

2020 Speaker Bios

Mayor's Welcome

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor
Municipality of Anchorage

Mayor Ethan Berkowitz has lived in Anchorage since 1990. He and his wife, Dr. Mara Kimmel have two children, Ziva and Noah. Mayor Berkowitz earned an undergraduate degree studying Government and Economics at Harvard University, where he graduated with honors. He received a Master's degree from the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University, and a law degree from Hastings College of the Law. After moving to Alaska, he worked as an assistant district attorney before serving for ten years in the Alaska State Legislature, eight as Minority Leader. As a state legislator he supported fiscal responsibility and a more comprehensive and sustainable energy policy. In the private sector, Mayor Berkowitz worked on technology and energy projects, including deployment of fiber optic cables in Alaska and across the Arctic, and a major geothermal project in Northwest Alaska. Email: mayor@muni.org



Critical Coastal Connections: Intrastate Marine Transportation in Southwest Alaska

Gary Hennigh, City Administrator
City of King Cove

Gary has been the City Administrator for King Cove for the last 30 years. He has the Alaska record for the longest serving city administrator in the same community. Prior to this position, Gary was the Community Development Director for the cities of Valdez and Dillingham. He is a 40+ year resident of Alaska. He has an undergraduate degree in geography and a master's degree in regional planning from Penn State University. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the AML/Joint Insurance Association and the Alaska Power Association. He is also a past president of the Alaska Municipal Managers Association. Gary enjoys fishing, river-running, cross-country skiing, and simply loves the great Alaskan outdoors! Email: ghennigh@kingcoveak.org



Mary Siroky, Deputy Commissioner
Alaska Department of Transportation

Mary Siroky is the Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). She has over 30 years of state experience working for DOT&PF and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Mary retired from DOT&PF in May 2016 as the Administrative Services Director for DOT&PF having previously served as an Admin Director for DEC and legislative liaison for both DOT&PF and DEC. She put her retirement on hold to come back to DOT&PF as Deputy Commissioner. Mary plans to return to her garden and quilting later this spring. Email: mary.siroky@alaska.gov



Shawn Richardson, Alaska Operations Manager
Samson Tug & Barge

Shawn Richardson is a life long Alaskan residing in Ketchikan Alaska since 1959. He began his Towing and Service transportation career in 1977 for Boyer Towing working on various tugboats for almost 4 years between Seattle and Alaska. After that he started working for Boyer Alaska Barge lines/Boyer Towing in 1980 when he chose to work shore side as the Operations Manager for SE AK overseeing the transportation service in Marketing, Operations, and Administration, and continued in that position through 2001 when Northland Services purchased Boyer Alaska Barge Lines and took over in the same capacity for SE AK along with overall direction in assisting the Seattle operations to provide the proper customer service that was built up for over 20 years with Boyer Alaska Barge Lines. In 2013 the Lynden Group purchased Northland Services and he assisted with the purchase and transaction while supporting both Northland Services and Samson Tug & Barge through the transition. During that time he accepted an offer to work for Samson Tug & Barge as the Operations Manager for SE AK, and in 2018 accepted with honor the Operations Management position for Samson Tug & Barge for Alaska. Email: shawnrichardson@samsontug.com



Susan Bell, Principal/CEO

McDowell Group

Susan returned to McDowell Group in 2015 after serving as Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development Commissioner. There, her priorities included enhancing transportation infrastructure, developing natural resources, and increasing Alaska's visibility in the marketplace. Susan and her colleagues have been engaged in the AMHS Reform Initiative, helping to transition the system into a sustainable organization. McDowell Group has a long history of projects concerning the Marine Highway including economic benefits to Alaska's communities and industries. A lifelong Alaskan, Susan is originally from Nome. She lives in Juneau with her husband and two Labrador retrievers. Email: SusanB@mcdowellgroup.net



Kodiak to Adak and All Points in Between: Air Transportation in Southwest Alaska

Scott Habberstad, Director of Sales & Community Marketing

Alaska Airlines

Scott Habberstad is a lifelong Alaskan currently residing in Anchorage with his lovely bride Amy, daughter Catheryne, and son Jack. Scott graduated from Ketchikan High School in 1989, and then attended flight school, earning his multi-engine commercial land and sea ratings. He returned to Ketchikan to fly for Taquan Airlines in the summer and attended college in the fall at Boise State University. Scott graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing in 1997 and returned to Ketchikan to continue his flying career; shortly after returning, however, he decided to peruse a business career, and accepted a position with the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau as the Director of Marketing. In 2001, Scott went to work for Alaska Airlines as an account executive in Anchorage and was later elevated to Manager of Regional Sales, Alaska; today, he is the Director of Sales & Community Marketing-Alaska. Scott is active in the community serving on the following boards: Providence Alaska, Regional Board; Resource Development Council, Executive Committee; Alaska Travel Industry Association, Past Chair; Alaska Resource Education; Alaska Air Carriers Association, Secretary; Board Member Emeritus Providence Foundation, Alaska. Email: Scott.Habberstad@AlaskaAir.com



John Binder, Deputy Commissioner

Alaska Department of Transportation

John Binder serves as Deputy Commissioner for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and Executive Director of the Alaska International Airport System. He oversees the management of the state's 239 airports including the Anchorage and Fairbanks International Airports, is Chairman of the board for the National Association of State Aviation Officials, is a Trustee of the International Air Cargo Association, and is an Accredited Airport Executive of the American Association of Airport Executives. Mr. Binder is a former U.S. Air Force pilot and combat veteran with over 21 years of service, having retired as a commander and a command pilot with both fighter and trainer aircraft experience in the F-15C Eagle, T-38 Talon, and the T-6 Texan II. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Astronautical Engineering. He also earned a Master of Science degree in Aeronautical Sciences from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 1995 and a Master of Science degree in Space Systems from the Air Force Institute of Technology in 2006. Mr. Binder and his wife Kia have four children and live in Anchorage, Alaska. Email: john.binder@alaska.gov



Derek Shanks, Chief Commercial Officer

Ravn Air Group

With over twenty-five years of experience in the airline and global travel industry, Derek Shanks played key roles at a number of different airlines, in addition to building his own consulting company focused on international sales and distribution within the hotel, car rental, and airline industry. Prior to striking out on his own, Derek was president of the world's leading sales and marketing travel representation company, Discover the World Marketing, where he was responsible for increasing client revenues from a global network of offices in over 40 countries. Derek started his career in the United Kingdom with Thomson Holidays (TUI) before joining British Airways, where he was involved in their tour operating division. Derek has lived and worked in six countries, and he and his family are greatly looking forward to getting to know Alaska. Email: ds96@ravnairgroup.com



Thursday Lunch Speakers

United States Senator Lisa Murkowski

Senator Lisa Murkowski is the state's first Alaska-born U.S. Senator and has served in the United States Senate since 2002. She chairs both the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee. Since joining the Senate in 2002, Senator Murkowski has worked tirelessly for Alaskans and earned a reputation in the Senate for her ability to work collaboratively and across the aisle to reach common sense solutions. Murkowski is well-known for her love and dedication to her state, which means putting Alaska first. Lisa loves spending time in the Alaska outdoors. She's an avid skier, has hiked on glaciers, enjoys fall duck hunts, and has a pretty impressive King Salmon mounted on her office wall. She is married to Verne Martell and they have two grown sons.

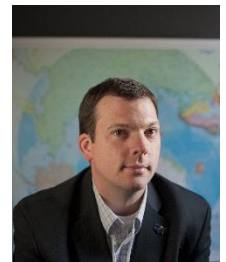


Nils Andreassen, Executive Director

Alaska Municipal League

Nils has a degree in Peace and Development from the University of Bradford in England and his background in rural and international development, Alaska, and Arctic policy issues fit well within AML's mission to support and strengthen local governments. Nils is currently pursuing a master's degree in Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas through the University of Saskatchewan and University of Tromso. Nils lives in Juneau with his family.

Email: nils@akml.org



New Opportunities to Address Familiar Challenges

Erik Obrien, Program Manager

Denali Commission

Erik Obrien, joined the Denali Commission in November 2019 as Program Manager, but like many rural Alaskans wears many hats, including mariculture pioneer. Erik was approved for the first kelp permit in Alaska in Larsen Bay in 2016, and moved into oysters in 2018 after losing his kelp market. Today, Erik is the largest private employer for wintertime work in Larsen Bay, with a robust staff of 2 part-time workers who maintain the gear and support permitting activities. Kodiak's first ever oyster sales are planned to come online before the end of the year. Erik jokes he is an accidental mariculturist, as his work in economic development – 10 years at SWAMC – and passion for entrepreneurship coalesced when regulators notified him no kelp permits had been submitted despite the growing press. With a background in commercial fishing, Erik decided to take the plunge and applied for the first two permits, one in Larsen Bay and the other in Kodiak that ultimately seeded the Kodiak mariculture hub that exists today. As a Denali Commission Program Manager funding needs of rural Alaska, Erik believes that mariculture has the greatest potential to inject new dynamism into coastal economies and is excited to partner and develop projects. Mariculture is new for Alaska and it makes sense that an injection of public funds are necessary to kickstart this powerful new economic engine, and Erik is in a unique position to understand all aspects of need and opportunity. Disclaimer – Erik will not use public funds to benefit his personal interests. Email: eobrien@denali.gov



Robert Himschoot, CEO/General Manager
Nushagak Electric & Telephone Cooperative

Robert and his wife Barbara have lived and raised their family in Rural Alaska since moving to Bethel in 1991. Over the last 35 years Robert has enjoyed employment in telecommunications, commercial fishing, and most recently as the CEO/GM at Nushagak Cooperative. As a rural telecommunications technician and operational manager over 28 years at GCI there are few Alaskan communities Robert has not visited and worked in, but his family and his interests have always centered on Bristol Bay and the community of Dillingham where he and Barbara have resided since 1998. Email: rhimschoot@nushagak.coop



Harold Johnston, President
Alaska Tribal Broadband, LLC

Harold Johnston, a Native Hawaiian raised in a Hawaii tribal community, now calls Alaska home. He has extensive telecommunications management experience. He has run domestic and international operations for AT&T and Verizon, and headed the Northern Marianas telephone company. Harold was GM of a telephone company serving Hawaii's tribal lands. Living on tribal lands and serving on native Hawaiian non-profit boards, he understands challenges of native communities with access to resources for health care, education and economic development. He is passionate about how broadband can improve access to those resources and counts delivering broadband to underserved native Hawaiian communities as the "high" of his telecom career. He founded Alaska Tribal Broadband LLC as a resource focused on improving broadband for Alaska Natives. Harold holds a BS from the United States Naval Academy and an MBA from San Jose State. He served as a Marine infantry company commander in Viet Nam. Email: hcalljohnston@live.com



Robert Venables, Executive Director
Southeast Conference

Robert Venables is the Executive Director for Southeast Conference, Alaska's Regional Development Organization for southeast Alaska. He has over 30 years of public service in Alaska, serving on many local, regional, and state boards and commissions with a passion for sustainable communities and healthy economies. He currently is Chair of the State's Marine Transportation Advisory Board and a member of the Governor's AMHS Reshaping Working Group. He also facilitates the statewide AMHS Reform initiative managed by Southeast Conference. Email: robert@seconference.org



Brave New World: Broadband Internet Connectivity for Southwest Alaska

Doug Griffin, Former SWAMC Executive Director

Doug Griffin recently retired as the Executive Director of Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference. Prior to his five years at SWAMC, Doug served as the City Manager for the cities of Valdez (1987 – 1995), St. Mary's (2009-2010), and Palmer (2010-2014). He also worked for the State of Alaska as a Local Government Specialist and Deputy Director (DCRA) (1977-1987), and Director of the Alaska Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (1996-2008). Doug moved to Alaska in 1964 with his parents who taught school and served in school administration for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As a child Doug lived in Barrow, Wainwright, St. Michael's, and Sitka, and worked in Juneau, Valdez, Anchorage, St. Mary's, and Palmer throughout his diverse career. He has an interest in government, rural affairs, and economic development. Doug has maintained residence in Anchorage since 1996 with his wife Barbara. His two grown children live in Anchorage and he is Granddaddy to four beautiful grandchildren. Email: dgriffin@swamc.org



Jenifer Nelson, Senior Manager of Corporate Communications and Community Engagement

GCI

Growing up in King Cove gave Jenifer Nelson a unique understanding of the impact that reliable connectivity brings to rural communities. As the senior manager of community relations at GCI, she is responsible for developing strategies and programs in rural communities and ensuring customers have a voice. She is a leading member of GCI's Rural Affairs Committee and GCI's Arctic working group, championing projects that improve services in sparsely populated areas. Nelson's experience and work have earned her positions on a number of boards and committees including the Arctic Council's Task Force on Telecommunications in the Arctic (TFTIA) under the U.S. chairmanship. She was part of the Task Force to Improve Connectivity in the Arctic (TFICA) under the Finish chairmanship. She was also appointed to the Arctic Economic Council to represent the Aleut International Association and serves as the vice chair of the Aleut Corporation Board of Directors. Email: jnelson1@gci.com



Chuck Schumann, CEO

Pacific Dataport

Chuck Schumann is Vice President of Microcom and CEO of Pacific Dataport, Inc. He has over 40 years of experience in the satellite communications industry in Alaska, Russia, Hawaii, and the lower 48. Chuck founded Microcom in 1984 to focus on satellite communications projects within Alaska and has been responsible for many "firsts" for the industry in Alaska. Pacific Dataport was founded to solve Alaska's rural broadband problem and is now focused on another first for Alaska: building and launching Aurora 4A and then Aurora IV as a regional HTS satellite system that will serve all of Alaska. Pacific Dataport was recently named by OneWeb as their exclusive distribution partner for Alaska and Hawaii. Under this agreement, PDI will provide hybrid satellite capacity combining LEO and GEO platforms. Email: cschumann@pacificdataport.com



Emmett Fitch, CEO

OptimERA

Emmett grew up in Unalaska. During his college career at the Evergreen State College, where he earned a B.S. degree studying Applied Mathematics and Computer Science, he came back to Unalaska every summer to work and save for the following year. After graduating, his plan was to continue to work in Unalaska in the summer and further his education with the goal of attaining his M.S. degree in Electrical Engineering. These goals fell short when he was unable to use the internet in Unalaska to study. In 2005 he launched OptimERA with the goal of bringing better internet to his home town. After 15 years of perseverance, today OptimERA is the premier internet service in Unalaska continuing to push for faster and less expensive service. Most recently OptimERA is weeks away from launching a 4G LTE service, dubbed the SWAN project that, along with broadband, will start in Unalaska and spread across all of Southwest Alaska. Email: emmett@optimerainc.com



Roger Meeks, Technical Sales Manager

TelAlaska

Roger joined TelAlaska in 1996 as a laborer/technician in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor where he lived for eight years. In 1999, Roger became the Unalaska/Dutch Harbor Area Supervisor and in 2003, he relocated to Anchorage and was promoted to Operations Manager where he oversaw day-to-day operations across the state. In 2012, Roger went to work for Alaska Communications where he managed Field Services in Anchorage and the Aleutians, Dispatch, Internet Tech Support, and Tier II Tech Support. Roger is a born-and-raised Alaskan who's worked in the commercial fishing industry in a number of different capacities, held elected offices on Planning and Zoning and the Unalaska City Council and has served on numerous non-profit boards. Email: RMeeks@TelAlaska.com



First Responders in the Last Frontier: Public Safety in Southwest Alaska

Katherine TePas, MA, Program Coordinator II

Alaska Department of Public Safety

Ms. TePas has worked in the field of intimate partner and sexual violence and child exploitation for over two decades. She currently manages the Alaska State Troopers Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) training section and is responsible for the development, coordination, and training for law enforcement officers and agencies across Alaska related to DVSA. Ms. TePas also was a senior policy advisor for Governor Sean Parnell and coordinated the Governor's statewide Choose Respect initiative against DVSA. Email: katie.tepas@alaska.gov



John Skidmore, Deputy Attorney General

State of Alaska

John Skidmore is a 21-year prosecutor who currently serves as the Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Division. Prior to that, he served as the Director for the Criminal Division for 8 years. John joined the Department of Law in 1997 starting at the Kenai District Attorney's Office where he tried a DV A4 with a recanting victim his fourth day on the job. Over the next seventeen years he prosecuted misdemeanor and felony cases all across the state. John has conducted trials and court hearings all across the state including Anchorage, Kenai, Palmer, Bethel, St. Mary's, Dillingham, Naknek, Togiak, Juneau, Fairbanks, and Homer. John served in the Bethel DAO, the Dillingham DAO, and the Anchorage DAO. At the Anchorage District Attorney's Office, John served as a misdemeanor unit trial attorney, property unit trial attorney, property unit supervisor, violent crimes unit trial attorney, and violent crimes unit supervisor. He served as the head of the Office of Special Prosecutions before being named the Director of the Criminal Division. As the Director, he oversaw the 13 District Attorney Offices across the state, the Office of Special Prosecutions, and the Office of Criminal Appeals. In addition to leading the Criminal Division, he currently advises the governor and legislature on legislation related to the criminal justice system, serves on the Council for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA), the board for Alaska High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HITDA), the board for the Western States Information Network (WSIN), the board for Alaska Justice Information Center (AJiC), and the Alaska Criminal Justice Information Advisory Board (CJIAB). Email: John.skidmore@alaska.gov



Nikole Nelson, Executive Director

Alaska Legal Services

Nikole Nelson is the Executive Director of Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC), Alaska's only statewide provider of free civil legal assistance to low-income Alaskans. Nikole oversees ALSC's 12 offices and 6 Medical-Legal Partnership locations and a 60+ member staff that are scattered across the vast and remote State of Alaska. Nikole joined ALSC in 1998 as a staff attorney shortly after graduating from Willamette University College of Law and became ALSC's Executive Director in 2010. She is licensed to practice law in both Oregon and Alaska. Nikole's legal career has focused on systemic advocacy to improve access to justice for low-income and marginalized Alaskans.

Email: nnelson@alasc-law.org



Captain Andrew Tolman Merrill, MPA, Commander/Director

Alaska State Troopers

Captain Merrill joined the Alaska State Troopers in 2002 and has been assigned to Fairbanks, Bethel, Nome, and Anchorage. He has worked in various assignments to include Judicial Services, Patrol, and Rural Investigations. He supervised the remote Trooper Posts of Nome and Unalakleet as the Sergeant and Post Commander. He was then promoted to the Western Alaska C Detachment Deputy Commander overseeing the area from Kodiak to Kotzebue as well as the Aleutian chain. In his current assignment as the Commander/Director of the DPS Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program Commander of C Detachment he works with partnering Alaska Native Tribal Associations to administer and oversee the VPSO program throughout the State of Alaska as well as commanding the AST posts in western Alaska. Captain Merrill is a DARE Officer, School Resource Officer, Alaska Police Standards Council instructor, Use of Force Instructor and analysis commander, Crisis Negotiation Team Leader, DPS Online training coordinator, and Department fixed wing aircraft pilot. Captain Merrill holds a Master of Public Administration from Wayland Baptist University and a Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice Education from the University of Virginia and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy session 257. He lives in Anchorage with his wife and three children. Email: Andrew.merrill@alaska.gov



Dunleavy Administration

Julie Anderson, Commissioner

Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

Commissioner Anderson has held leadership positions within both private and public sectors and has a diverse background in Alaska's core sectors. Increasing economic development opportunities and growing the economy in all regions of the state is a priority. Commissioner Anderson received her undergraduate degree in Business with an emphasis in International Management from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and holds a Master of International Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management.



Science-Driven Fisheries Dynamics: What's in Our Future?

Glenn Merrill, Assistant Regional Administrator

NOAA Alaska Regional Office

Glenn Merrill is the Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries in the Alaska Region of NOAA Fisheries. Sustainable Fisheries has the primary management responsibility for Federal fisheries off Alaska. Glenn has been with the Alaska Region since 2001. Prior to his work at NOAA Fisheries, he served as Chief Resource Analyst for the Aleutians East Borough, a Legislative Fellow with the U.S. Senate, and worked as a Federal fishery observer. He holds a Master of Marine Affairs from the University of Washington. Email: glenn.merrill@noaa.gov



Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Mr. Vincent-Lang had a 34-year public service career at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game before accepting the position of commissioner. A scientist with a focus on fulfilling the department's mission, Vincent-Lang began work at the department as a fisheries research and management biologist for the Division of Sport Fish in 1981. He held the positions of regional management and research coordinator and assistant director for 28 years in the Division of Sport Fish. In 2012 he was named Director of the Division of Wildlife. He holds a B.S. degree in biology/population dynamics from the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and a M.S. degree in Biological Oceanography from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He lives in Anchorage with his wife of 35 years and has three children. Email: doug.vincent-lang@alaska.gov



Jeff Hetrick, Director

Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery

Jeff Hetrick is the Director of the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery (APSH) and the Alaska Ocean Acidification Laboratory in Seward. APSH produces Oysters and Geoducks for the aquatic farm industry and produces Littleneck, Butter and Razor Clams for enhancement of beaches in south-central Alaska. APSH has developed hatchery technology for Red and Blue King Crabs, Pinto Abalone, Giant Red Sea Cucumber, Purple-Hinged Rock Scallop, and Soft-Shell Clams and Basket Cockles and conducted numerous growth trials. The Ocean Acidification Lab provides continuous data of water quality from Resurrection Bay to various data portals, provides discrete sample analysis for 15 coastal partners, and conducts OA exposure studies on various species produced at APSH.

Email: jjh@seward.net



Dr. Bradley Harris, FAST Lab Director & Associate Professor

Alaska Pacific University

Dr. Brad Harris is a fisheries ecologist whose work focuses on investigating how the resources and conditions present in an area influence the occupancy and life history of individual organisms, their population dynamics, and their community interactions. He is particularly interested in the roles that anthropogenic and natural disturbance play in these processes at landscape scales. This is multidisciplinary work and spans a wide array of fields including quantitative spatial modeling, population abundance and stock assessment, disease ecology, physical oceanography, fishing gear conservation engineering, aquatic habitat mapping, and natural resource law and policy. Dr. Harris was born and raised near Homer, Alaska. Prior to entering academia, he commercially fished salmon in Prince William Sound and Upper Cook Inlet, served aboard an Alaska Department of Fish & Game research vessel, and captained an oil spill response vessel in the Beaufort Sea. Dr. Harris earned a B.Sc. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University, and a M.Sc. and a Ph.D. in Fisheries Oceanography from the University of Massachusetts. In 2011 he joined the faculty of Alaska Pacific University where he founded the Fisheries, Aquatic Science, & Technology (FAST) Laboratory which has grown into a world-class research team with over 20 excellent scientists and highly motivated graduate students. In addition to serving as an Associate Professor at APU, Dr. Harris holds faculty appointments at Ulster University in Northern Ireland, and at the University of Massachusetts - School of Marine Sciences. Dr. Harris currently serves on the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. He is the vice-chair of the North Pacific Research Board's Science Panel and he serves on several expert working groups advising the International Council for Exploration of the Sea and the Food and Agriculture Organization. Dr. Harris lives in Anchorage with his wife, three wild boys, and a grumpy Chihuahua named Buddy.

Email: bharris@alaskapacific.edu



ASMI-Sponsored Lunch

Ashley Heimbigner, Communications Director

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

As Communications Director, Ashley Heimbigner oversees the brand and messaging priorities for Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI), domestic consumer public relations, and in-state and fleet communications. Prior to this role, Ashley supported the Alaska Seafood brand in ASMI's international program. A lifelong Alaskan, Ashley has lived across Alaska, from Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula to the Interior, and now lives with her family in Juneau. After many years championing Alaska brands and industries from brewing to tourism, Ashley is pleased to be working for Alaska's dynamic seafood industry. Email: aheimbigner@alaskaseafood.org



Nicole Kimball, Council Member

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

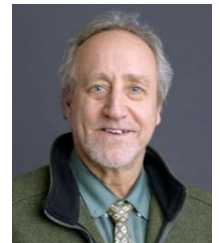
Ms. Kimball has 20 years' experience in Alaska fisheries management and policy and currently works for the Pacific Seafood Processors Association, a non-profit trade association comprised of motherships and shorebased seafood processors across Alaska. Prior to this, she served as Federal Fisheries Coordinator for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, where she represented the state in regional, national, and international fisheries venues, and served as the alternate to the Commissioner on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (2012-2016). Before this Nicole worked as a fisheries analyst for the Council for 12 years. Nicole received a BS in natural resource management at the University of Maine, and a master's in environmental policy and renewable resource management from Tufts University. Nicole currently serves on the board of the Alaska Sea Life Center, the Maritime Works Leadership Council, the Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee, and as Vice-Chair of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute's Communications Committee. Born in Ketchikan, she resides in Anchorage. Email: NicoleK@pspafish.net



Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Mr. Vincent-Lang had a 34-year public service career at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game before accepting the position of commissioner. A scientist with a focus on fulfilling the department's mission, Vincent-Lang began work at the department as a fisheries research and management biologist for the Division of Sport Fish in 1981. He held the positions of regional management and research coordinator and assistant director for 28 years in the Division of Sport Fish. In 2012 he was named Director of the Division of Wildlife. He holds a B.S. degree in biology/population dynamics from the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and a M.S. degree in Biological Oceanography from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He lives in Anchorage with his wife of 35 years and has three children. Email: doug.vincent-lang@alaska.gov



Gerad Godfrey, Member

Alaska Board of Fish

Gerad Godfrey was born and raised in Alaska. He is an Alaska Native whose mother is originally from the Village of Ouzinkie and his father's lineage is from the Village of Afognak, both villages in the Kodiak Archipelago. Gerad was raised throughout Alaska. He grew up commercial fishing on salmon seiners in the Kodiak Island Fishery over 12 summers. For a combined 14 years he worked on the North Slope of Alaska and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline in the Port of Valdez. From 2015-2018, Gerad served in Governor Walker's Administration as Senior Advisor on Rural Business and Intergovernmental Affairs. In 2016, he was elected to Afognak Native Corporation's Board of Directors where he served as Chair and Vice Chair. In September of 2019, Gerad stepped down from Afognak Native Corporation's Board of Directors to assume a position as President of two Afognak Native Corporation subsidiaries. For 17 years Gerad chaired Alaska's Violent Crimes Compensation Board having been appointed by four consecutive Governors of Alaska. In this volunteer capacity he received the Advocacy Award from Victims for Justice. In July of 2019, Gerad assumed a new appointment by Governor Dunleavy as a member of Alaska's Board of Fisheries. Email: gerad.godfrey@alaska.gov



Erik Obrien, Program Manager

Denali Commission

Erik Obrien, joined the Denali Commission in November 2019 as Program Manager, but like many rural Alaskans wears many hats, including mariculture pioneer. Erik was approved for the first kelp permit in Alaska in Larsen Bay in 2016, and moved into oysters in 2018 after losing his kelp market. Today, Erik is the largest private employer for wintertime work in Larsen Bay, with a robust staff of 2 part-time workers who maintain the gear and support permitting activities. Kodiak's first ever oyster sales are planned to come online before the end of the year. Erik jokes he is an accidental mariculturist, as his work in economic development – 10 years at SWAMC – and passion for entrepreneurship coalesced when regulators notified him no kelp permits had been submitted despite the growing press. With a background in commercial fishing, Erik decided to take the plunge and applied for the first two permits, one in Larsen Bay and the other in Kodiak that ultimately seeded the Kodiak mariculture hub that exists today. As a Denali Commission Program Manager funding needs of rural Alaska, Erik believes that mariculture has the greatest potential to inject new dynamism into coastal economies and is excited to partner and develop projects. Mariculture is new for Alaska and it makes sense that an injection of public funds are necessary to kickstart this powerful new economic engine, and Erik is in a unique position to understand all aspects of need and opportunity. Disclaimer – Erik will not use public funds to benefit his personal interests. Email: eobrien@denali.gov



Craig Fleener, Founder & CEO

Alaska Ocean Cluster

Craig's background includes working in tribal and state government and the U.S. military. Early in his career, he worked on tribal and village corporation land issues. Then, at his regional tribal consortium, he worked on wildlife and fisheries issues, environmental stewardship, climate change research, vocational training, and healthcare. From 2008-2018, Craig worked as the Director of the Division of Subsistence, then Deputy Commissioner of Wildlife, Subsistence, and Habitat Divisions at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and ultimately serving as the Arctic Policy Advisor and Director of State and Federal Relations in Washington, D.C. Craig has served 33 years in the U.S. military. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1986, transitioning to the Alaska Air National Guard in 1991. He was enlisted for 16 years then received his commission in 2002. Currently, he holds the rank of Lt. Col. with the 176 Air Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson. Craig holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources Management from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (1999). His research focused on managing chronically low moose populations. In 2013, he earned a Master of Arts in Intelligence Studies from American Public University where his research was on developing a more effective U.S. Arctic Policy. In 2019, Craig completed Air War College at Air University with research that focused on resolving regional conflict in the South Atlantic. Craig is originally from Fort Yukon, Alaska, and is a Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in Tribal member. His priority areas include tribal self-determination, economic independence and diversification, Arctic Policy including Arctic sub-national leadership, collaboration, research, and infrastructure. Craig's ongoing interests include ensuring a better understanding of the Arctic including the needs of its residents, adaptation due to rapid climate changes, understanding the ocean, strong U.S. and Alaska leadership in developing Arctic Policy, and greater virtual storage, access to, and utilization of Arctic research that has been conducted but is difficult to uncover.



Email: craig@alaskaoceancluster.com

Julie Decker, Executive Director

Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation

Julie Decker is the Executive Director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. Since 1994, Julie has worked in Alaska's seafood industry with a variety of work experience which includes: cannery worker, deckhand, diver, vessel owner, and manager of both seafood processing businesses and non-profits. In the summers, she takes vacation time to commercial fish with her family in Wrangell, Alaska. Mrs. Decker has also served on various boards and committees working toward economic development in the seafood industry, including the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute and United Fishermen of Alaska. In 2019, she was elected to a third term on the Wrangell Assembly. Mrs. Decker holds a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and a Masters degree from University of Alaska Southeast in Public Administration with a concentration in Natural Resource Management. In 2013, Mrs. Decker was presented the Ernest Gruening Award for "outstanding graduate student". Email: jdecker@afdf.org



Charlotte Levy, Natural Resources Assistant Director

Aleutians East Borough

Charlotte Levy is the Natural Resources Assistant Director for the Aleutians East Borough (AEB), where she has worked since 2014. She earned her BS in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences from Oregon State University, studying coastal mitigation and ecological succession of rocky reef habitat in Alaska. Ms. Levy's position focuses on the protection, management, and development of natural resources within the AEB. She enjoys managing collaborative research projects, where she can use innovative solutions to address natural resource issues in a meaningful way. As a result, she has developed strong working relationships with local fishermen and processors, government agencies, and academia. Recently, Ms. Levy has been spearheading a local mariculture initiative, including developing a pilot seaweed farm in Sand Point. She is based in Anchorage, and spends her free time diving and catering to her dog, Mr. Fish. Email: clevy@aeboro.org



Matthew Fagnani, Senior Development Executive

Alaska Development Team

Matthew Fagnani (pronounced Fun-yah-nee) came to Alaska in 1979 with the military and was stationed at Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks. He served one tour. His professional career spans 35 years of private sector business ventures with small and large companies. He has managed up to \$230 million in revenue and as many as 600 employees. He has held numerous senior level executive positions with Alaska Native Corporations (ANC) and has had direct responsibility for companies operating in the oil and gas, transportation, mining, forestry, tourism, workforce development, remote fuel distribution, and 8(a) federal contracting industries. Fagnani has worked to build business opportunities for some of Alaska's largest corporations and private industries, as well as training the next generation of Alaska's workforce. As CEO of a large Alaska Native corporation, he greatly appreciated the unique perspective of watching an Alaska Native corporation balance the need for economic prosperity with the passion for preserving cultural heritage, a quality education, and their subsistence lifestyles. He also played a critical role in federal contracting, which contributes to their success. Mr. Fagnani currently serves on the American Red Cross board of directors and the National 8(a) Association. Email: matthew.fagnani@alaska.gov



Legislative Update

Senator Gary Stevens, Legislative District P

Alaska State Senate

From Alaska State Senate to Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute and Rotary International, Gary Stevens has been involved with a variety of institutions in both the public and private sector. He served in the Alaska House of Representatives from 2001-2003 and was the Senate President from 2009-2013. Currently he is Chair of Senate Education and Senate Legislative Council and a member of Senate Judiciary (Fin Sub), Senate University of Alaska (Fin Sub), Senate Education and Early Development (Fin Sub), and Senate Health and Social Services.

Email: Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov



Representative Louise Stutes, Legislative District 32

Alaska State House

Representing coastal communities from Tyonek to Yakutat, Cordova, Seldovia, and Kodiak Island, Louise Stutes understands the importance of transportation infrastructure and the fishing industry for rural Alaskans. With her husband of 25 years, Stormy Stutes, Louise lives in Kodiak where she is a retired business owner and a former member of the Kodiak Assembly. Louise also previously sat on regional fisheries advisory boards and SWAMC's Board of Directors. Louise currently serves as the Majority Whip in the Alaska State House of Representatives and she is the Chair of the House Transportation Committee and the House Fisheries Committee as well as a member of the House Judiciary and Labor & Commerce committees. Email: Representative.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov



Senator Lyman Hoffman, Senate Majority Leader, Legislative District S

Alaska State Senate

Senator Hoffman graduated from Bethel High School and obtained a degree in Business Administration from the University of Alaska. Hoffman served as State Senator from 1991-92, and from 1995-present. He has also been Deputy Director of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. Hoffman has been a former owner of North Star Gas; owner of Bethel Drilling & Welding; Finance committee member of Orutsararmiut Native Council; and Member of the Lower Kuskokwim Development Hoffman is Chair on Senate Education and Early Development (Fin Sub), Chair Senate University of Alaska (Fin Sub). He is a current member of the Senate Legislative Council, Senate Legislative Budget and Audit, Senate Community and Regional Affairs, and Senate Finance. He is the Senate Finance Subcommittee Chair for the Department of Fish and Game and Department of Administration. He is married with two children. Email: Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov



Representative Bryce Edgmon, Speaker of the House, Legislative District 37

Alaska State House

An Alaska state legislator since 2007, Representative Bryce Edgmon is currently serving his second term as Speaker of the Alaska House of Representatives, leading a majority coalition of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. He is the first Alaska Native House Speaker in the history of the state. Prior to the 31st Legislature, Speaker Edgmon was seated on the House Finance Committee, chairing the Departments of Public Safety and Corrections Budget Subcommittees. Speaker Edgmon also previously served as Co-Chair of the House Energy Committee and Chairman of the House Special Committee on Fisheries. Additionally, he has served on the Resources and Education Standing Committees, and the ADF&G, Revenue, Commerce, and Transportation Budget Subcommittees. Speaker Edgmon currently serves as Vice-Chair of the House Tribal Affairs Committee and sits on the Fisheries, Transportation, and Legislative Council Committees. A graduate of the University of Alaska Anchorage, Speaker Edgmon was born and raised in Dillingham, Alaska, where he fished commercially for salmon and herring for more than twenty years and where he was a longtime chairman of the board of Choggiung Ltd., the Alaska Native village corporation for Dillingham, Ekuk, and Portage Creek. He currently lives in Dillingham with his wife Melody and their son Evan and daughter Emma. Email: Representative.Bryce.Edgmon@akleg.gov

