pools, expenditures and the organization’s workforce as company principals moved to reposition their operations for a rapidly tightening market. And with these forceful actions a leaner and more productive company structure evolved better able to meet the challenge of an extended contraction in work availability and the overall choppiness in the economy.

But there is still more work to be done. It appears that the market fears and forces that once pointed toward a deflationary cycle have eased. They are now replaced with indicators pointing toward inflationary pressures triggered by monetary easing and spending programs used to offset the original economic difficulties. If an inflationary up-tick is building, a timely review of your company’s borrowings, balance sheet position and cost controls might offer some opportunities for expense and structure improvement.

Consider the following:

• Take advantage of today’s low interest rate climate and look to convert floating rate debt into fixed rate term debt, especially on loans tied to fixed assets.

• Consolidation of debt may improve your working capital, cash flow and leverage position. These are positive factors for increasing bonding capacity.

• Understand the assets securing your company’s liabilities so the pool of assets tied up corresponds to the debt position.

• Segment these assets (cash, account receivables, inventory, real estate fixed assets, equipment and vehicle fixed assets) to secure similar classes of debt. Use your balance sheet strength to borrow individually against different classes of assets,
If an inflationary up-tick is building, a timely review of your company’s borrowings, balance sheet position and cost controls might offer some opportunities for expense and structure improvement.

allowing your company to optimize its credit availability and financial sources to provide for operating needs.

• Keep close tabs on the material costs that are being built into bids for future work. Cutbacks in production by manufacturers might squeeze supply channels with even small jumps in demand. Combined with a rise in commodity prices and the estimated material expenses could be hit with sharp increases flattening the profit for the job.

• Review the cost of long-term leasing arrangements vs. the benefits of converting to a purchase. Can the cost of usage be reduced or tax savings be gained with ownership that are now being passed through to a lessor depleting the return for use of the item?

• Also look for low utilization fixed assets on your balance sheet that have high carrying costs. If the asset is sold off, would the expense for renting the item on an as-needed basis provide a cost savings? Also, selling the unit could provide a net cash benefit to the balance sheet.

As always consult with your accountant, tax advisor, financial sources or bonding agent to discuss and sound out potential moves. The goal is to save money for your business while enhancing its financial structure and condition. These improvements should position your company to remain competitive in the current work environment and to be ready for a rebound in construction market activity or even future expansion of your operation with the support of your suppliers and financial partners.
AVTEC is the premier post-secondary vocational and technical training centers supported by the State of Alaska. Its mission is to “train a diverse and effective workforce that supports the economic growth and stability of our state.” In keeping with that mission, AVTEC’s administration has embarked on program upgrades to meet the changing face of Alaska’s employment opportunities. To meet the new program and to update older and failing facilities, the organization has developed a systematic plan for upgrading its training facilities.

AVTEC has recently completed two new projects - the AVTEC Maritime Safety Training Center, the AVTEC Connected Education Center and a renovation/addition project - the Culinary Arts Building Expansion. Both of the new projects were delivered via a design/build contracting method through the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The Maritime Safety Training Center is a 5800-square-foot building that includes classrooms, a shop and a fire simulator. The Connected Education Center features classrooms for distance/connected education including a broadcast room and offices. Both new facilities, constructed by Blazy Construction, meet a real need for Alaska training opportunities.

The Culinary Arts Building Expansion was a slightly different project. AVTEC’s Culinary Arts program has grown from training camp cooks during the oil boom to becoming a nationally recognized program certified by the American Culinary Federation. It was at capacity for training programs. In addition, the existing Culinary Arts Building (CAB) was found to be structurally unsound in the early 2000s and other portions of the building could no longer support the program adequately. Therefore, this project included renovation and upgrades to existing facilities as well as construction of an addition to the Culinary Arts Building.

The 12,891-square-foot addition consists of a walk-out basement with faculty offices, a classroom and storage area. The main floor includes a restaurant kitchen, an ala carte kitchen, a training kitchen and a dining room area that can be divided and function as two classrooms. The renova-
Construction work included a new dish room, a conference/banquet room and additional kitchen spaces.

Because the project was completed while students were present, and the project included several phases and construction planning, the ADOT&PF developed it under Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) design and construction contracts. The ADOT&PF hired the construction contractor, Cornerstone General Contractors, at schematic designs to assist the architect, Nvision, and AVTEC in cost estimating, value engineering, scheduling, etc., to ensure the new facility could be completed on time and within the available funding. Challenging issues included a fast-tracked construction schedule and a finite and limited budget. However, working together the design team, AVTEC, Cornerstone and ADOT&PF were able to agree on a guaranteed maximum price. The cooperative work environment was highly efficient, allowing several contract alternates to be exercised during the construction process without increasing the $6.2 million cost.

With the opening of the Culinary Arts Building Expansion as well as the Maritime Safety Training Center, AVTEC is turning its attention to programs in alternative energy as a way to remain in the forefront of training to meet Alaska’s future needs. With the help of ADOT&PF’s project management, current plans are for a new 100-kilowatt wind turbine installed on the Applied Technologies Campus and connected to the existing diesel generator power plant and a new classroom addition to accommodate alternate/renewable energy training (wind, hydro and solar).

Brook Mayfield works for Cornerstone General Contractors Inc. and is a member of the AGC Editorial Board for The Alaska Contractor magazine.
2010 Winners of AGC's Excellence in Construction Awards

AGC members’ projects

2010 Winners of AGC's Excellence in Construction Awards

AGC members’ projects
Sustainability in Construction Award

Contractor: American Marine Corporation - Project: Ship Creek Dam In-Service Inspection, Repair & Dredging

Part of American Marine Corporation’s mission statement is excellence in operations. This core value was realized in the Ship Creek Dam In-Service Inspection, Repair & Dredging Project. This project was successfully completed, despite the challenges and project scope and scheduling changes. After compensating for the resulting changes in scope, task assignment, schedule and budget, the project was still completed well within time and budget allowances; in conformance with all permit and regulatory requirements; and without harm to people or the environment. The Project was designed to address environmental concerns, by ensuring water from the dredging process was diffused into the forest, and no sediment-laden water was discharged into Ship Creek. In addition, the special equipment was designed, mobilized and demobilized in a way that had zero adverse environmental impact.
2010 Winners of AGC’s Excellence in Construction Awards

PHOTO: © Ken Graham PHOTOGRAPHY.COM
Meeting the Challenge of a Job, Over $15,000,000
Vertical Construction

Contractor: Kiewit Building Group and Cornerstone Construction Co.,
DBA Kiewit/Cornerstone JV

Project: VA Outpatient Clinic and Regional Offices

The 190,000-square-foot, two-story VA Outpatient Clinic and Regional Office project was constructed by the joint venture of Kiewit Building Group and Cornerstone Construction for the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA).

The facility houses the VA’s regional offices and the benefits administration in addition to medical, dental, mental health, radiology, laboratory and pharmaceutical services. Located immediately outside the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson security gate, the new building is connected to the 3rd Medical Group Hospital.

The $70 million facility was designed to meet the needs of Alaska’s rising veteran population, which is expected to increase 3 to 5 percent annually over the next decade.
Meeting the Challenge of a Job,
Over $3,000,000 Transportation, Marine, Heavy, Earthmoving

CONTRACTOR: QAP
PROJECT: Tudor Road and Lake Otis Parkway Intersection Improvement

The new lane configuration at Tudor Road and Lake Otis Parkway added left-turn lanes northbound, southbound and eastbound. Modifications were made to center raised medians and sidewalks. Intersection islands were constructed and right-turn lanes were added. This required utility relocations, landscaping, lighting, signal modifications, bus stop pullout modifications and pedestrian accommodations.

Discovered petroleum contamination was excavated as part of the intersection improvements and utility relocations. The DEC-approved corrective action plan outlined measures to mitigate the impacts including the treatment and disposal of groundwater and media contaminants.

QAP completed the project three months ahead of schedule with minimal impact on traffic.
Meeting the Challenges of a Job, Under $5,000,000 Vertical Construction

**Contractor:** Roger Hickel Contracting Inc.
**Project:** Walgreens Dimond and Creekside Stores

In early 2008 RHC was invited by a developer from Washington State to provide budget numbers for two 15,000-square-foot Walgreens stores to be built simultaneously at Dimond and DeBarr (Creekside).

One of the main challenges of the project began with the discrepancies between the "criteria" documents and the initial bid documents provided. There were significant delays in receiving “final” drawings for the projects.

With only a month of construction left on the Creekside store, RHC at last received a final set of final, red-line drawings from Walgreens. The delays in final drawings and last-minute changes resulted in change orders to the owner to modify work that had been done. Several of these scopes of work changes resulted in a review by the Municipality and utility companies.

Due to the efforts of RHC’s superintendent and excellent subcontractors the store was completed safely within schedule and budget.
2010 Excellence in Construction winners


Four winning projects are featured in this issue of the Contractor Magazine and the remaining winners will be featured in the Spring 2011 issue of the magazine.

Do you or your company have professional photos to share on recent AGC member construction projects in Alaska? Send us your TAKING PRIDE photos, along with a brief description of the project and photo credits. Mail all photo submissions or drop them off at:

AGC of Alaska, 8005 Schoon Street, Anchorage, AK 99518-3045
If you prefer e-mail:
Contractor@agcak.org
Win, Win, Win PCL Construction Services

Northwest Construction awarded PCL Construction Services with three Best of 2010 Awards. The annual competition recognizes construction and design excellence in the three-state region that includes Washington, Oregon and Alaska. Projects are scored by an independent jury comprised of design and construction professionals. PCL’s award-winning projects are:

- ANC South Terminal Seismic and Security Retrofit Phase 2 (Anchorage), Renovation/Restoration.
- The Bravern Signature Residences – Towers 3 and 4 (Bellevue), Residential/Hospitality.
- VA Community Living Center at American Lake Medical Center (Tacoma), Health Care (tie).

A total of 20 winning projects were selected for such categories as Best Green Building and Best Transportation Project. Top winners in each category will move on to the national Best of the Best 2010 competition. Those winners will be announced in Engineering News-Record and at www.enr.com.

National Award to the Construction Education Foundation for the Alaska Construction Academies

The Construction Education Foundation, Alaska Construction Academies (AkCA) program has won the Construction Users Roundtable (CURT) Workforce Development Award for the second time. The CURT Workforce Development Awards are designed to provide significant national and international recognition for extraordinary, exemplary and innovative training and education programs, which either encourages individuals to pursue a career in the construction industry and/or enhances an individual’s construction skills.

The award was first presented to CEF in 2008. Kathleen Castle, director of the Alaska Construction Academies, received CEF’s second award at the 2010 CURT National Conference in November.
Holmes Weddle & Barcott opens new offices, extends services

Holmes Weddle & Barcott is pleased to announce new offices in San Diego, Calif. and Portland, Ore. opened Nov. 1, 2010. HWB has long been a leader in the Pacific Northwest representing employers and insurers, maritime and construction interests, banking, workers’ compensation, commercial and personal injury litigation and federal government relations, as well as employment law clients through its Seattle and Anchorage locations. These services now extend throughout the West Coast.

Sterling Stires serves as managing shareholder in the firm’s San Diego office. He has practiced maritime law since his admission to the Bar of California in 1998, and advised the Board of Legal Specialization of the State Bar of California regarding establishment of maritime law as a certified legal specialty in California. He was president of the Propeller Club of the United States, Port of San Diego from 2004 to 2006.

The Portland law firm of Babcock and Haynes joined forces with Holmes Weddle & Barcott to open the Oregon office, managed by Robert Babcock. He has represented West Coast stevedores, shipyards, marine contractors and insurers at all levels of the administrative and judicial processes including the United States Supreme Court. Sandra Haynes served as the employer representative on the Oregon Workers’ Compensation Board from 1993 to 2001, and has represented employers and insurers in Oregon and Washington workers’ compensation proceedings at all levels for nearly 20 years.
The Regal Tikahtnu Stadium 16 built by Davis Constructors & Engineers Inc. features Alaska’s first IMAX theater.

The 72,000-square-foot cinema opened in the summer of 2010 and boasts 16 screens — including IMAX and 3D — with digital projection and surround sound, and stadium seating with rocking recliner seats.

The theater is the largest addition to Tikahtnu Commons, a 95-acre shopping and entertainment center in northeast Anchorage.

The Alaska Contractor Winter 2011

AGC welcomes Mandy Beaulieu.

She joined the staff as the receptionist. Mandy moved to Anchorage from Florida in 2005. Her husband is in the Army and is stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. She graduated from the University of Alaska Anchorage and received her bachelor’s degree in English education in 2005. Mandy enjoys volunteering with the Family Readiness Group for her husband’s unit. She and her husband plan to stay in Alaska and make it their home.

GCI Industrial Telecom Safety

Milestone 1,000,000 Hours

GCI Industrial Telecom, a division of GCI, recently achieved a team goal of 1,000,000 hours since their last lost time accident. They have operations in Prudhoe Bay, Anchorage, Houston, Texas and New Orleans, La. This equates to more than eight years of safe operations in some of the world’s harshest environments.

“Safety is a critical part of our industrial business. This achievement is something we are very proud of as a team. It takes a total team effort to get here, and we’re not done yet! We ask our staff and subcontractors to take the theories of a safe workplace home with them and to share those practices with their families.” said GCI Industrial Telecom Vice President Russ Doig. “It’s a safety mindset that we have created and one that we can be proud of.”

GCI Industrial Telecom employs more than 60 professional telecommunications engineers, project managers and technicians throughout Alaska, Texas and Louisiana to support the communication needs of full life cycle of industrial operations. More information about GCI Industrial Telecommunications is available at www.gci-industrialtelecom.com and (907) 868-0400, toll-free (877) 411-1484.

Denali Drilling’s 40th Anniversary

Denali Drilling Inc., a member of AGC of Alaska since 1976, celebrates 40 years of success. As an Alaska-owned and operated company Denali Drilling offers such diversified drilling services as include geotechnical drilling, mineral exploration, large diameter borings, environmental drilling/sampling, monitor well installation, water well drilling and developing, and piling/tieback installation. For four decades Alaska engineering and construction companies have relied on the experience and expertise of Denali Drilling and its reputation for delivering well-maintained drilling equipment to projects.
AGC Associates Awards Reception – January 26, 2011 - Anchorage
Legislative Fly In – February 8 & 9, 2011 - Juneau
Western Chapters Meeting – Presidents/Vice President – February 15-17, 2011
AGC of America Annual Convention – March 21-25, 2011 - Las Vegas
Spring Board Meeting – April 21 & 22, 2011 – Fairbanks
AGC Spring Sports Train Ride – April 30, 2011 - Anchorage
Golf Tournament – June 17 – Anchorage
Golf Tournament – July 15 – Fairbanks
AGC Annual Convention – November 9-12, 2011 – Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage

Welcome new AGC Members from September 2010 - November 2010

AGC of Alaska Calendar

GENERIC CONTRACTORS

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Wharf, and Bridge Construction

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Heavy Civil Construction in Support of Operations at Red Dog Mine
Recruited by: Trisha Stockinger, Willis

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Building Contractor

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Building Construction, Oil & Gas,
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New AGC Members continues on next page

Daily Journal of Commerce
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Manufacture of Commercial and Residential Modular Structures,
Trusses & Wall Panels

Recruited by: Trisha Stockinger, Willis

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Geotech Engineers, QC Testing & Inspection Work

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Recruited by: Teri Gunter, Senco Alaska Inc.

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