

Update from the District: What's Happening in your Neighborhood (6/17/11)



Dear Alaskans,

I've just returned from a three day whirlwind in New York City. I was there, along with my chief-of-staff Michael Rovito, to participate in meetings along side KABATA with potential investors for the state's Knik Arm Crossing public-private partnership or as industry calls it, P3s. **It is important that you understand this bridge is a top priority for many of the world's largest investors.** Keep reading for more on that subject.

Quote of the Week: *"The Mat-Su Borough is the 'bread basket' of Alaska."* – Sen. Linda Menard.

Investors competing to be short listed for Knik Arm Crossing Partnership



At left, Sen. Menard meets with KABATA and KABATA's consulting team at the Citigroup New York. At right, the stage is set on Citigroup's 22nd floor for the Knik Arm Crossing Industry Workshop.

From Monday through Wednesday of this week I traveled to New York City with the KABATA team to meet with potential investors for the state's public-private partnership.

The results of this conference have given me an increased spark. They were beyond excellent. With me was Michael Foster, the chairman of the KABATA Board, Andrew Niemiec, the executive director of KABATA and Kevin Hemenway, CFO of KABATA.

We met on both days from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with some of the largest investment firms on earth. All of them were vying to out-do the others and be **shortlisted as a project partner**. You could tell the industry interest from a workshop we had on Monday at Citigroup in New York. In all, almost 200 people from different companies showed up to hear the presentation. These meetings all took place ahead of a planned **RFQ (request for qualifications)** that will go out next month.

These meetings were beneficial to me because it showed just how many private sector investors are jazzed about being a part of the Knik Arm Crossing project.

I still have important legislation that needs to pass next session for the state to get the absolute best value on the project.

Here's a list of 17 companies we met with one-on-one:

- **Bilfinger Berger Project Investments Inc.**
- **ACCIONA**
- **HOCHTIEF PPP Solutions**
- **Bechtel Infrastructure Corporation**
- **China Construction America Inc./ China State Construction Engg Corp. Ltd.**
- **Plenary Group**
- **InfraRed Capital Partners**
- **Meridiam Infrastructure**
- **CINTRA USA, LLC**
- **Bouygues TP**
- **Balfour Beatty Capital, Inc.**
- **OHL USA**
- **Macquarie**
- **The Walshe Group**
- **AECON Concessions & AECON Infrastructure Group**
- **PCL Civil Constructors, Inc.**
- **Fluor**

(Wow, we still maintain the lure to do business in Alaska!)

I cannot stress enough the amazement and excitement I felt when each of these companies came in and wanted to know what they needed to do to get on the short list of potential partners for the state. All of them said the same statement, however: it's the right time for Alaska to get this bridge!



At left, KABATA Chairman Michael Foster, Mr. Foster's son, Tyler, and chief-of-staff Michael after an industry meeting at Citigroup in New York City. At right, Sen. Menard and Michael Foster stand in front of an odd sidewalk inhabitant.

P3 Conference Shows the new Way of the Future



Sen. Menard and KABATA Board Chairman Mike Foster network during the P3 conference

Along with attending hours of meetings with individual investors, Michael and I also listened as **public policy experts** from across the country held a forum about the **public-private partnership** method. One of the most interesting points made about **P3s** was their **viability in a stagnant income economy**. At this time in our nation's history, the federal government and most state and local governments are unwilling to raise taxes in any way shape or form. This is good for the individual, but hits infrastructure hard. That's where **P3s come in**. By partnering with the private sector, a government reaps the benefits of infrastructure development while the private partner reaps the profits that come with the agreement. Residents benefit because they've received new and improved infrastructure without being taxed more for it.

Right now, **Canada is the leader among countries that use P3s**. They've also been **popular in Europe**, but that region is experiencing a severe construction slow down, and **investors are turning toward the United States**. The phrase used to describe it is there is a "**new wave of European immigrants**" heading to the United States.

Since Alaska is new to the P3 game, I posed a question to the panel of experts for advice on getting **P3** related legislation through. I'm happy to report that the answers were everything KABATA is already doing, such as **educating other legislators** on exactly what a P3 is, having guidelines to procure the P3, have **executive branch support** and highlight the benefits statewide, among other items.

The P3 market is an exciting one, and I'm so glad Alaska is getting into the market with KABATA as the first go. As a side note, organizers told us that as soon as industry heard KABATA was going to be there the conference sold out.



The not-too-distant future: The Knik Arm Crossing.

Presenting SB 80 to the Wasilla Chamber of Commerce



At left, Sen. Menard prepares to give a speech to the Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce. At right, the senator talks with Rep. Bill Stoltze after the meeting. Rep. Stoltze is a former KABATA board member and an avid bridge supporter



Sen. Menard, mid-speech, highlights the points of her Senate Bill 80. She also gave an update on the Capital Budget and what projects Wasilla received in the Capital Budget.

I took a great opportunity to wrap-up session and present my top legislative priority to the **Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce** last week during their Tuesday meeting. To recap, **SB 80** is a bill I filed that would garner the best value for the state of Alaska during the procurement of a public-private partnership for the **Knik Arm Crossing**. I'm working hard on this legislation all summer and will charge hard during the beginning of session in 2012.

I'll give updates on this bill as they come.

Senator Menard named Mat-Su Politician of the Year



Thank you good people of the Mat-Su for voting me best politician! Allow me to share this recognition with my capable staff, namely: Michael Rovito, Chief-of-Staff, Edna DeVries, office manager, Joan Klapperich, committee aide, Cathy Tilton, Legislative Council aide.

Success Story: Sen. Menard Helps cut Nugen's Ranch Ribbon



Between two Mayors: From left, Mat-Su Borough Mayor Larry DeVilbiss, Sen. Menard and Wasilla Mayor Verne Rupright.



Part of the new facility at the Point MacKenzie location.



From left, Sen. Menard with U.S. Rep. Don Young, with Diane Kaplan, and, at right, U.S. Rep. Don Young meets with Darcie Salmon.



The ribbon is cut and the new Nugen's Ranch is ready to go at its new location.

Good people, doing good things for their neighbors in need; and for all the right reasons....that was the message that echoed loud and clear during the **Nugen's Ranch** ribbon cutting at their new location in Point MacKenzie.

Distinguished guests included Nugen's founders, **Leonard and Henrietta Nugen**, Executive Director of the Ranch, **Karen Nugen-Logan**, along with U.S. Rep **Don Young**, **Senator Menard**, **Borough Mayor DeVilbiss**, **Mayor Rupright**, and U.S. Sen. **Mark Begich's aide Mary Kvalheim**. Each person gave brief accolades to the deserving Nugen family, staff and volunteers that have dedicated their time at the **only residential drug and alcohol addiction treatment facility in the Valley**. Truly a success story, Nugen's ranch has helped over **2,837** men and women overcome addiction and integrate back into society by receiving long term treatments lasting from six months to two years. The ranch's new location, **which is 110 acres**, was necessary because of a DOT project to improve Seward Meridian Parkway that is about to take much of the current location's land.

Foreseeing the road expansion, Nugen's Board of Directors purchased land and built a new facility near Point MacKenzie with a generous **\$2.8 million dollars** from the **Mat-Su Health Foundation**, **\$500,000 dollars** from the **Rasmuson Foundation**, state appropriations, and federal dollars. Congratulations to Nugen's Ranch on their new facility and location!

Photos from Colony Days!



On the left, Jim and Patty Herrick of Nikiski share the stand with Sen. Menard. The pair was celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary. On the right, local Olympic hockey star Kerry Weiland rides an antique tractor in the parade.

International Relations: The Japanese Self-Defense Force Visits Alaska



At Left, Sen. Menard on a Japanese Naval vessel with sailors in the background. At right, the senator talks to Rep. Lance Pruitt, the only other legislator to attend the event,



Legislative Council aide Cathy Tilton and the senator take time to read about earthquake and tsunami relief efforts in Japan.



Rear Admiral Umio Otsuka speaks to the crowd. The admiral is the commander of the Japan Training Squadron.

One of the blessings as a senator is my job allows me to meet some very interesting and impressive people, and June 6 was no exception. My Legislative Council aide Cathy Tilton and I went on board a **Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force** naval ship and got to meet Rear Admiral Umio Otsuka and his crew. I was also happy to run into Anchorage **Rep. Lance Pruitt**, the only other legislator who came to the event. Going on board the ships and meeting sailors from another country who have stepped up to defend their way of life was also very educational and fun. As we all know, our history with Japan is complicated, but we have great relations now. The Maritime Defense Force has been making voyages like this since 1957, and has been to anchorage seven times in all those years. Japan is important to Alaska economically because they import a greater amount of Alaska seafood than any other country in the world. **We are the closest United States port to Japan, and the closest U.S. state, for that matter.** The Japanese's short visit was a nice, multi-cultural touch to my summer.

Meeting with Fine Fairbanks Folks



Sen. Menard, keeping true to her word, visits still one more Legislative Information Office in Fairbanks. The first of July she and her Legislative Council aide Cathy Tilton will find themselves visiting LIO offices on the Kenai Peninsula. In total, there are 23 LIOs in the state of Alaska. In this photo, from left, is Vivian Stiver, aide to Rep. Tammie Wilson, Karen Lidster, aide to Sen. John Coghill, Rep. Tammie Wilson, Sen. Menard and Rynniva Moss, aide to Sen. John Coghill.

Mat-Su Regional Medical Center makes positive impact on community



At left, Sen. Menard is still grinding it away on the top Category A hospital board, while all the others in this photo, except Craig Thorn, have come and gone. From left are: Jack Williams, Janet Kincaid, Craig Thorn, Sen. Menard, Clyde Boyer (a legend for the hospital's joint venture purchase), Sarah Palin and Harold Newcomb.

The Mat-Su Regional Medical Center has been growing ever since it opened. And because of that growth, very positive impacts on the community have followed. I'm serving my second term as a member of the **hospital's board of directors** and was on the Mat-Su Health Foundation for over a decade, but I recently termed out. I marvel at the hospital's growth, especially as a member of this community.

Here are some financial facts about the hospital from the beginning of the year until March 2011:

- \$10.2 million in payroll
- \$3.5 million in employee benefits
- \$1.2 million in capital investments

Dollars Spent Locally

- Utilities: \$507,139
- Maintenance: \$952,159
- Medical Specialty Fees: \$13,656
- Community and Education Outreach: \$115,656

Total Community Benefits: \$25.1 million.

Here's some statistics on the hospital's business until March 2011:

- ER Visits – 6,857
- Inpatient Admissions – 1,185
- Outpatient Visits – 24,573
- Surgeries – 1,584
- Deliveries - 194

The hospital is the largest private employer in the Mat-Su, and, obviously, a huge asset to the community. It's one of 133 hospitals owned by Community Health Systems.

News from Anchorage... Valley residents to compete in 2011 Special Olympics World Games in Greece



From left, Melony Adams, Krystina Collins, Layne Larson-Collins and Melissa Adams share a quick photo with aide Cathy Tilton in Sen. Menard's Anchorage office. The group is heading to the 2011 Special Olympics World Games in Greece. Hanging on the wall in the background are gorgeous northern lights photos depicting yet another extreme beauty in Alaska.

A great group of Valley residents stopped by my Anchorage office recently. Cathy was there to greet them, and here is a write-up in **Cathy's own words**:

A wonderful group of **athletes** stopped by Senator Menard's Anchorage Office this week. Visitors included **Sandra, Melony, and Melissa Adams** from **Wasilla** along with **Layne Larson-Collins and Krystina Collins** from **Palmer**. They came to visit in preparation for the **2011 Special Olympics World Games** being held in **Athens, Greece**. Opening ceremonies are set for June 25 and these athletes are ready. Sandra and Layne (team chaperons) proudly announced that Melony, Krystina, and Melissa are long time Special Olympics Alaska Team Mat-Su Athletes. Adding to the excitement was the announcement that **Melissa** has qualified as **one of three** Alaskan Athletes to represent Alaska on Team USA. Team USA consists of 317 extraordinary athletes who will compete against 7,000 others from 180 countries. Along with perfecting their skills before heading to Greece, team members have been holding bake sales and selling Dairy Queen cards as fundraisers to help with travel costs. I want to give a sincere **Thank You** to **Melony, Krystina, and Melissa** for representing the **beautiful Mat-Su Valley in Greece**, and **congratulations** to each of you for your accomplishments. **Further Congratulations** to **Melissa**, a proven extraordinary athlete, for representing the great **State of Alaska** on **Team USA**.

Good Luck to you as you compete and know that we could not be prouder.

Spike in Pike Numbers....Fish on!!



Fishery Biologist Samantha Oslund smiles after giving a speech to the Palmer Chamber of Commerce.

Samantha Oslund, Fishery Biologist for the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, gave a compelling PowerPoint presentation to the **Palmer Chamber of Commerce** this week discussing the growing numbers of Northern Pike in our lakes and streams. With salmon population decreasing in some area waters,(ex. Alexander Creek), the villain **Northern Pike** is on the ‘wanted poster.’ With a voracious appetite for salmon, (they will eat 41 salmon fry at a time!) and anything else they may find in the water, including ducks, and other pike, as they grow older, the bigger they get, and so does their appetite. With the salmon population in jeopardy, the word from Fish and Game is ... **“fish as much as you want for the invasive northern pike!”**

- **There is no bag, possession, or size limit on pike year round.**
- **Do not release pike back into the water alive.**
- **Discard dead pike in a responsible manner or harvest the catch.**

Remember, check all regulations before fishing anywhere, and be sure to carry your license with you. For the 2011 Alaska Sport Fishing Regulations Summary, go to www.adfg.alaska.gov Happy Fishing!

Matanuska Telephone Association... ‘The company you Own’ Annual Meeting



At left, aide Joan Klapperich stops for a post-meeting photo with Greg Berberich, MTA’s chief executive offer. At right, the very sizable crowd listens in during the meeting.

Matanuska Telephone Association held its **58th Annual Membership** meeting this past week to a crowd of **600 members at Raven Hall in Palmer**. A fabulous dinner was prepared by the **Job Corp** culinary students, and incumbents **Catherine Fosselman and Al Strawn** were **re-elected** to serve another term on the board. Of special interest is that the valley cooperative, **MTA**, was **awarded a five year contract** from the **Mat-Su Borough School District** to install **fiber optic infrastructure** to nine schools in the District, providing internet access made possible through State funding. **Congratulations are in order to Mr. Greg Berberich for leading the successful Cooperative the past 10 plus years.**

Wasilla Chamber of Commerce: Update

The spotlight this week for the Chamber Luncheon was **Wasilla City Mayor, Verne Rupright**, giving the **‘State of the City’** address. Rupright was upbeat, and gave a positive account of the City’s affairs. Included in his speech, he remarked that the budget was successfully cut by **16.4 percent** over the previous year and the city sales tax cut by a half percent. **Plans for a new post office are in the works.** The downtown area has been much more user friendly with the addition of a parking area which has increased business in the center of town. **The Menard Center** is being refurbished with new flooring, and a removable floor has been purchased for the ice arena. Also discussed was the **Main street couplet, road upgrades, airport rezoning and more.** So much more that local **business man Darcie Salmon** asked “Why did you do so much?” which received chuckles from the room filled with business men and women.

What’s the next big upcoming highlight? The **3rd of July fireworks** scheduled for **11 p.m.**, and the **4th of July parade** to kick off at **11a.m.**, featuring **John Klapperich and myself as emcees**; sponsored by the **Wasilla Chamber of Commerce.**

**From a famous father, the entire staff and me, “Happy Father’s Day”
to all you Dads out there!**



Michael Rovito

Your Voice in the Senate

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda Menard".

Senator Linda Menard