

# Alaska Committee

## Summary Action Plan and Recommendations

### For the City & Borough of Juneau Assembly

Revised January 15, 2008

#### Introduction

In 1995 the Alaska Committee was officially incorporated as a non-profit corporation charged with enhancing Juneau as Alaska's capital city. Working closely with the Juneau Assembly and in concert with other groups around the state, the Alaska Committee has successfully initiated numerous projects that have enhanced access to the capital, improved communications and generated a more positive image of Juneau as Alaska's capital city. From initiating Gavel-to-Gavel public television coverage of the Alaska State Legislature, to working in concert with Alaska Airlines to initiate constituent airfare discounts and RNP/GPS navigation systems, to infrastructure improvements, and to supporting enhanced road and ferry access, City and Borough Assembly and Alaska Committee efforts have made a positive difference in efforts to make Juneau a better capital city.

Indeed, Juneau's motto has become and should remain "Serving Alaska as Alaska's Capital City."

The purpose of this Action Plan is to make sure Juneau remains focused on making improvements wherever possible and that concerns of constituents statewide are addressed in a methodical manner.

In order to accomplish that task going forward, the Alaska Committee recommends these critical steps be implemented. The Alaska Committee – because of its extensive experience – can best assist in its role by providing background research, coordination, and advocacy for the issues identified below.

#### Findings

The Alaska Committee believes the information provided by professional research firms and garnered as part of the Alaska Committee's work in the past, contains a number of significant findings. We offer these findings as a basis for formulating our action plan:

- **Capital-move sentiment will always exist.** At various times in the past, approximately one voter in four, according to Alaska Committee polling data, would have signed a petition to put the capital move back on the ballot. Historically, to get on the ballot in Alaska, an initiative required enough signatures equaling at least 10 percent of the total number who voted in the most recent general election. More recently, an amendment now requires that a certain portion of those signatures must come from a diverse distribution across a number of Alaska election districts – a change that makes any possible initiative more representative and democratic.
- **The cost of a move has always been one of the major deterrents to approving a capital move in the past.** Under current law (popularly called the FRANK Initiative), any attempt to relocate the Capital or the Legislature requires a vote of the people to approve all bondable costs. This law was renewed overwhelmingly in 2002 by a margin of over 2 to 1.
- **An increasing number of people know very little about the capital-move issue and the efforts made by our community to improve Juneau as a Capital City. The burden of educating the voting public remains with us.** Voters newly arrived in the state, for example, may not understand the cost or the economic consequences of a move. Nor do some understand that a Legislative move is a "de-facto" capital move.
- **People who have visited Juneau are more likely to appreciate capital improvements and understand that moving the capital will not result in "better" government.** The data has been consistent on that point for years. If we can encourage Alaskans to come to Juneau, they will serve as our ambassadors to Alaskan voters back home.

- **Alaskans throughout the state are supportive of Juneau's efforts to improve access and communications.** Gavel-to-Gavel, Constituent Airfare, telecommunications, and Internet access make a difference in people's attitudes.
- **Access to Juneau remains of significant concern throughout the state.**

### **Issues to Address**

#### **Enhanced Access:**

- Road access
- Enhanced ferry access
- Maintenance of airport runway length
- Improved electronic access

#### **Enhanced Capital infrastructure:**

Development of Juneau's infrastructure to support Legislators and other visitors;

- Airport improvements
  - Terminal enhancements
  - Improved parking for arriving and departing passengers
- Improvements to the Capitol facilities;
  - Expanded and updated Legislative Hall/Capitol Building
  - Improve/expand existing support buildings
- Capital enhancements
  - Downtown parking improvements
  - Enhanced visitor related amenities
  - Enhanced maintenance and clean-up efforts of city buildings and downtown area

#### **Improved public relations and communications**

- Support for on-going promotional marketing to enhance and educate the public about Juneau;
- Continued support of and promotion of Gavel-to-Gavel;
- Continued support of and promotion of discounted constituent transportation;

#### **Enhanced, coordinated and consistent grassroots efforts**

- Participation and presentations to statewide political, industry and trade associations;
- Invitations to political, trade and industry officials to come to Juneau;
- Enhanced activities in support of Legislators and staff
- Participation in Legislative functions and fly-ins
- Coordination of efforts between Alaska Committee, CBJ Assembly, and legislative delegation

## **Recommended Action Steps**

In order to adequately address the issues outlined above, the Alaska Committee proposes the following actions:

### **Enhanced Access: with the assistance and support of Alaska Committee**

- CBJ Assembly actively oppose any FAA proposal to shorten airport runways
- CBJ continues to support GPS enhancements and constituent access programs
- CBJ Assembly and our legislative delegation take an active role in requesting, monitoring and supporting the Department of Transportation's Lynn Canal road access option
- CBJ Assembly and our legislative delegation continue to support ferry access and enhancements
- CBJ Assembly and our legislative delegation advocate for increased use of electronic access by state agencies and the legislature to include possible interactive use of Internet; i.e. Web Meetings, video conferencing, etc.

### **Improved public relations and communications**

- Staffing
  - Staff the Alaska Committee on a part-time basis
- Revamp organization/structure
  - Enhance promotion of Juneau as Alaska's capital as a destination and to promote in-state education of access initiatives
  - Coordinate quarterly Alaska resident voter education initiative aimed at new Alaska residents - Direct Mail
  - Alaska Committee contracts through Juneau Chamber or similar organization to provide administrative support
  - Revamp and continually update Alaska Committee website and other related websites as needed to provide a resource for residents, constituents and visitors

### **Capitol enhancements**

- CBJ Assembly and our legislative delegation support Capitol improvements/additional facilities and meet with Administration to request support
- CBJ Assembly and our legislative delegation take an active role in improving and enhancing existing state government facilities through CBJ/State partnerships and advocacy

**Enhanced Capital infrastructure:**

- Airport enhancements: eg. covered walkways and taxi/bus waiting areas
- Improved transportation to and from Airport and Ferry terminal
- Improved parking downtown and visitor related amenities

**Coordinated and grassroots efforts**

- CBJ Assembly and legislative delegation take a more active role in providing outreach to communities in Southeast and north
- Enhanced support for Legislative fly-ins from outlying communities and more participation in legislative functions
- Design, implement, schedule “road show” presentation about Juneau
- Monitor citizen initiative process for possible reform and improvements
- Initiate and schedule periodic meeting with CBJ Assembly, legislative delegation, and Alaska Committee to discuss status and goals

While some actions steps above can be approved and implemented more quickly, further discussion about roles and responsibilities may be required to implement others. Some actions will require continuing financial commitment by the CBJ Assembly and the Community of Juneau.

The Alaska Committee believes that our role as a Capital City is a privilege and an honor – not a right. We must maintain awareness of concerns Alaskans across the State have regarding access to their Legislature and their government and continue to inform, educate, reach out and improve if we want to remain the best Capital City we can be.