



S

LEADERSHIP FORUMS

**Creating New Partnerships
for Rural Alaska Jobs**

**JUNE
28 & 29
2004**

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA



**SEPTEMBER
20
2004**

WASHINGTON, DC



Sponsored by~

Denali Commission

Harvard University~

Center for International Development

Alaska Federation of Natives

E

N

Alaska Natives Create Innovative Partnerships and Explore Knowledge-Based Economies

FORUMS OVERVIEW

The Leadership Forum on June 28-29, 2004 in Anchorage, Alaska was a first-of-its-kind event in North America. The conference brought together nearly 300 indigenous leaders, accomplished academics, development bank experts, elected officials and business leaders from four continents to discuss best practices and explore new models for economic growth linked to poverty reduction.

The June Forum was spearheaded by a historic collaboration of the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Denali Commission and Harvard University's Center for International Development. U.S. Senator Ted and Catherine Stevens played key roles in generating support for this Leadership Forum, which was authorized in the omnibus bill passed by Congress and signed by the President in January 2004. Other key individuals making the Forum possible included:

U.S. Congressman Don Young,
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski,
U.S. Secretary of the Treasury John Snow,
U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta,
Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski and
other local, national and international leaders.

Forum Sponsors

Denali Commission
Harvard University ~ Center for
International Development
Alaska Federation of Natives

Participating Organizations

The World Bank
Asian Development Bank
Inter-American Development
Bank

In Cooperation With

Alaska Inter-Tribal Council
Alaska Pacific University
Alaska Permanent Fund
Corporation
Alaska Public Broadcasting
Commonwealth North
Council for Native Hawaiian
Advancement
First Alaskans Institute
National Congress of
American Indians
Office of Hawaiian Affairs
Polynesian Voyaging Society
Rasmuson Foundation
University of Alaska



Five generations of the Beaver Family from Bethel, Alaska, wearing traditional parkas.



In addition to Alaska Native leaders, other indigenous participants included the Inuit of Greenland, the Maori of New Zealand, the Ashaninka of the Peruvian Amazon, indigenous Asians from the Philippines and Native Hawaiians. The forward-thinking indigenous leaders in attendance shared a broad range of experiences and innovative ideas for creating sustainable jobs in the emerging global economy.

The June Forum was followed by a half-day seminar on September 20 in Washington, D.C. that brought together nearly 200 participants, including elected officials, Native leaders, esteemed professors, development bank experts and corporate leaders. Presentations focused on a popular concept being proven in Alaska and in development circles around the globe: that economic development efforts which strengthen local indigenous cultures succeed best and provide those communities with an economic edge in the global economy.

The basis for these collaborative forums is a growing sense in Alaska Native communities that the time for blaming others, holding onto a “victim mentality” or remaining dependent on federal aid is behind us. Instead, we believe the time has arrived for thoughtful, innovative discussions to determine which development approaches work, which ones don’t, what’s possible in Alaska and what’s making a lasting difference in other parts of the world.

One of the overarching goals of the Forum was to give voice to the increasing awareness on the part of Alaska Native peoples that change in Alaska’s economy is inevitable, and that change will, by necessity, bring global perspectives to the forefront in future decision-making. The time for us to take charge of our own cultural and economic development is now. AFN is opening doors to new partnerships and models of development that can help us.

September Leadership Forum Presenters

Ted Stevens, U.S. Senate President Pro-Tempore

David Rubenstein, Founding Partner and Managing Director of the Carlyle Group

Kenneth Rogoff, Thomas D. Cabot Professor of Public Policy and Professor of Economics, Harvard University, former Chief Economist and Director of Research, International Monetary Fund

David W. Anderson, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior

Richard Trudell, Executive Director, American Indian Resources Institute

David Getches, Raphael J. Moses Professor of Natural Resource Law and Dean of the University of Colorado Law School

Nicholas E. Flanders, Program Leader, Corporate Citizenship Facility, International Finance Corporation

Brent Dark, Deputy Resident Director, Asian Development Bank’s North American Representative Office

Jerry Straus, Partner, Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, LLP



Seminars Strike a Chord

A series of seminars on Alaska-specific issues and development issues outside the state took center stage during the two-day Leadership Forum in June. A few of the seminars are listed below.

- An Overview of the Challenges and Opportunities for Expanding the Private Sector in the Alaska Economy
- Development Bank Model: Lessons Learned
- Strong Cultures, Strong Economies
- The Role of Financial Services in Alaska Native and Indigenous Communities
- Education in Our Own Backyard: Building Knowledge Capacity in Rural Alaska
- Participation in an Interactive Decision-Making Experiment
- Arctic Trade
- The Alaska Permanent Fund, Investing in Our Future



Knowledge-Based Economies Generate New Ideas

A knowledge-based economy is defined as an economy that generates innovation internally and is open to capturing innovation from outside.

AFN is exploring ways to expand the Native village economies to become knowledge-based economies. In the emerging knowledge-based global economy, the best partners are placing a premium on new ideas. Strong leadership in this new approach will be critical, and truly effective development must combine all of the best values of local traditional cultures, but also be driven by indigenous leaders who are confident enough to embrace and absorb the contemporary modern society and its values.

No one understands this better than Alaska Natives who have succeeded in preserving and maintaining their traditional cultures while at the same time adopting new technologies (e.g. snowmobiles) and tools (e.g. computers) to maximize productivity, minimize travel time and increase efficiencies. Yet despite some tremendous economic accomplishments by Alaska Native corporations, persistent poverty continues to affect 20% of our population, and many of our village economies are collapsing. The time is ripe to introduce new economic development ideas that strengthen our cultures and create hope, opportunity and jobs in our villages and regional hubs.

New Partnerships Foster Economic Innovation

One of the main goals of the Forums was to create an environment to foster new ideas by bringing together leaders from different sectors who had not necessarily recognized the collaborative economic opportunities that could be forged through new partnerships. Two such collaborations deserve special mention here and indicate the transformative power of economic innovation both within and outside the state of Alaska.



Eziba Meets the Alaska Native Arts Foundation

A remarkable new collaboration is now underway to open up new markets for Alaska Native artists. Alaska Native Arts Foundation (ANAF) will soon be marketing through Eziba.com, an internet-based retailer that aims to stimulate economic development in some of the world's most isolated regions by providing a market for their indigenous products. Eziba has agreed to feature Alaska Native artwork sourced through ANAF in its launch of "Rare Finds," a section of one-of-a-kind and limited production items. Not only will a number of Alaska Native artists' work be showcased on Eziba.com, but this partnership will also increase the number of visitors to ANAF's website at alaskanativearts.org. Eziba has already established a large audience of interested buyers, so these new links between the two websites will bring motivated buyers to peruse the many other items in stock at alaskanativearts.org. With its more than 200,000 customers and millions of catalogs and email messages distributed annually, Eziba will introduce the beautiful work of Alaska Native artists to many people outside of Alaska through this new alliance.

This exciting example shows how expanding the market for Alaska Native artwork could also lead to an expansion of opportunity for all Alaska Native people. The more that outsiders are educated about the unique value and contributions of Alaska Native artists, the more potential investors from multiple sectors will become aware of the myriad economic opportunities that lie waiting to be tapped in rural Alaska.



More Seminars

- Indigenous Ownership of Economic Initiatives
- Sew Your Way to a Great Fortune: Arts and Rural Economic Development
- Broadening Perspectives: Place Based Education as a Foundation For Knowledge-Based Economies



- Climate Change
- Western Alaska Community Development Quota Program: A Guide to Success in Offshore Fisheries
- Best Practices of Alaska Native Tribal Governments



“If parents cannot hope for a better life for themselves or at least for their children, they have no stake in development and will not support it. However, when there is hope, when there is dignity, development efforts are sustainable. Much of what we have learned about development with dignity we have learned from working with indigenous peoples for their own social and economic development.”

*Steen Jorgensen,
Director of Social
Development,
The World Bank*



Alaska Marketplace Introduced

The June Forum brought an innovative entrepreneur to Alaska to introduce an exciting initiative that has taken the development world by storm. Dennis Whittle, the co-founder of The World Bank’s *Development Marketplace*, captivated the audience with his description of this highly successful economic development “ideas competition.” A similar model is currently being adapted for Alaska and will be introduced in 2005 by the Denali Commission, the State of Alaska’s Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, the Alaska Native Arts Foundation and AFN.

The *Development Marketplace* invites proposals from all corners of the world that offer fresh ideas for fighting rural poverty and creating jobs. The “ideas competition” selects winners through a rigorous jury process that awards financial grants to individuals and organizations to implement the most innovative ideas.

Dennis Whittle moderated a groundbreaking intercontinental discussion with previous *Development Marketplace* winners and jurors from Manila, Philippines and Lima, Peru via a live satellite videoconference. The cutting-edge technology enabled a two-hour interactive discussion between indigenous leaders from the Peruvian Amazon, jurors and winners from Manila, Philippines and the hundreds of Forum participants in Anchorage.



Moving Forward: Next Steps in the Year Ahead

Plans to launch the Alaska Marketplace are just beginning to get underway. The effort will invite Alaskans from across the state to present fresh ideas for stimulating economic opportunities in rural Alaska villages with an emphasis on the arts. The final competition is set to take place at the AFN Convention in 2005, and details of the competition will be broadly advertised throughout the state in the coming months.

Discussions are underway to form an Indigenous Trade Commission following the Pacific Ocean: from Alaska to the north; down to Hawaii and Asian countries to the east; and across the Arctic, from Alaska to Canada, Greenland and Russia. The purpose of the trade commission would be to stimulate trade around customary trade routes with willing partners. AFN is looking into forming a contracting authority to help get the trade commission off the ground and is putting together a pilot project to be discussed with the Asian Development Bank in 2005. Discussions are also underway to host additional economic forums here in Alaska and halfway between here and Asia.

This year's Leadership Forums stimulated exciting dialogues with a wide range of new partners on innovative economic development models for rural Alaska. The infusion of new ideas from outside the state, combined with the decades of commitment, skills and expertise of Alaska Natives, elected officials and other Alaskans is sure to bring about exciting new opportunities to improve the quality of life across the state.

PHOTO CREDITS Alaska Native Heritage Center, Asian Development Bank, Global Giving, Bill Hess, Ted Horner, Darin Yates of Chugach Alaska Corp., The Architect of the Capitol Website

AFN Thanks Forum Sponsors

Special thanks to the Leadership Forum sponsors that generously contributed to make these events possible.

Underwriters

Denali Commission

State of Alaska Department
of Commerce, Community &
Economic Development

Sealaska Corporation

Bristol Bay Native Corporation

Doyon, Limited

BP Exploration

USDA Rural Development

GCI

Major Sponsors

Boeing

Alaska USA Federal Credit Union

Northland Services, Inc.



Alaska Native Heritage Center Dance Group





LEADERSHIP FORUMS
Creating New Partnerships
for Rural Alaska Jobs

Produced by Kathleen Russell Consulting
www.kathleenrussell.com