



A Bold New Alaska

BLUEPRINT FOR THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS



INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Dialogue, hosted by the Institute of the North, has a long and successful history providing the state with a venue for creative deliberation. Now in its eighth year, we continue to bring Alaska's business, social and cultural leaders together for inspired conversation. The Alaska Dialogue is a non-partisan platform for change, providing expert updates on issues facing the state as well as an opportunity for groups of five to ten individuals to discuss issues both in a productive and collaborative atmosphere.

This year's Dialogue, *A Bold New Alaska: Blueprint for the Next Fifty Years* engaged participants in a strategic planning process around issues of energy, transportation and resource development. This process was driven in part by a commitment to the concept of the Owner State, loosely defined as ownership of resources and responsibility to communities. At the end of this report you will see the results of a fascinating roundtable discussion on the Owner State.

The Alaska Dialogue engaged in a new process for selecting breakout groups this year. Open Space Technology invites people to take responsibility for what they care about and establishes a marketplace of inquiry where people offer topics of importance to them and are able to reflect and learn from one another to accomplish meaningful work. Open Space offered Dialogue attendees an opportunity to put *their* issues on the agenda. We have collected the small group reports with the hope that they will further add to the conversations taking place across Alaska. Please note that each of these has come from different groups, that writing styles differ and that they were used specifically to develop the group's ideas. The Institute of the North has reformatted them for readability.



GROUP PAPERS



“Healthy, Wealthy and Wise” What if Alaska were on its own?

Preamble

Alaska has benefited from the nation’s highest per capita federal funding for a number of years. This will change in the near future. What is our perspective on funding Alaska’s needs from federal, tribal and state sources? Is Alaska sustainable from a federal standpoint?

There was a general feeling that it was important to avoid the cost-benefit analysis implied in the term “sustainability.” Instead the goal was to look at “healthy communities” to recognize all factors including the cultural identification with specific community locations and the determination of the local people to remain there.

Issue

Future energy and transportation investment depends on financial self-sufficiency of Alaska and our determination to invest in affordable and efficient technologies.

Opportunity

Alaskans have the budget surplus this year to “connect the dots” of State of Alaska money to make energy investments that will result in healthy communities statewide.

Challenge

What if Alaska has only tribal and state funds? Where should Alaska invest the funds it controls?

Needs

Affordable energy must be available to have healthy communities. The financial resources of the State must be mobilized in a receptive legislative and regulatory climate in order to achieve equitable access to affordable energy at prices that remain stable.

Actions

- **2009:** Power cost equalization (PCE) should be expanded by the legislature to assist with more than residential needs. This includes developing a mechanism for helping finance fuel for more than just electricity - like space heat and heating needs not currently covered in the program. PCE should be expanded to more communities and additional structures. Good performance and conservation should be rewarded. There should be an exit plan to move beyond diesel and utilize other energy sources.
- **2012:** Look at amendments to the state constitution to create dedicated funds for investment in communities (energy, transportation, infrastructure and local services, such as fire, police and education). Use funding stream to invest in site-specific alternative energy technologies, including utilization of waste heat. Explore specific projects of a refinery and macro bulk fuel storage facility in western Alaska (Adak?) to make petroleum-based fuels more cost-effective.



“Healthy, Wealthy and Wise” What if Alaska were on its own?

- **2015:** Alaska should have an in-state natural gas pipeline to prioritize Alaska’s internal energy needs. Get methane and propane to Alaskans. Explore gas royalty-in-kind (from TAPS oil pipeline) prior to connecting methane to ultimate markets.
 - o Alaska should own the gasline. (TransCanada can build it.)
 - o Start construction of Alaska segment of the gasline (Prudhoe to either Delta Junction or Valdez).
 - o Incentivize construction of “straddle plants” to process propane at multiple locations along the gasline to provide affordable energy to rural communities.

- **2017:** Consistent with the Owner State concept, establish a (20%?) share of gas royalties to be distributed on a per capita basis as a “community dividend.”
 - o Export LNG to U.S. domestic markets on West Coast and in Hawaii
 - o Process gas liquids in state
 - o As markets mature, move methane/LNG into export markets (Canada and Asia)

Goals and outcomes by 2058

Through a combination of state and private sector investment, the people of Alaska will receive maximum benefit as site-appropriate, alternative and traditional (diesel) energy will allow all communities to have uniform, stable and affordable cost of energy.

The Owner State will be a model for the wise use of our natural gas resource including major distribution of propane to the river and coastal communities of Alaska. Alaska will have a state-of-the-art system of wind, geothermal, micro-, small- and large-scale hydro, solar, coal, and biomass to support the residential and business activities of the Alaska economy.

Alaska has the financial resources. We must mobilize the citizen willpower and resources to establish the course to get affordable energy to be a reality. ■



The Development of a Statewide Energy Distribution System Anchored by Economic Value Hubs

Goals and Outcomes

In 50 years energy poverty will be a thing of the past and each region of the state will enjoy a cost of power consistent with the rest of the United States. Resources in the region will have been developed in a sustainable way supported by the necessary energy distribution grid and infrastructure. Alaska will be a global energy province, exporting products resulting from the abundance of energy sources in the state that will benefit the communities of the region.

Investments in energy distribution infrastructure will be set at a state level, with investments being linked to energy cost savings, the number of energy products available to the region, economic development and job growth and regional priorities.

Policy Statement

It is the state's policy to encourage the development of jobs and economic growth in conjunction with lowering local energy costs. This will be accomplished through the creation of an energy distribution infrastructure organized around economic value hubs. The state will develop an investment plan through an open and transparent process, taking into consideration energy cost savings, new job creation and export opportunities.

Challenges and Opportunities

High energy costs combined with inadequate infrastructure have combined to restrict economic development in the state; the subsequent lack of economic scale keeps energy costs high in Alaska and especially in rural Alaska. Even when low energy costs exist

(Southeast) the lack of infrastructure restricts the full development of the resource.

The development of economic value hubs in conjunction with state-owned energy infrastructure could result in significant lowering of energy costs in all sectors (heat, power, transportation) in combination with new jobs/businesses.

Examples of these combinations include the development of northwest Arctic coal in conjunction with power to Red Dog mine, regional communities and the production of a Fischer-Tropsch fuel for regional use. Long-term development could include the production of urea for export. Bristol Bay gas could be distributed locally through CNG or propane tankers. The resultant gas could then be used for power generation, home heat and a GTL product. Power transmission to Donlin Creek lowering energy costs would result in the development of the mine and creation of jobs. The mine would provide the anchor load for the line; power could be delivered to all communities along that alignment. Integration of the various hydro projects in Southeast would provide for system reliability and cost stabilization and anchoring this distribution grid would be large power exports to Canada.

Infrastructure that would make up an energy distribution system need not be limited to electrical interties but would also include pipelines, roads and ports.

The Development of a Statewide Energy Distribution System Anchored by Economic Value Hubs



Issue

It is proposed that an energy distribution system/grid be developed by the state as a vehicle of economic development, organized around economic value hubs. The creation of a series of key energy distribution grids and infrastructure will result in a more diverse statewide energy portfolio, stabilizing and lowering energy costs at the same time addressing the need for economic development and job growth in the state.

Action

Near term goals will include the identification of the variety and size of energy resources and possible development opportunities to provide a first cut review of energy distribution needs along with the creation of meaningful infrastructure costs.

1. Identification of statewide energy resources including wind, hydro, natural gas, coal, oil, unconventional natural gas (coal bed methane, methane gas hydro), biomass and geothermal
2. Identification of energy products from energy resources such as the use of electricity (electron transformation) for a variety of applications: local use (power, heat), industrial use (smelting), charging of batteries, creation of hydrogen, bulk storage including compressed air and pumped storage, steam, hot water, gas, liquid fuel, and chemicals.
3. Identification by AIDEA and the ARDORS of potential economic value hubs – large projects that might provide an anchor/foundation for economic development
4. Creation of a review and analysis process
5. Creation of evaluation metrics
6. Development of potential infrastructure synergies

Alignment

The development of an energy distribution grid at first look may seem to be the responsibility of either the Alaska Energy Authority or one of the state's energy utilities. A case could be made that the development of such a grid is a tool for economic development. In order to gain the economies of scale to provide lower-cost power, it is necessary that these grids be anchored by some kind of economic development. To develop these grids an appropriate driver must be identified. This will require the alignment and cooperation of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority and the Alaska Regional Development Organizations. ■



Alaska's Gas

The group identified its mission as bringing Alaska's gas to Alaskans as soon as possible in the most economical fashion. They suggest pre-building a 48" gas line from Prudhoe Bay to Delta Junction as well as pre-building a spur line from Delta Junction to Southcentral Alaska.

Policy

- Energy independence for Alaskans
- Connecting Alaskans to Alaska natural gas as soon as possible and in the most economic manner
- Creating sustainability

Goals

- Reduce energy costs
- Create value
- Create jobs
- Create value-added base
- Maximum value to Alaskans (i.e., value > \$\$\$)

Means

State of Alaska to facilitate

- Development of pipeline from North Slope to Delta Junction
- Pre-build spur line
- GTL and NGL Processing Plant
- TransCanada and Producers come to terms

Results

- Gas processing plant at Prudhoe Bay
- Propane off-take at Yukon as well as other off-takes
- Gas to Fairbanks
- Gas to Southcentral Alaska
- Keep options open for value-added and export
 - Propane
 - Butane
 - Ethane
 - LNG

Sustainability of the State

- Lower energy costs
- Certainty of supply
- Jobs and education
- Economic growth and opportunity
- Enhances community viability
- Diversifies economic base
- Increases quality of life
- Increased exploration
- Increased revenue
- Income tax ■



Regional/ local workforce development training centers

Challenges and Opportunities

- Competition for funding between different organizations
- Coordination of all training programs and trainers
- Lack of follow-through with program participants post training
- Lots of Alaskans throughout the state who want meaningful employment and don't have convenient access
- Linking training programs with jobs vs. basic skills training programs

Needs

- Regional opportunities for people to receive appropriate training
- Partnerships/collaboration between existing organizations so that there isn't excessive competition, overlap or gaps

Alignment

- Players: private industry, regional corporations, training centers, state government
- Peripheral issues: development of short-term training regimes to meet immediate needs of industry and society

Goals and Outcomes

- Sustainability of communities and local economies
- Alaskan workforce gains skills that are needed worldwide (State becomes labor exporter rather than being dependent on outside labor)
- The state can retain the next generation

Action

- Finish and expand regional training centers as soon as possible
- Maintaining and expanding TVEP (operating dollars for training programs)
- Accountability: Local boards and state department of labor

Policy Statement

- Encourage the state to put their money where their mouth is!
- The state recognizes the need for more vocational training programs and the need for workforce development, but they don't recognize the regional needs for funding programs in support of their stated goals. ■



Locally Produced Fossil Fuels

Challenges and Opportunities

- There is no question that fossil fuel energy prices are inordinately high as a result of handling and logistical costs associated with delivery of refined oil products to western Alaska
- A refinery located in the vacated Adak naval facility would reduce energy costs significantly

Needs

- Reduce energy costs and ensure the sustainability of our rural communities

Alignment

- The native corporation owning the facility would need the backing of financial institutions and the support of the State of Alaska and U. S. government to build the refinery

Goals and Outcomes

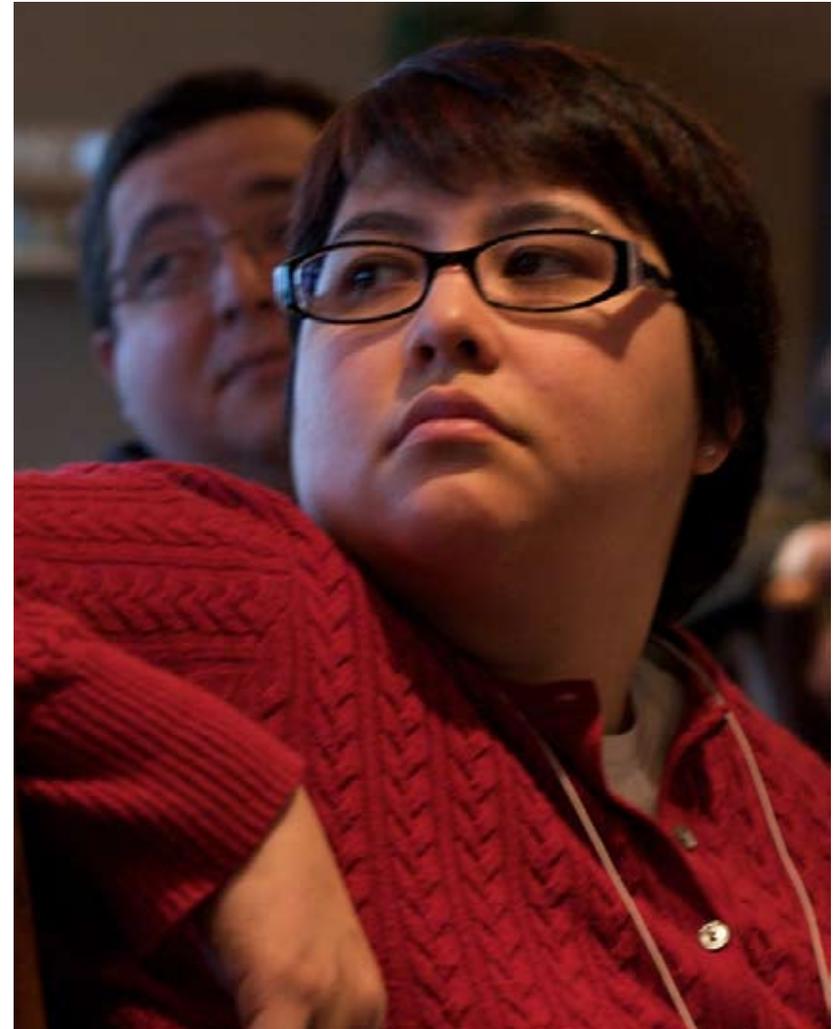
- New markets would be created in the Pacific as well as making refined oil products available in western and northern Alaska

Action

- Accelerated feasibility study
- Get the appropriate parties to agree and start the permitting process

Product- Policy Statement

- State of Alaska should initiate the effort towards building the refinery ■



Alaska's Knowledge

Vision

- Alaska owns its share of the knowledge economy
- Alaska has the means to conduct relevant research, development, investment and education to capitalize on its strengths/opportunities in a global economy
- Knowledge is necessary to meet our global responsibilities
- Competitive position – other states and nations
- Goal: understand Alaska's leading role/niche

Policy Options

- Excellence in research – University Board \$250M
- Excellence in teaching - \$250M / Chairs & Faculty
- Competitive/flexible
- Seed capital/ fund learning from ASTF \$100M

Endowment Fund

- \$2 billion

Invest

- IT broadband infrastructure to allow participation in knowledge society.
- Expand K-12 to "P-14" as state responsibility
- Require 4 years of high school math, expand AP programs
- Use incentives to connect high school kids to post secondary education.
- Whole child – arts, sports, etc...
- Math-science-language teaching, alternate certification
- Monitoring sensor networks

Enlist/partner

- Finance – ownership
- Permanent Fund leverage – early stage capital
- Mentors – private sector, non-profits
- Global partners
- Risk taking

Niches

Jobs for the next generation -

- Location
- Arctic, maritime, Pacific Rim
- Energy – geothermal, thermal, bio
- Climate change
- Environment/wilderness/wildlife
- Tourism
- Defense/security
- Mapping/remote sensing
- Logistics

Others -

- Commons
- Education
- Indigenous studies
- Fish
- Minerals
- Oil and gas
- Space and space physics
- Agriculture and forestry ■



Economic Development - Where are we and where do we want to be?

Economic sustainability and independence are led from local control and decision making. We can develop a sense of ownership when we empower local voices and choices regarding development. The state needs to prioritize inter-agency coordination, cooperation and collaboration in and around the sense of local control. The state's relationship with local communities becomes a well-developed partnership whereby the state provides services not paternal directives.

Vision

- Local control – define what we want and need
- Import substitution – able to produce/develop supply locals needs at local regional level
- Growing an awareness of rural needs as well as urban needs and the symbiotic relationship the two have to one another
- Incorporation of education and workforce development training needs
- Holistic approach to community development tied to economic development

Norms

- Respect for cultural traditions – coordination between diverse priorities
- Statewide view includes local perspective and control
- Develop decision matrix to account for the many variables that exist around cultural, human and natural resources
- Entrepreneurial perspective – performance-based rewards locally defined
- Passion, flexibility and opportunity
- Incorporate infrastructure – foundation for retaining people and communities

Issue

Locally led community and economic development for Alaskans

Background

The state should highlight issues that affect all Alaskans. We must define a process that will bring together common ideas instead of continuing from opposing view points. Examine our definition of economic development and quality of life that includes respect for culture.

Challenges

- Free money has bred an entitlement mentality
- Bridging universal understanding – urban/rural divide
- “How will it benefit me?” decision-making
- Unpredictable resource based economy
- Things good for Alaska may not always be good for Alaskans
- Planning about the people – quality of life not necessarily always money incentives
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- Lack of understanding regarding what economic development and entrepreneurial support services already exist and what support can be garnered from them
- Lack of local control
- Logistics – leakage (goods not available in rural Alaska)
 - o Transportation
 - o Energy infrastructure
 - o Internet connectivity/broadband/lacking telemedicine ability/distance learning
 - o Runways not large enough in some communities to support transport of goods out of the community



Economic Development - Where are we and where do we want to be?

- Communities may not always identify with the place
- Transient population – loss of knowledge with changes in leadership or people

Opportunities

- Expanding opportunities and access for all
- Global position creates increased possibilities
- Creating funds to incentivize community and business development
- Import substitution – creation of business to address local needs
- Assessment of systems to eliminate heavy government systems who don't move the challenges to solutions
- School-based enterprises – K-12 entrepreneurship training (3rd grade target)
- Culturally relevant teaching

Needs

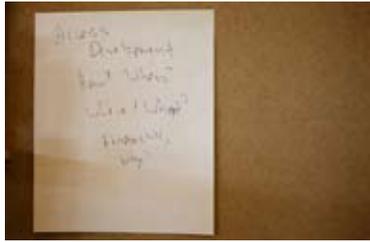
Form an Owner State, “common ground”, local community vision for direction we should and want to be heading as Alaskans. Prioritize accountability of owner state to all stakeholders. Common vision – where we are wanting to head. Statewide economic development planning, including:

- Energy
- Transportation
- Workforce Development
- Business Development
- Resource Development
- Social Impacts

Alignment

- Clear information sharing
- Shift with role of state
- Better coordination between agencies
- Encourage broad citizen participation
- Buy-in from Alaska Native corporations, village corporations and other local level players (schools, University of Alaska, school boards) trade unions, etc.
- Nurture development – generate opportunity or basis for business development
- Media marketing element – sharing of stories – bringing together of ideas and groups





Economic Development - Where are we and where do we want to be?

Goals and Outcomes

- Increase per capita income
- Retain wealth across all communities
- Increase quality of life for all Alaskans – no Alaskan lives in poverty (agreement on poverty definition)
- Alaskans have a choice to live in communities – safe and affordable, not life and death
- Communities have basic needs met – housing, food, social needs addressed (i.e., domestic violence, substance abuse, etc.)
- Balance of power between State of Alaska and sovereign nations

Action

- Develop tools and systems (data collection) to understand Alaska's economy (subsistence/quality of life) – support ability to measure progress
 - o Add an income question to PFD form
 - o Adopt a zero rate income tax
 - o Ability to address basic economic development questions
- Develop methods for marketing our stories to each other
- Bring together entrepreneurs and encourage the sharing of success/failure stories to encourage learning between areas and regions
- Request the governor of Alaska to support the creation and retention of wealth in Alaska

Policy statement

Promote a statewide economic development policy with mechanisms that stimulate sustainable and diversified economies, support local control and result in Alaskans creating and retaining their own wealth. ■



Social License

“Social Licence is the acceptance and belief by society, and specifically our local communities, in the value creation of our activities, such as we are allowed to access and extract mineral resources. ... You don’t get your social licence by going to a government ministry and making an application or simply paying a fee. ... It requires far more than money to truly become part of the communities in which you operate” (Lassonde, 2003).

Initial Discussion

In projects facing the state, region or community, the public has a big role. “Social license” is conveyed by people closest to the project. This is essential in identifying the common good. Communities are forced to make choices and need to be able to operate in an environment of trust to do so. They should be able to say no to projects they don’t believe in. In this, there can’t be a top-down decision-making process. Local input is generally reflective of people committed to sustainable, healthy communities.

Engagement needs to happen at the start – before the formal permit process, raising early awareness. Manipulation of lack of knowledge by special interests is a danger, therefore factual/objective information is necessary. The state should play a role in educating project proponents about social licensing as well as building capacity for making informed decisions. Building capacity also means developing job skills and opportunity for local businesses. However, in order to do this the state must learn more about social licensing, which means they have to listen to the people. There is also the opportunity to learn from private sector projects. It would benefit the private sector to incorporate this concept when considering future plans.

Ultimately social licensing leads to getting more for local people from development projects. The Owner State has many roles and interests in regards to this, including:

- Fiduciary (full value)
- Regulatory
- Development
- Local investment in training and skills
- Proactive planning
- Business skills – resources and assistance

Definition

Social licensing as a key, informal part of every development project, requires:

- Early effort – before formal permitting processes begin
- Raising awareness of the proposed development and the issues related to it
- Sharing knowledge about local concerns and tradition
- Creating a basis of trust

Summary of Opportunities

- Benefit to local people and communities
- Benefit to the business pursuing development projects
- Benefits to Alaska’s economic development

Summary of Challenges

- New process for businesses
- Communities need capacity to take advantage of opportunities – business skills
- Lack of trust

Social License



- Communities are struggling with satisfying basic needs (housing, water, food, energy, transportation) that are more crucial to them than participating in the process
- Different cultural values and norms
- State agencies also need to consider “social license” in their projects

Actions

- Listening by all parties, sharing of stories, taking time to learn from each other
- State, including UA, should invest in building local and individual capacities for civic engagement and project development
- *White Paper: Examine challenges, opportunities, and examples of social licensing in Alaska projects

Outcomes

- Trust – understanding – “bridging capital”
- Progress
- Fulfills constitutional mandate to maximize benefits to all Alaskans ■



Redefine Alaska as an Energy State

Issue

Redefine Alaska as an energy state – both short fixes and long term energy vision

Long Term Energy Vision – In 50 years...

- Alaska is a leader in the development, implementation and export of technology to generate, store and transmit peak excess energy
- Affordable energy throughout the State

Goals and Outcomes / Action

- No wasted energy – excess energy, heat energy is used completely
 - Creating storage capacity
 - Better transmission technologies
- 90% renewable energy for electricity generation and no diesel reliance
 - Net metering
 - Increased funding for research and development
 - Increased funding for implementation
 - State pays for capital projects
 - Individual
- Ground heat source
- Solar
- Micro hydro
 - Utility
- Tidal
- In-stream hydro
- Hydro projects: Chakachamna, Susitna
- Transportation
 - Providing Alaskans with alternative ways to reduce their

costs – bicycle, ride share, public transportation (rail options, bus) – what about rural?

- Reduction in carbon emissions
 - Preference for non-carbon based fuels
- Alaska is using all measures necessary for efficiency and conservation to work towards a goal of a 20% reduction by 2020*
 - Housing efficiency standards – statewide
 - Increased funding from the state to implement
 - Conservation and efficiency education
- Stable and affordable energy for communities across the state

Needs

The danger is that Alaska will not have a stable future unless we have a secure, affordable and stable energy supply. We will not be self-sufficient unless we do this. It is important that we work toward stability for Alaska, sustainable communities, future generations, generational equity, climate change mitigation and global responsibility.

Alignment

Participants

- Minds: We need the minds to get this done. Need to train our own workforce. Educational infrastructure – is there a way to get more kids through school?
- State leadership
- Native corporations
- Legislature
- Utility companies



Redefine Alaska as an Energy State

Peripheral issues

- Power of oil companies – much of the work they're doing on renewables is being done in other states and countries. Want to see some of that happen in Alaska.
- Owner State – we should be developing our own (energy) resources
- Money and politics
- Entrepreneurial spirit needs to take hold.

Product/Policy Statement

Alaska needs to be self-sufficient through renewable energy use. Alaska will become a leader in the development, implementation and export of technology to generate, store and transmit peak excess energy. Through this work we will be able to provide affordable energy throughout the state. ■



Marketing, Outreach and Education

Challenges:

- Political will
- History (studies and what's come before)
- Getting momentum going
- Getting people to care
- Media
- Finding a credible voice
- Cynicism
- Inbound population that doesn't understand the issues facing Alaska
- Permanent Fund being looked to as a safety net
- Getting over the "It's someone else's responsibility"
- Caution over the urban and rural divide

Opportunities:

- History
- Personal access to decision makers
- Many people have been involved in the past
- History – we can learn from our mistakes
- Media
- Low-hanging fruit (momentum is moving)
- Initiative movement
- Permanent Fund

Needs:

- Credible voice/clout
- Personal commitment
- A clear and specific product to sell
- Legislative buy-in and action plan
- Citizen buy-in
- \$\$\$!!!!

- Reasons for individuals and organizations to buy in – benefits vs. product
- Public listening process
- Decision-maker – conflict resolution
- Understanding need for state, NOT federal investment
- Engage new Alaskans
- (Campaign paradigm)

Alignment:

- Citizens
- Voice (individual, organization, champion)
- Legislative
- Program/product visualized and seen
- Leverage points
- Current crisis
- Future collapse
- No federal safety net
- Other examples including Siberia and Norway

Goals and Outcomes:

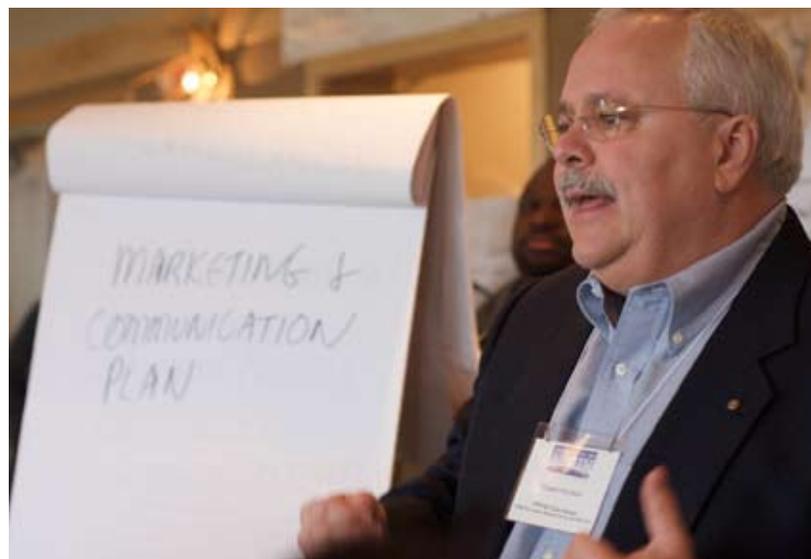
- Societal involvement
- Government proactive interaction with citizens
- Effective process to deal with issues in place
- Shorter term-
- Campaign engages people
- Government/Administration
- Higher voting
- Activists united through communication and leverage
- Citizens seen as an asset, not nuisance
- Vision



Marketing, Outreach and Education

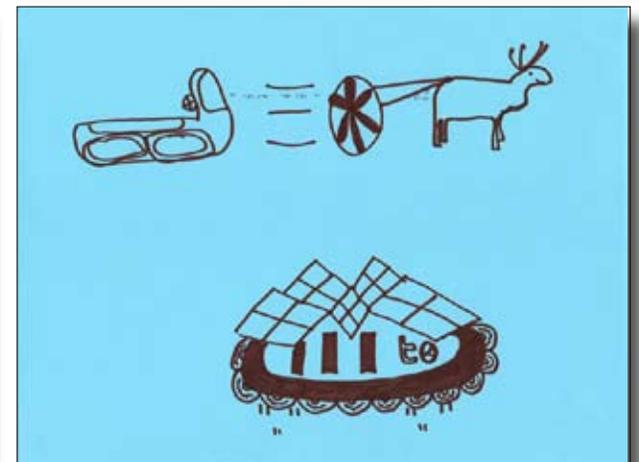
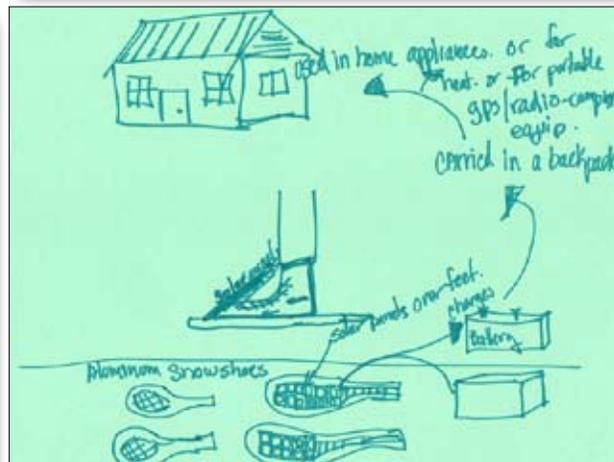
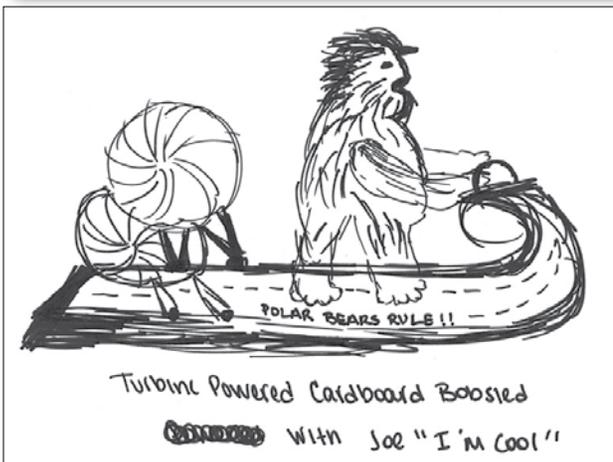
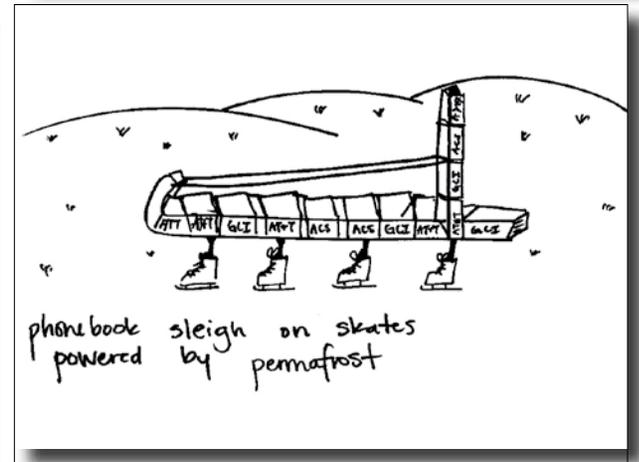
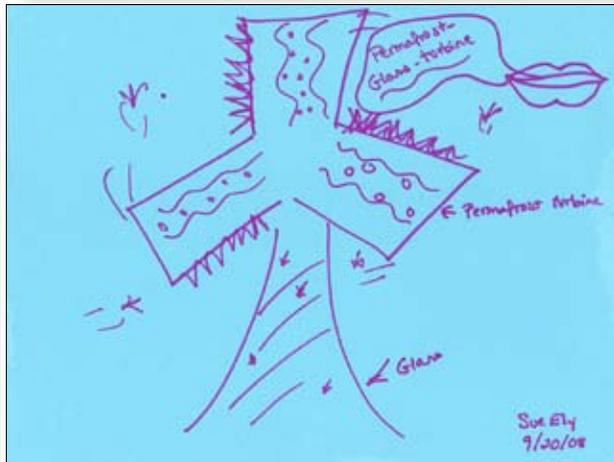
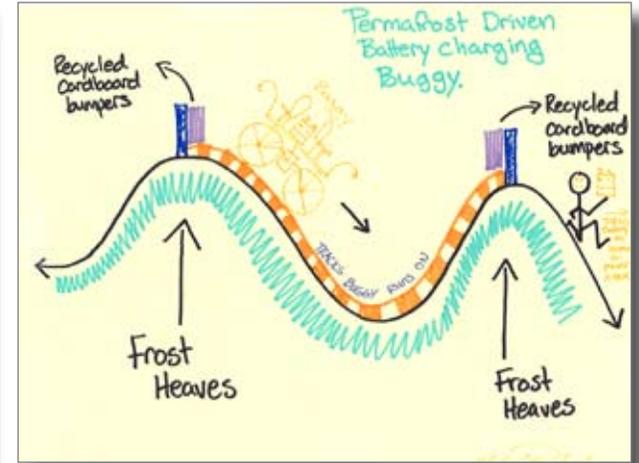
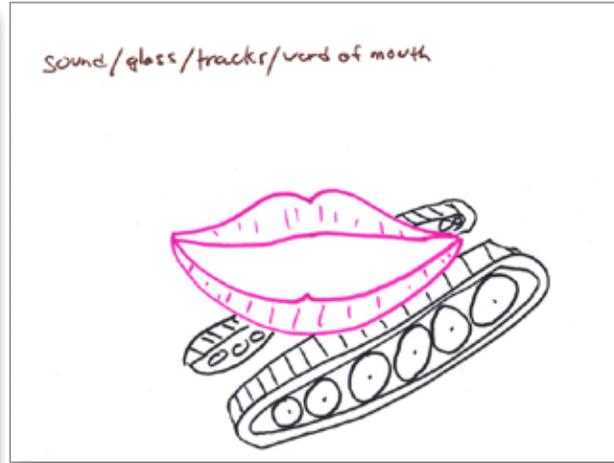
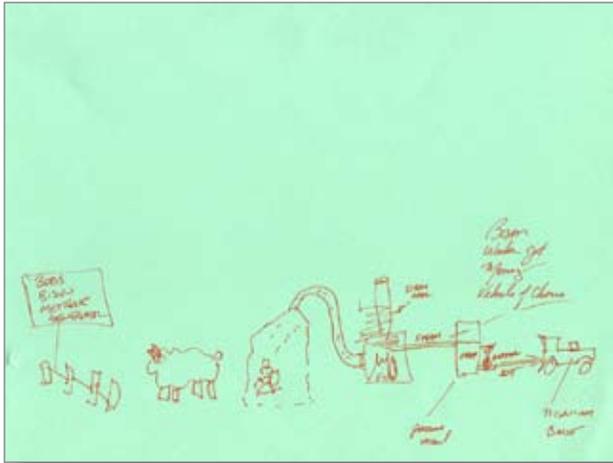
Action

- Who: Talkeetna Dialogue
 - o Driver
 - o Build organization
 - o Involved public
- What: Campaign plan
 - o Powerful idea
 - o Buy-in
 - o Communication plan
- Accountable to whom?
 - o 2008 Dialogue
 - o 2009 Dialogue report
 - o The people of Alaska
 - o Coalition participants
- When: 2009 Dialogue
 - o 2009 legislative session
 - o Whoever our governor is – as soon as possible
 - o \$\$\$\$ Pay ourselves, then and now



Policy Statement

Engage all citizens in Alaska to accomplish mutual goals (and we don't care who gets the credit). ■



THE OWNER STATE AN UPDATE

At the 2008 Fall Alaska Dialogue a round-table discussion was convened to expand and develop the concept of the Owner State. The following is a synopsis of the thoughts generated during this conversation.



The Owner State - an Update

Alaskans are an independent people. It is fortunate that past leaders fought hard for statehood and produced a Constitution reflective of that independence. We are also a wealthy state, with vast publicly held lands containing vast riches. No other state has such a large engine for economic development, combined with capitalist entrepreneurialism and a constitutional democracy. This convergence is unique to Alaska, and Alaskans have a greater ability to define our future than other states and most countries. That definition stands on our will to engage.

With this in mind, the idea of the Owner State is based on people who are willing to take risks. Alaskans have the responsibility to stand up for what they believe in, risking their personal and professional investments to do so.

For most Alaskans, the Owner State is an unrealized effort. Most people understand the fact that we own collectively many of the resources and they see the effect of that in their Permanent Fund dividends. However, not many in Alaska realize their obligation to participate in the issues facing the state and their obligation to one another. The Owner State is more than ownership of resources; it is responsibility to each other and each of our communities.

We need an awakened consciousness in Alaska.

Another critical component of the Owner State is wise and responsible management of our resources. We must work together for the best quality of life for all. Faced with climate change we need to decide what our communities will look like. Faced with population growth or shift we must plan how to best use our resources. Alaskans have an individual and collective responsibility to carry out self-government – we need to take responsibility for ourselves.

Within an Owner State, where does our obligation lie? To what extent are we responsible for, or held accountable to, all communities in the state? Within an Owner State, many would argue that it is our obligation to take responsibility for all communities and individuals. Indeed, our constitution is unique in that it demands that “all persons have corresponding obligations to the people and to the State.”

Are we capable, ready and willing to respond to that obligation? If so, then we must be held accountable for progress, growth and the future. We are also accountable for mistakes, problems and misguided handling of issues facing the state. As rightful owners we must be better stewards. This suggests that, to prove that ownership means something and to be responsible for the outcomes, we must pay for it ourselves. Whether this is through taxes, investment in infrastructure or some kind of community dividend is determined by what we are willing to commit to.

The Owner State - an Update

Ownership does not mean money in the bank. Nor does it mean entitlement. Ownership means creating opportunities so that all communities in the state can participate in proactively negotiating economic development challenges. Alaska has to be self-sufficient. If we are able to take care of our own then we succeed in the vision left to us at statehood.

To expand the playing field, we must address problems of massive scope. We have an obligation to responsible resource development and provision of equal access to basic public infrastructure. In the current landscape of crisis, the Owner State's first duty is to address energy issues. This can be done by becoming truly energy independent, using surplus revenue now to act boldly and construct an energy infrastructure for the entire state. We must address issues of large scale resource development projects, a comprehensive energy plan, transportation corridors between communities and educational goals for a knowledge-based citizenry.

For those who have read through the final report for the 2008 Fall Alaska Dialogue it is easy to see that no matter how diverse a group of Alaskans come together, without claiming equal representation from all parts of the state, we arrive at common themes. We can argue about how to get there but we generally agree on where "there" is. The Dialogue is not a single event. This conversation will continue to develop, inside and outside the group of attendees we had this September 2008. It is a conversation that Alaskans must continue having, redefining who we are and where we're going.

What is your "Owner State"? We encourage you to share your vision with us or respond to the thoughts articulated in this document by contacting Nils Andreassen at the Institute of the North, akdialogue@institutenorth.org.



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