

**Our Vision: Vibrant, connected, and sustainable communities in Southwest Alaska.**

Dear Member or Prospective Member,

SWAMC was formed in 1988 to serve and support residents and leadership of our unique region spanning Kodiak, Bristol Bay, the Pribilof Islands, and the Aleutian Chain. There have been many changes in our communities since then, but one thing that has not changed is SWAMC's dedication to pursuing economic opportunities to spur new investment and fuel growth in Southwest Alaska. We continue to work hard on your behalf to help residents, small businesses, and municipalities navigate the incredibly trying circumstances we all faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are very proud of the way Southwest Alaska handled this unprecedented economic downturn and the impacts that continue today. There is still work to be done, and SWAMC remains on the front lines with you.

**SWAMC's core mission is to serve as a united voice of advocacy for the nearly 30,000 residents in our region, and we could not do it without the support of our membership through our annual Membership Drive.** Non-federal funds from membership dues are critical to our ability to leverage federal grant funding: our annual EDA Planning grant allows us to produce a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southwest Alaska and to pursue other timely projects, which has recently included mariculture industry development and ensuring the long-anticipated broadband expansion is realized in our communities. Two-year supplemental funding from the EDA is allowing us to develop an economic recovery and resiliency plan to help us understand the pandemic's impacts on our communities through surveys and interviews and identify areas to strengthen our response to future economic disasters. Our USDA-funded energy audit program has helped multiple small business owners (including fishing vessel owners) access over \$300,000 in grant funding so far to implement cost-saving energy efficiency upgrades.

Active member participation at our annual Economic Summit & Membership Meeting held in the spring strengthens SWAMC's collective voice as we tackle common challenges – like air and marine transportation, fisheries policy and regulatory changes, and internet connectivity – and identify solutions together in partnership with our Legislators, State Agencies, and Industry. Member support ensures that SWAMC has a regional network with which to engage in this cooperative decision making.

*In addition to supporting our critical work, SWAMC members enjoy the following benefits:*

- Vote for candidates and have the chance to serve on our governing Board of Directors.
- Receive a discount on SWAMC's annual Economic Summit & Membership Meeting registration.
- Propose and vote on Resolutions at the annual Membership Meeting to make your voice heard on governance, advocacy, and program issues.
- Be listed in our online [Membership Directory](#) with a link to your website.
- Use SWAMC as a medium for sharing issues critical to the region by providing your input on topics for our annual Conference and submitting stories and events to be included in our monthly newsletter.

***FY 2022 SWAMC Membership – July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022***

*Economic development and advocacy for Southwest Alaska*  
Economic Development District (EDD) and Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR)

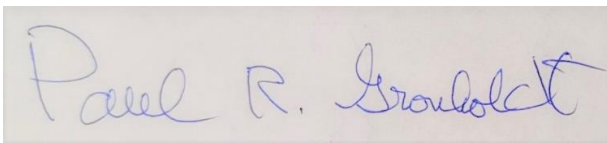
**I hope you will join or renew your SWAMC membership today. Your support is needed now more than ever.**

Impacts of the pandemic were particularly devastating to rural Alaska. With marginal internet connectivity to participate in remote work and school, severely restricted air and marine transportation options, health provider capacity limitations, and a near collapse of our primary seafood markets, our challenges seemed to compound each month. The SWAMC staff and Board of Directors have been working since day one to help our local municipalities, businesses, and fisheries organizations access COVID-19 relief funding, including the AK CARES grant. We set up a [COVID-19 Resources page](#) on our website with a free online tool called FORWARD to provide businesses with a comprehensive list of economic relief programs they qualified for. We also hired a temporary team member to help us deliver one-on-one assistance to business owners as they worked to understand their options and navigate grant and loan applications. SWAMC remained engaged with state and federal agency representatives and leadership to ensure they understood Southwest Alaska's unique challenges as they designed programs and policy, and we played an important role in the rollout of the AK CARES funds to small businesses and the Fisheries Assistance Funds to countless fishing families in the region.

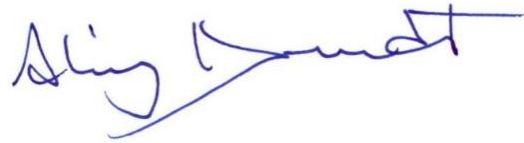
Our goal for this next year is to continue to help the region recover from the negative effects of the pandemic and to identify strategies that protect our economic, social, and healthcare needs in the future while continuing to focus on our core goals: responsible and sustainable development of fisheries, improved transportation options and safety, advancement of broadband planning and deployment, and the development of new business opportunities such as seaweed and shellfish farming. Roads, bridges, docks, harbors, air service, and the marine highway are essential for moving people and goods and spurring economic activity in the region, but other crucial elements of infrastructure – communications, energy, and water/wastewater systems – are just as essential to a high standard of living, and we will continue to pursue and advocate for state and federal support for these projects. We will stay on the front lines of new federal and state pandemic impact relief discussions and keep our members up to date with the newest programs and eligibility requirements. Our mission is to strengthen the region's economy, preserve its way of life, and serve as your collective voice for opportunity and prosperity.

**Please join or renew your SWAMC membership now! It's easy to renew at [www.swamc.org/membership](http://www.swamc.org/membership). If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please call Shirley Marquardt at 907-562-7380 or email [smarquardt@swamc.org](mailto:smarquardt@swamc.org)**

Thank you,



President Paul Gronholdt  
SWAMC Board of Directors



Shirley Marquardt  
Executive Director, SWAMC

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