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News Release

Dec 10, 2002

Former Coast Guard officer appointed to citizens' council board

Rich Nielsen is the newest representative for the City of Valdez on the board of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. He was seated Dec. 5 as the council held its quarterly meeting in Anchorage.

Nielsen, now a member of the Valdez City Council, spent 20 years with the Coast Guard, including service in Valdez, and after that spent 19 years in the oil transportation and measurement business.

Nielsen expects his career experience to serve him well on the council. "Having worked in and around the industry for 20-some-odd years, I have an in-depth knowledge of it, particularly the shipping side," he said.

He replaces Mike Williams, who had served on the board since December of last year, and is one of two Valdez representatives on the council. The other is Jo Ann McDowell, president of Prince William Sound Community College.

The council also recognized several of its volunteers for service to the organization:

- Tom Copeland, who represents the Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition on the council, was recognized as volunteer of the year.
- Dennis Lodge received an award as board member of the year, and an award for his 10 years of membership on the board.
- The following people were recognized as members of the year from the council's technical advisory committees: Vince Kelly, Port Operations and Vessel Traffic Systems; Bob Benda, Terminal Operations and Environmental Monitoring; Dick Tremaine, Scientific Advisory; Jerry Brookman, Oil Spill Prevention/Response.
- Tex Edwards and A.J. Paul, who also serve on the council's technical advisory committees, received 10-year awards.

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is an independent non-profit corporation that promotes environmentally safe operation of the Valdez Marine Terminal and associated tankers. Its work is guided by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and its contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. RCAC's 18 member organizations are communities in the region affected by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, as well as commercial fishing, aquaculture, Native, recreation, tourism and environmental groups.