



## Pipeline Training Puts Workers in the Field

Skill. Teamwork. Safety. All are paramount to building a pipeline across the Alaska's arctic. That's why realistic, hands-on training is so important. Thanks to a two week intensive pipeline training academy, workers now have what it takes to go work on pipeline projects around the state.

Ninety-seven apprentices and beginning pipeline workers graduated from the training event held in Fairbanks in October. The training program is unlike any other in the country. Unions, industry, and government partner together to give participants an opportunity to work collaboratively on all aspects of pipeline construction. Along with the skills they gained in their respective trades, trainees practiced all phases of pipeline construction as a combined workforce.

Alaska Works Partnership helped coordinate the effort. Alaska's four pipeline unions – Operating Engineers Local 302, Laborers Local 942 and 341, Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 375, and Teamsters Local 959 – along with local contractors hosted this fifth annual Alaska Joint Pipeline training.



Rural students came from villages as far away as Kiana, Napakiak, Ambler and Dillingham.

“This is a great way for people to see how all the different crafts work together and how each trade supports the others,” said Betty Jo Dibble, apprentice coordinator for the Operating Engineers/Employers Training Trust.

Participants were recruited from across the state. Rural students came from villages as far away as Kiana, Napakiak, Ambler and Dillingham. Nearly 20 percent of the participants were Alaska Native and 20 percent were female. More than 60 percent were between the ages of 18-29.

One participant, Claudia Durringer, said the training offered a glimpse into the dynamic teamwork required to build a pipeline. Durringer is new to the trades, and after the pipeline training

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*Claudia Duringer attended the Fairbanks pipeline training in October.*

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*-- Randy Cheap, AWP Field Representative*



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in October she applied and was accepted into an apprenticeship in plumbing and pipefitting.

While some graduates like Duringer entered apprenticeships, others went directly to work this winter on Alaska's North Slope. Some of the work included building a new pipeline for Pioneer Natural Resources Ooguruk Project and replacing 17 miles of Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

As part of the training, students constructed a 2,000 foot, 12-inch diameter pipeline. Participants fabricated support members, hauled pipe, installed road crossings and operated heavy equipment such as side booms, cranes, excavators, and the hydraulic drills used in pipeline work. The training focused on crew development, safe work practices, quality

craftsmanship, and environmental awareness.

The training was funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Additional funding came from \$1.6 million appropriated by the Alaska Legislature as well as significant in-kind contributions from labor and industry.

"One of the most satisfying aspects to this training is bringing in people from rural Alaska and launching their careers in the construction trades," said Randy Cheap, Field Representative for Alaska Works Partnership. "This pipeline training helps build an Alaskan work force that is trained and prepared to fill gas and oil jobs now."



Mike Andrews, Director  
Alaska Works Partnership

## Shop Talk

Governor Sarah Palin ran for office under the banner of new energy for Alaska. She is now being well received by the people as a Governor who is accessible, capable, and serious about taking Alaska in a new direction.

Alaska's Legislature is now in session. The new mood in Juneau is in sharp contrast to last year's session. Today, lawmakers are reaching across the aisle to focus on ethics reform, balance the budget, develop Alaska's workforce, and advance a gas pipeline project.

Governor Palin and Legislators are very interested in workforce and economic development, particularly aimed at moving young Alaskans into good paying jobs and careers. They want to improve our vocational and technical education programs, graduate more students, and develop our future workforce.

I expect new policies and investment by government across Alaska to make those improvements. Governor Palin wants a greater

emphasis on tapping the talent of rural Alaska to provide jobs and hope.

Alaska Works Partnership works daily connecting residents to jobs in construction through a variety of programs fashioned uniquely for Alaska's construction industry. Our role in helping pipeline trades apprenticeship programs, employers and rural Alaskans get training in Fairbanks is only one example.

Today we are training adults evenings and Saturdays at the Anchorage Construction Academy, instructing home builders in Western Alaska, and training workers from villages for sewer and water projects. Our outreach programs are helping rural residents, women and Veterans become trade apprentices. We are busy planning our many construction academies for youth held in late spring.

I look forward to working with Governor Palin, her administration, and our Legislature to advance an agenda that builds a strong statewide economy through a skilled workforce in every region of Alaska. Working together for jobs, we can offer a new generation of workers a bright future in a prosperous state.

### *Employer Profile: Norcon Inc., General Contractor*

Industry provides critical support to the annual pipeline training event in Fairbanks. One of the employers is Norcon Inc., an Alaska-owned and based company with years of experience across the state.

The company was chartered in 1974 to provide mechanical and electrical construction services to oil and gas producers on the Alaska North Slope. Since that time, it has become a full-service industrial construction company providing a comprehensive range of project development, management and construction services to customers in oil and gas, utilities, military, and the public sector.

A long-term player in the development of Prudhoe Bay, Norcon has performed hundreds of capital development and major maintenance projects on the North Slope.

Norcon works with the Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council under the North Slope Contractors Association Labor Agreement. The company and the unions provide a labor force to enhance and promote continued and sustained oil production and steady jobs for many Alaskans.

"Pipeline training has been win/win for everyone -- the oil companies, Norcon, and contractors because of the skilled workforce that's being developed," said Ken Jacobi, Project Manager for the North Slope. "A lot of people who go through that training come to work for us."

He added that one of Norcon's most significant contributions to the pipeline training over the years has been to provide jobs on a year-round basis.

[www.norcon.com](http://www.norcon.com)

## Governor appoints AWP Board Member as Labor Commissioner

Alaska Works Partnership board member, Click Bishop, was recently appointed by Governor Palin to serve as Labor Commissioner. A life-long Alaskan from Fairbanks, Bishop is committed to building a world-class workforce and increase self-sufficiency through employment, training, and support services.

“Click brings over 20 years of leadership to his new position,” Governor Palin said. “He will help connect Alaskans to jobs, develop workplace skills, and assist the

unemployed. I am thrilled he has accepted the position.”

Bishop was previously the Administrator for the Alaska Operating Engineers/Employers Training Trust.

“I am humbled and excited at the same time, about having the opportunity to lead the Department of Labor in training the current and next generation of Alaskans for the workforce demands that are facing our state,” said Bishop. “I share the Governor’s vision of building Alaska’s workforce.”



*Click Bishop*



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