



MEDIA RELEASE

Jobs are Alaska's Future



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Greg O'Claray, Commissioner

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Alaskans Graduate From Unique Pipeliner Training Program

(Juneau) – Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development representatives joined with other state and federal officials, labor leaders and leaders of the state's petroleum industry in congratulating nearly 100 Alaskans graduating from the Fifth Annual Alaska Pipeline Joint Crafts Training Program.

Ninety-seven apprentices and beginning pipeline workers were trained to prepare them to go to work this winter on Alaska's North Slope. Building a new pipeline for Pioneer Natural Resource's Ooguruk Project and replacing 17 miles of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline are two projects requiring trained workers.

"This program is a continuation and expansion of Governor Frank Murkowski's ongoing efforts to recruit and train Alaskans for high-paying jobs and careers in the oil and gas industry," said Commissioner Greg O'Claray. "We're committed to getting Alaskans ready for the jobs that are ready for them."

The intensive two-week training academy, the only one of its kind in the country, focused on crew development, safe work practices, quality craftsmanship and environmental awareness – all skills necessary in laying pipe efficiently in the Arctic. The Academy is also unique in that it is inventing and pioneering new technologies and techniques specifically designed to address Alaska's arctic conditions.

The graduates are from throughout the state, with rural participants coming from such remote villages as Kiana, Napakiak, Ambler and Dillingham. Nearly 20 percent of the participants were Alaska Native and 20 percent were female. More than 60 percent of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 29.

Director of Labor & Workforce Development's Division of Business Partnerships Corine Geldhof was joined at the graduation reception by Jim Sampson, head of the Alaska AFL-CIO; Alaska House Speaker John Harris; State Representative John Coghill; State Representative David Guttenburg; Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Jim Whitaker;

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as well as industry representatives Ken Donagkowski of ConocoPhillips; Carlos Rivera, Steve Walker and Per Wangstrom of BP; Warren Christian of Doyon Industries; and Tony Joansen of Great Northwest. Labor representatives attending included Jim Laiti with the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 375; Tim Sharp with Laborers Local 942; Charlie Jurgens and Click Bishop with Operating Engineers Local 302; and Rick Boyles with Teamsters Local 959. Alaska Works Partnership was represented by Director Mike Andrews and Randy Cheap.

The training was funded in part by a Pipeline Training Earmark grant of \$496,000 from the Department of Labor & Workforce Development's Division of Business Partnerships. Additional funding was received through a \$1.6 million appropriation by the 2005 Alaska Legislature for the FY06 budget, as well as more than \$200,000 in-kind contributions from labor and industry.

“This Pipeline Academy represents union’s commitment to build an Alaskan work force that is trained and prepared to fill the jobs available today and in the future in the gas and oil industry,” said Randy Cheap, Field Representative for AlaskaWorks Partnership.

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