



# The Observer

VOLUME 17, No. 2/MAY 2007

AK Chamber of Commerce - AK Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Assoc. - Chugach Alaska Corp. - Cordova District Fishermen United - OSREC - PWS Aquaculture Corp.

## Project will document spill history

The citizen's council has launched a project to compile an oral history of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Sharon Bushell, a Homer oral historian, will record more than 100 interviews with people directly involved in the spill or its aftermath.

The results will be published in two volumes, the first containing the interviews themselves, and the second analyzing the interviews for lessons about the causes and effects of the spill, as well as the cleanup effort that followed.

The spill, in March 1989, is one of the most important events in Alaska history, yet no comprehensive oral history has ever been attempted, according to a council review of available resources that preceded the decision to start its own project.

"It came as a surprise to us that so little work of this type was ever done, considering how much has been written about the spill," said John Devens,

executive director of the council. "With the 20th anniversary in sight, we decided we needed to capture the memories and insights of people with first-hand involvement in the spill before it was too late."

The interview subjects will include people in communities affected by the spill, commercial fishermen, cleanup workers, officials of regulatory agencies such as the Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and employees from companies at the center of the event, such as Exxon, Alyeska Pipeline, and VECO.

While the project is just getting rolling and the time frame is still somewhat uncertain, the council hopes to be able to publish the first volume, containing the interviews, during 2009, twenty years after the Exxon spill.

The second volume is expected

See page 2, **HISTORY**

## Council contingent visits capital

In early March, several representatives from the citizens council traveled to Washington for visits with the Alaska Congressional delegation – Rep. Don Young, and Sens. Ted Stevens and Lisa Murkowski – as well as staffers in several other offices and agencies.

Council participants included Blake Johnson from the board of directors; John Devens, executive director; and Stan Jones, director of external affairs. Council board member Dorothy Moore, who was in Washington for the City of Valdez, also attended some meetings on behalf of the council.

During this trip, the council became aware that one of its issues appears to be coming to life in the newly Democratic Congress. That issue is combating non-indigenous species, long a council concern because of the risk that Prince William Sound could be colonized by alien marine species arriving in tanker ballast water.

In other areas, alien invaders like



Board member Blake Johnson and Executive Director John Devens met with Sen. Lisa Murkowski and other members of the Alaska delegation. Photo courtesy of Sen. Murkowski.

the zebra mussel and the European green crab have harmed native species and caused billions of dollars in damage.

Several bills on non-indigenous species have been introduced in the new Congress, though it's not yet clear which is most likely to become the chief vehicle for legislation in this area. Accordingly, the council will continue tracking the issue and related legislation very closely.

## SEARIVER DRILL: SHORT ON REALISM



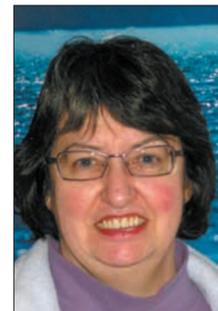
Two reports on last fall's oil-spill drill by Exxon Mobil's SeaRiver Maritime tanker subsidiary are available from the citizens council. Here, council president Stan Stephens meets with agency and industry officials during the drill to oppose plans to approve the use of dispersants on the hypothetical spill, or scenario. The dispersants approval process was among several problems the council found that made the drill unrealistic. "This scenario forced too many artificialities to be put into play to force the response to go in a non-rational direction," the council said in one of its reports. This was a tabletop drill, meaning it was conducted entirely indoors, with no on-water activities. The reports are available from either council office. Photo by Susan Sommer, citizens' council.

## Valdez residents join council board

The citizens' council seated two new board members at its January meeting in Anchorage.

Thane Miller will represent the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation. He replaces his wife, Sharry Miller, who resigned her board seat to take a position with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Miller has been commercial fishing in Prince William Sound since 1980 and is a member of the Valdez Fisheries Development Association and Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation. He and his wife live in Valdez with their daughter, Rowan.



Dorothy Moore



Thane Miller

Dorothy Moore will represent the City of Valdez on the council board. She replaces Connie Stephens, who resigned due to the press of other

See page 3, **BOARD**

### INSIDE

**Volunteer: Retired forecaster donates weather wisdom, p. 2**



**Alyeska Viewpoint: Pipeline control center moving to Anchorage, p. 3**

**Devens: Different results from different c-plan processes, p. 3**

**Community Corner: Poets recognized in contest, p. 8**



Cordova's harbor glows in a February sunset. Photo by Linda Robinson

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## Volunteer Profile

## Retired meteorologist volunteers weather wisdom

By **SUSAN SOMMER**  
Project Manager

What do a charter boat captain, an award-winning meteorologist, a taxi driver, and a pizza deliveryman have in common? Everything, if you're Dave Goldstein. He's done all that and more.

Dave, a member of the council's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee, says he didn't just retire from the National Weather Service after more than 35 years, he retired to his current career as owner and operator of Whittier-based Prince William Sound Eco-Charters. Dave had already been chartering clients in his free time for salmon and halibut in Prince William Sound. Turning that into a full-time endeavor seemed a natural extension.

Dave is friends with Pete and Marilyn Heddell, who serve, respectively, on the prevention and response committee and on the council board. They suggested Dave's background in weather might be beneficial to the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee, or OSPR, and suggested he contact the council about joining.

Volunteering with OSPR gives Dave the opportunity to help prevent spills in a region he calls home and from which he now makes his living. He was working a midnight shift in the Anchorage Forecast Office the night the Exxon Valdez grounded. During the response, Dave provided weather information to the people involved. Not long after the citizens' council was formed, his office began receiving The Observer. He followed the council's efforts for several years before joining OSPR last year.

The committee focuses on reducing the size and frequency of oil spills, as well as reducing the harm they cause. Dave's experience in Alaska weather forecasting provides valuable input for committee actions and recommendations, as his career frequently involved forecasting wind and sea conditions, obstructions to visibility such as fog and snow, icing conditions due to freezing spray and even sea ice conditions.



**ECO-TOURISM:** Retired meteorologist Dave Goldstein now runs an eco-tourism business in Prince William Sound. He also serves on the council's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Committee. Photos courtesy of Dave Goldstein.

Dave says making accurate forecasts, mentoring younger employees, and traveling Alaska were highlights of that job. He got a bachelor's degree in meteorology from Penn State University in 1970 and started on a master's in the same field. Before he finished, the National Weather Service offered him a position, and he worked for that agency in Washington, D.C., his birthplace, for several years.

In 1974, he moved to Fairbanks as lead forecaster. He finished his weather service career as the Anchorage office's first warning coordination meteorologist, or liaison between the National Weather Service and all user groups including local governments, state organizations, federal agencies, private and public groups, schools, and

other organizations. Along the way, he helped establish the popular "Alaska Weather" show, which airs every night on public television.

Dave received numerous awards during his career as a meteorologist, including the National Weather Association "Outstanding Meteorologist" award in 1984 as recognition for a job well done while monitoring unusually destructive flooding in Kotzebue.

Family is central in Dave's life. He lives with his wife, Bonnie, in a condo in Whittier. His daughter, Michelle, and her family are nearby in Anchorage. And his step-daughters and their families live in the Lower 48 but return to Alaska nearly every year.

Besides family, Dave spends time on fishing, hiking, boating, exercise,

wildlife watching, and travel.

"I enjoy helping others," he says. "I enjoy working to make my small community a better place to live in and visit."

Besides volunteering with the citizens' council, his efforts include participation in national and local Whittier-based groups.

Prince William Sound Eco-Charters, established in 2000, offers not only the usual trips for fishing, sightseeing, and photography, but also kayak hauling, transportation to off-the-beaten-path coves to hike or camp, and custom trips.

Two trips stand out as special memories for Dave.

The first involved a paraplegic man who had just graduated from high school and had dreamed since childhood of going fishing. Dave was unsure of how this would work on his 24-foot boat, the Chinook, but decided to give it a try. The family caught their limit of halibut, watched humpbacks breach, and saw several pods of killer whales, as well as puffins and cormorants. Several weeks later, Dave received a heartfelt letter of gratitude from the family.

Another memorable trip involved an older couple. The husband was ill, and the wife wanted to take him on one last fishing trip. Rain and choppy seas did not hinder catching fish, though, and the others on board paid special attention to the ailing man.

At the end of the charter, the wife pressed a bill into Dave's hand and bid farewell. Thinking this was a customary tip of \$10 or \$20, he tucked it into his pocket without looking. Later that day he realized it was a \$100 bill, so he contacted the woman and asked if she had made a mistake; if so, he said, he'd gladly return the money. She replied that she knew exactly what she gave him, and wanted to thank him from the bottom of her heart for the wonderful experience they'd had.

Dave says it reminded him of what someone had said about running a charter business—that he might not make a lot of money, but he would make a lot of friends.

## HISTORY: Will tap memories of the oil spill of 1989

Continued from Page 1

to follow approximately a year later.

The council plans to distribute many free copies of the oral history to libraries, regulators, elected officials, and oil-industry personnel. Additional copies will be sold at printing cost.

In addition, the council plans to make the history downloadable as an electronic book from its web site, [www.pwsrca.org](http://www.pwsrca.org). The transcribed interviews will also be posted there, and, as technology allows, so will the recordings of the interviews.

Bushell is a veteran Alaska writer who produced a series of oral history interviews that ran for years in the Anchorage Daily News. They were later compiled into a two-volume book called "We Alaskans – Stories of people who helped build the Great Land."

"I'm extremely excited that the spill project is under way," Bushell said. "I look forward to traveling around Alaska with my recorder and capturing what people remember about those days."



Sharon Bushell of Homer is the oral historian for the council's project. Photo courtesy of Sharon Bushell.

### Council Meeting Schedule

The citizens' council board of directors meets three times annually. Here is the tentative schedule for the coming year:

September 20-21, 2007: Kodiak  
January 24-25, 2008: Anchorage  
May 1-2, 2008: Valdez

Agendas and other meeting-related materials are available on the council web site at [www.pwsrca.org/about/boardintro.html](http://www.pwsrca.org/about/boardintro.html).

Or, contact either council office: Anchorage, 907-277-7222, or Valdez, 907-834-5000.

**From the Executive Director**

# Differing c-plan processes show value of citizen role

Approximately four years ago, Alyeska Pipeline started work on the complex process of preparing a new oil-spill contingency plan for its tanker terminal in Valdez. From our perspective, the company couldn't have handled it better.

Alyeska and the state Department of Environmental Conservation set up a working group to develop the new plan and invited us to participate. Our concerns have been resolved along the way, and both we and Alyeska are confident the plan will do a good job of preventing oil spills at the Valdez terminal, and of ensuring an effective response if one should occur. When it's submitted to the conservation department for approval in a few weeks, we have no doubt it will make it through its review by the agency and then by the public with few, if any, changes.

We consider this such a good example of how citizen involvement should work that we have nominated Alyeska for a Legacy Award, given annually by the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force for exceptional projects in oil spill prevention, preparedness, or response; we also recommended that the state's Division of Spill Prevention and Response be recognized for its part in the process. As I said in my letter of nomination, "This workgroup's collaborative and cooperative approach to continuous improvement of the terminal contingency plan is unique in the State of Alaska."

Also about four years ago, the shipping companies that haul oil out of the Valdez terminal started work on a new contingency plan for preventing and

responding to tanker oil spills. The contrast could not have been more stark. We were almost completely excluded from the process, and did not see a draft of the new tanker plan until just before it was submitted to the state in February of this year.

Once we did see it, we identified many deficiencies, as did the state. The Department of Environmental Conservation deemed it 'insufficient for review,' meaning it wasn't even good enough to go out for public comment, the final stage in the process of developing a contingency plan.

What was wrong with the plan? The conservation department's basic complaint was that the plan wasn't specific enough to show how or even whether it would work. As the agency said in its rejection letter to the shippers, "detail is lacking throughout the plan to allow the Department and the Public to determine how you intend to conduct and support your prevention and response objectives."

The agency listed 24 specific defects in just three areas of the plan, and went on to caution the shippers that those areas "are, by no means, the only areas which need work in order for the Plan to be sufficient."

Now the shippers have started over, and this time they're following Alyeska's example. They have formed a working group and included us. We're happy to sit down with them to share our ideas and our nearly two decades of experience overseeing crude oil transportation in Prince William Sound. We hope for a final product as good as the one coming

from Alyeska for its tanker terminal.

Still, the situation is far from ideal. The time lost on the unsatisfactory version submitted by the shippers in February has left everyone involved under a level of deadline pressure that makes it harder to perform a thorough

review and achieve the kind of productive working group we enjoyed with the Alyeska plan.

When Congress passed the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, it identified complacency as one of the causes of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. "One way to combat this complacency," Congress declared, "is to involve local citizens in the process of preparing, adopting, and revising oil spill contingency plans."

Congress's wisdom has been demonstrated anew by the different outcomes of the two different contingency planning processes we've seen over the past four years.

We hope the shippers take a lesson from this experience: citizen oversight isn't just good for the environment, it's good for the oil industry, too, because it helps get things right the first time.

• John Devens is executive director of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council.



John Devens

**Alyeska Viewpoint**

# Pipeline control center is relocating to Anchorage

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company will move its Operations Control Center from Valdez to Anchorage late this year. The control center is currently located at the Valdez Marine Terminal and has been in continuous operation since 1977. At that time, Valdez was the most feasible choice for this operational task based on its proximity and access to the pipeline backbone telecommunications system.

In the last 30 years, numerous changes have occurred in both the infrastructure of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System and the technical assumptions underlying the original scope of the control center and the choice of the Valdez terminal as its site. The high bandwidth, wider range of access, and declining cost of telecommunication circuits made it possible for the company to consider locations such as Fairbanks and Anchorage. A modern distributed Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system now being implemented makes it easier to operate the pipeline system from another site such as Anchorage or Fairbanks, and to implement an alternate control site.

In line with these developments as well as other recommendations, in 1999, Alyeska conducted a risk-based assessment to further investigate the optimal location for the control center. A major

conclusion of this analysis was that the best location is Anchorage, with Fairbanks as the second-rated site. In 2003, Alyeska took the information from the earlier study and conducted an economic and risk analysis for the optimal site for the control center. The findings of that study indicated that Anchorage is the best regional site for the control center.

Anchorage, because of its location, ranks most highly as it best integrates with pipeline system infrastructure, allowing for enhanced functional and organization efficiency. A centralized location more efficiently supports the majority of personnel who interact daily with the control center. This includes measurements personnel, pipeline schedulers, operations engineering, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system maintenance, telecommunication providers and control system vendors. With the control center at the hub of the telecommunications infrastructure for the pipeline system, there is redundant capability to control pipeline and terminal operations. Most pipeline operations centers are either co-located with the company headquarters or are located in close proximity.

In addition to being nearer to Anchorage-based personnel, the location also takes advantage of the availability of public infrastructure includ-

ing access to airports, control system equipment vendors, telecomm providers, highway and surface transportation, and high availability and flexibility of flights to sites on the pipeline system. All flights traveling to pipeline locations either originate in Anchorage or must pass through it, and this central point of origin for travel makes it easier for employees to return to their families.

Alyeska did consider Fairbanks and Valdez. However, Anchorage allows for the best integration with future pipeline infrastructure under the current Strategic Reconfiguration Plan. Fairbanks ranked second overall in this analysis, with Valdez third.

It is important to emphasize that the relocation of the control center does not affect control and monitoring of the pipeline and terminal, while safety and system integrity are improved.

• Mike Joynor is Alyeska's Vice President, Oil Movements.



Mike Joynor

## BOARD: New members seated at January meeting

Continued from Page 1

responsibilities.

Moore was raised in Valdez and taught social studies and Alaskan history at the local high school. She currently teaches photography at the Prince William Sound Community College. Moore is a member of the Valdez City Council.

At the council staff level, Jessica

Cler resigned her position as administrative assistant in the Anchorage office to accept a job as canvassing director with Alaska Center for the Environment.

Also, Mary Schonberger, formerly project manager assistant in Anchorage, was promoted to office manager.



Mary Schonberger

**THE OBSERVER** is a quarterly newsletter published by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. Except where noted, Observer articles are written by Stan Jones, director of external affairs. For a free subscription to the Observer, contact a council office in Anchorage or Valdez. Contact information is available on the back page.

## Community Corner

### Poets participate in council contest

The council sponsored a Shorebird Poetry contest in Cordova, similar to the Whalefest Poetry contest last year in Kodiak. Poems are being printed in a book, and the winners will receive a ticket to the boat cruise during the Shorebird Festival, where they will read their poems. The festival is May 3-6 this year, and celebrates the arrival of millions of shorebirds passing through during their annual spring migration. Festivities include bird viewing, presentations, family activities and an evening cruise. For more information, visit [www.cordovachamber.com](http://www.cordovachamber.com).



Linda Robinson

a very interesting experience. The simulator doesn't move, but it seems like a moving boat. The illusion can cause dizziness, and, as in my case, the need to grab a wall!

For more information, see [avtec.labor.state.ak.us](http://avtec.labor.state.ak.us)

#### Conferences

In February, the council participated in the Alaska Forum on the Environment in Anchorage as a Leadership Partner. For the first time, the Forum included a film festival organized by Lisa Ka'aihue, the council's Director of Administration. It was

very successful. Over 50 films were shown, highlighting environmental topics such as non-indigenous species, Alaska Native diet, and recycling. Lisa plans to issue a call for films for the 2008 Forum this summer. Contact her at [kaaihue@pwsrca.org](mailto:kaaihue@pwsrca.org) for more information.

Speaking of film, the council will begin work in July on a film on the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, including historical footage and interviews. We hope to show this film at the International Oil Spill Conference in 2008 and the Forum on the Environment in 2009, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the spill.

The council took the booth to the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association Conference in Anchorage in early March. The theme this year was Sustainability: Banking on Nature. Presentations were given on global warming, eco tourism, the cruise ship industry and the pebble mine. Stan Stephens represents the tourism group on the council.

The next conference the council will attend is the 30<sup>th</sup> Arctic Marine Oil-spill Program, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The conference in early June provides a chance for oil spill researchers, regulators and responders to present up-to-date information on topics such as oil spill treating agents, contingency planning and containment and recovery. For more information, or to obtain proceedings, visit [www.etc-cte.ec.gc.ca/news/conferences\\_e.html](http://www.etc-cte.ec.gc.ca/news/conferences_e.html)

#### Seward ship simulator

Peter Armato of the council's Scientific Advisory Committee, Capt. Mark Devries of the Coast Guard's Anchorage office, and I had the opportunity to tour the full mission bridge simulator at the Alaska Vocational Technical Center in Seward in early April with Curt O'Halloran, head of the simulator program. This simulator, designed with some of the programming used in computer games, provides ship simulation for training in a number of maritime fields and U.S. Coast Guard approved courses.

Training capabilities include ship maneuvering and tactics, collision avoidance, docking, undocking, transiting shallow waters, and ship handling in various sea and weather conditions.

This \$2 million piece of equipment has a solid concrete foundation that holds bridge equipment for ship control, navigation, communications, and emergencies. It has windows as seen on a ship bridge, with the bow of the vessel in front. Screens behind the windows are used to project high-resolution video of actual locations, such as Resurrection Bay and Prince William Sound. The simulator can be set up to replicate any number of vessels from tankers to cruise ships to tug boats. Any number of weather conditions and sea heights up to 20 feet can be input.

About 500 students per year participate in classes at the simulator. It's



**REAL OR VIRTUAL?** The ship simulator at the Alaska Vocational Technical Center in Seward creates a convincing illusion of actually being at sea. Photo by Linda Robinson.

## Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is an independent, non-profit corporation formed after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to minimize the environmental impacts of the trans-Alaska pipeline terminal and tanker fleet.

The council has 18 member organizations, including communities affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill and groups representing Alaska Native, aquaculture, environmental, commercial fishing, recreation and tourism interests in the spill region.

The council is certified under the federal Oil Pollution Act of 1990 as the citizen advisory group for Prince William Sound, and operates under a contract with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. The contract, which is in effect as long as oil flows through the pipeline, guarantees the council's independence, provides annual funding, and ensures the council the same access to terminal facilities as state and federal regulatory agencies.

*The council's mission: Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.*

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