



Tuesday, September 29th, Ketchikan's Ted Ferry Civic Center



Andrew Barkis, Partner, Atlas Global Ventures

Rep. Andrew Barkis represents the 2nd Legislative District. He was first appointed to the Washington House of Representatives in February 2016 and is currently serving his fifth term. Andrew was born and raised in Chehalis. He earned the rank of Eagle Scout through the Boy Scouts of America, the highest achievement in scouting. He graduated from Seattle University with a degree in communication and completed the university's Army ROTC program. Although he had hoped to become an Army officer, a knee injury sustained during training ended his goal of military service. Since 2019, Andrew has served as the ranking Republican on the House Transportation Committee. As one of the Legislature's transportation budget leaders, he has focused on fiscal responsibility, practical reform and better prioritization of existing transportation dollars. His goals are to keep costs down, oppose new burdens on drivers and ensure promised projects are completed with the revenue the state already collects. Andrew's experience as a local business

owner has shaped his work on Washington's housing affordability and homelessness crises. Increasing housing supply remains one of his top priorities. He continues to push for removing unnecessary barriers that delay or prevent affordable housing from being built across the state. Andrew has also made fighting Washington's drug epidemic a priority, an issue shaped by the deeply personal impact opioid and heroin addiction has had on his family. He supports policies that strengthen public safety, hold offenders accountable and help connect people struggling with addiction to treatment and recovery resources. Andrew and his wife, Lisa, live on Lake St. Clair in Thurston County and have been married for more than 30 years. They have two grown sons, Cameron and Evan. They enjoy spending time outdoors, especially hiking and camping around the Pacific Northwest. Andrew is active in his community and has served with several local organizations, including the Lacey Chamber of Commerce, Yelm Chamber of Commerce, Gateway Rotary of Thurston County, Lacey Sunrise Lions, National Federation of Independent Business and the Olympia chapter of the National Association of Residential Property Managers. He has also been involved with Boy Scouts Troop 222 since 2000, served on the board of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County for six years and currently serves as an adviser to Homes First.

Mayor Austin Otos, Ketchikan Gateway Borough-coming soon!

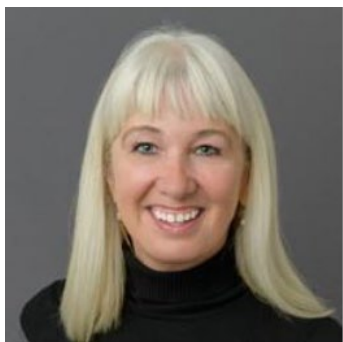
Bruce Agnew, Director, PNWER-coming soon!

Mayor Bob Sivertsen, City of Ketchikan

Bob Sivertsen is a lifelong Ketchikan resident and longtime public servant with deep roots in the community. Born in Ketchikan in 1950, he spent nearly four decades working in the city's Public Works Department before being appointed to the Ketchikan City Council in 2009. He served on the council through 2017 and was elected Mayor the following year, later returning to the role after the 2024 election. Beyond city government, Sivertsen has been a prominent regional leader. He serves as Chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging, where he helped rewrite the statewide senior plan required under the Older Americans Act, and he is also past Chairman of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency and presently serving as the Board Treasure. His civic involvement spans decades: he is a Sealaska shareholder, a member of the Alaska Pioneer Advisory Board, and has volunteered extensively in youth



sports and community organizations. Sivertsen is known for his practical leadership style, focus on infrastructure and fiscal stability, and commitment to representing Ketchikan in regional and legislative matters.



Commissioner Cathy Muñoz, AK Dept of Labor and Workforce Development

Deputy Commissioner Cathy Muñoz is a life-long Alaskan, small business owner, and the mother of two. She served three terms in the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly and was elected in 2008 to the Alaska House of Representatives, where she served four terms. Workforce development has been a key priority throughout Muñoz's public service career. In the Legislature, she served as chairwoman of the Community and Regional Affairs Committee and was a member of the House Finance Committee. She advocated for the University of Alaska vocational training programs, and secured funding for Alaska's first mining simulator. She also sponsored a provision in state law allowing for tax credit contributions to vocational education programs. Muñoz holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, and is a graduate of the Emerging Leaders Academy at the University of Virginia. She serves on numerous boards and commissions including the Salvation Army Advisory Board, the Juneau Parks Foundation and the Advisory Board of the University of Alaska Southeast. Deputy Commissioner Muñoz is the mother of Matthew and Mercedes and is married to Juan Muñoz. In 2014 she was adopted into the Raven Coho clan. Her Tlingit name is Kee Nax i Klaa, an honored name given to her by the Kunz family of Juneau, Alaska.



Craig Tornga, Marine Director, AMHS

Mr. Tornga has extensive experience both in the marine industry and in managing multifaceted organizations. He started his maritime career sailing aboard Crowley's ocean-going vessels and spent over 20 years working his way up through the Crowley's Marine Services Division.



Senator Dan Sullivan, State of Alaska

Dan Sullivan was elected in 2014 and serves on four Senate committees: the Armed Services Committee, where he is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness; the Environment and Public Works Committee; the Veterans' Affairs Committee; and the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, where he is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Security and the Coast Guard.



Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, AK DF&G

Doug Vincent-Lang spent his 34-year public service career at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game before accepting the position of commissioner in January 2019. A scientist with a focus on fulfilling the department's mission, Vincent-Lang began work at the department as a fisheries research and management biologist for the Division of Sport Fish in 1981. He held the positions of regional management and research coordinator and assistant director for 28 years in the Division of Sport Fish. During his tenure at the Division of Sport Fish, Vincent-Lang worked on a number of high-level research and policy issues for the state. He evaluated habitat needs and instream flow requirements of fish while working on the feasibility assessment of the Susitna River Hydro-electric project. He was instrumental in integrating planning into the management of Alaska's recreational fisheries by leading an effort to develop and implement the first-ever strategic plan for the Division of Sport Fish. In 2012 he was named Director of the Division of Wildlife where he managed Alaska's wildlife under the sustained yield principles and public trust doctrine principles. He led legislative wildlife issues on the state, national and international levels. In addition to his experience in both fisheries and wildlife management, Doug has served as the Endangered Species Act Coordinator for the State of Alaska. He has represented the State of Alaska on a wide range of policy issues including climate change, arctic, and marine policy issues. He holds a B.S. degree in biology/population dynamics from the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay and a M.S. degree in Biological Oceanography from the University of Alaska – Fairbanks.



Emily Edenshaw, CEO, Ketchikan Indian Community

Emily Edenshaw is a nationally recognized Alaska Native leader and the Tribal Administrator/CEO of Ketchikan Indian Community, the second largest federally and state recognized Tribes in Alaska. She also serves as Interim CEO of Ketchikan Tribal Business Corporation. Emily is Yupiaq and a member of the Haida Raven Thunderbird Clan. A longtime advocate for Alaska Native people, Emily previously served as President and CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center for nearly six years, where she advanced cultural preservation, healing, education, cultural tourism, and greater understanding of the history and ongoing impacts of the boarding school era. Prior to that, Emily worked at Tlingit & Haida and oversaw many of its business and economic development efforts. Emily's leadership extends nationally, statewide, and regionally. In February 2024, President Joe Biden nominated Emily to serve as a member of the National Council on the Humanities. Emily also currently serves on several national and statewide boards, including Native Americans in Philanthropy, the Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation, and the Healing Hand Foundation. A fierce advocate for Indigenous cultural tourism, Emily drafted the first statewide cultural tourism plan, previously served on Alaska's state tourism board and was instrumental in helping establish a dedicated Tribal seat, strengthening Indigenous representation within Alaska's tourism industry. Emily holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and strategic communications from the University of Alaska Anchorage, an Executive MBA from Alaska Pacific University and is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where her research focuses on Alaska Native boarding schools and healing. She was also selected as a 2024–2025 Obama Foundation USA Leader. At the heart of Emily's leadership is a commitment to strengthening Tribal sovereignty, building healthier communities, and creating a future where Indigenous people, cultures, and ways of knowing are valued and thriving. She lives by a simple but powerful principle: Be a good Ancestor.



Emma Pokon, Regional Administrator, EPA Region 10-coming soon!

President Gloria Burns, Ketchikan Indian Community-coming soon!



Mayor Herb Pond, Prince Rupert

Herb was re-elected mayor of Prince Rupert in 2022, after a 14-year sabbatical. He previously served as mayor during the tumultuous years of 2002 to 2008. In the worst economic collapse on record, his team focused on driving down costs and attracting new employment, culminating in the opening of Fairview Container Terminal in 2007. Herb credits partnerships as the key to the community's recovery - partnerships with labour, industry, First Nations, other communities, and senior governments. Herb has broad industry experience in diverse sectors - forestry, transportation, tourism, energy - and has owned several small businesses. He and his wife Sandy raised four children in Prince Rupert and are currently exploring the joys of long distance grandparenting. Herb has been a fierce advocate for stronger ties between Alaska and British Columbia and proudly touts his connection to SE

Conference as an honorary lifetime member.

Jackie Pata, CEO, Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority-coming soon!



James A. Crawford, Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs, USDOT

US DOT Assistant Secretary James A. Crawford is a member of the Forest County Potawatomi Community located in Northern Wisconsin. He was awarded the Madison 365 Wisconsin's most Influential Native American Leaders 2023 and the BizTimes Media Wisconsin 275 Most Influential Business Leaders in 2024. James was the initial Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Potawatomi Business Development Corporation, which is now Potawatomi Ventures. James has spent the past 39 years working for his Tribe including being elected to the roles of Vice-Chairman, Council Member, Secretary and most recently resigning his Tribal Chairman position to take on the role of US DOT Assistant Secretary. As Tribal Chairman James was the fourth tribal leader to sign a Self-Governance Compact with the US DOT. A strong advocate for Tribal Sovereignty James

enters this role from the viewpoint of a Tribal Leader and looks forward to advancing the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program.



Jill Melcher, Southeast Planning Chief, AKDOT&PF

Jill Melcher is a seasoned transportation planning expert with a career spanning over two decades with the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. Currently, she serves as the Southcoast Region Planning Chief in Juneau. In this role, Jill supervises a team of planners who support the Southcoast Region by identifying, prioritizing, and programming projects across all modes of transportation. Jill's educational background includes a Master's degree in Rural, Town, and Regional Planning, and a Bachelor's degree in Resource Management, both from the University of Montana. Jill's expertise, innovative approach, and collaborative spirit make her a respected leader in the field of transportation planning.



President Joe Williams, Jr., Organized Village of Saxman

Joe Williams, Jr. was born and raised in Saxman, Alaska. Graduated from Ketchikan High School; he obtained a business degree from Alaska Pacific University and has been an active Christian for 46 years. Joe has been married for 51 years, has six children, 6 granddaughters and 4 grandsons. Joe & Suzi were selected Parents of the year 1997 by Alaska Federation of Natives. Elected Tribal President Organized Village of Saxman for 15 years. Vice-Chairman for Alaska Inter-Tribal Council for 8 years. Served Area Vice President for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) for eight years. A Tlingit and Haida Delegate 8 years, appointed to the Tlingit and Haida Regional Housing Authority board and served 5 years as Chairman of the board for 3 of those 5 years. Joe served as Mayor of the City of Saxman for six years and is the first Tlingit to be elected as Mayor for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and is the only elected Mayor for a city

(Saxman) and Borough (Ketchikan) go serve simultaneously in the State of Alaska. Elected Grand President of Alaska Native Brotherhood and was appointed to the Ruralcap Board and has been serving as Chairman of the board for 3 years. Presently Joe is serving on the Board of Trustees for Alaska Pacific University and is Chairman of the Elders Council for that board. Joe began his walking tour business 32 years ago; his company is Where The Eagle Walks. The business offers not only walking tours, but specialty tours, lectures on Tlingit Culture.



Commissioner John Crowther, AK Dept. of Natural Resources

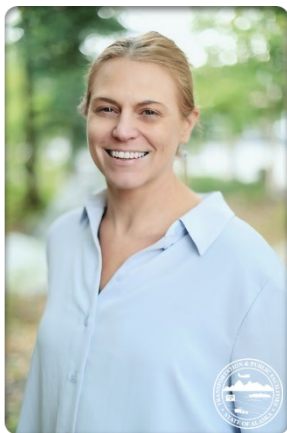
John Crowther has served as Commissioner of Alaska's Department of Natural Resources since October 2025. He's held multiple roles within DNR since 2012 and served under the prior eight Commissioners. John leads a dedicated staff of approximately 900 full-time and 300 seasonal employees in the Department's mission to develop, conserve and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest. DNR encompasses divisions as varied as Agriculture, Forestry & Fire Protection, Geological & Geophysical Surveys, Mining, Land & Water, Oil & Gas, and Parks & Outdoor Recreation. John previously served as Director of the Governor's office in Washington, DC and on the professional staff of the U.S. Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee after receiving his law degree from Georgetown University. He grew up and happily lives in Anchorage, Alaska.

Commissioner Julie Sande, AK DCCED-coming soon!



Katie Koester, SEC President, City & Borough of Juneau

Katie Koester began working as Juneau's City Manager in September 2023. She joined the City and Borough of Juneau in 2020, serving as the Director of the Public Works and Engineering Department, one of CBJ's largest departments. Prior to joining CBJ, Koester served as the City Manager of Homer, Alaska for five years. She holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Alaska Southeast along with a Master of Political Science from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and a Bachelor of Arts in Government from Smith College.



Katherine Keith, Deputy Commissioner, AKDOT&PF

Katherine Keith is the Deputy Commissioner for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. Previously Ms. Keith served as the Change Manager Director for Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. Ms. Keith is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and Agile Practitioner (PMI-ACP). Katherine works with cross-functional interdisciplinary teams on initiatives such as the Sustainable Transportation and Energy Program, Agile Project Delivery in Multi-modal Transportation, Charting the Course; Reimagining AMHS (Alaska Marine Highway System), and New Ways of Working in dynamic environments. She has previously worked on projects in energy storage and distribution, transportation, ferry electrification, and strategic planning. Ms. Keith earned a BS interdisciplinary degree in Renewable Energy Engineering from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. She is an author, dog musher, and endurance athlete.

Kevin Adams, NADO/RPO America-coming soon!



Senator Lisa Murkowski, State of Alaska



Lisa Murkowski, Alaska's senior U.S. Senator, is a third generation Alaskan proudly serving as the first Alaskan born senator. Murkowski was born in Ketchikan and raised in towns across the state, including Wrangell, Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. She is married to Verne Martell, and they have two grown sons. Lisa loves spending time in the Alaska outdoors. She's an avid skier, has hiked on glaciers, enjoys fall duck hunts, and has a pretty impressive King Salmon mounted on her office wall. Since joining the Senate in 2002, Senator Murkowski has worked tirelessly for Alaskans and earned a reputation in the Senate for her ability to work collaboratively and across the aisle to reach common sense solutions. Murkowski is well known for her love and dedication to her state, which means putting Alaska first.

Meilani Schijvens, Rain Coast Data



Meilani Schijvens is the owner of Rain Coast Data and author of *Southeast Alaska by the Numbers*. A lifelong Juneauite and former executive director of Southeast Conference, she brings three decades of experience studying the region's economy - and a knack for turning complex data into clear, compelling stories.

Nils Andreassen, Executive Director, AML



Nils has a degree in Peace and Development from the University of Bradford in England and his background in rural and international development, Alaska, and Arctic policy issues fit well within AML's mission to support and strengthen local governments. Nils is currently pursuing a master's degree in governance and entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas through the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Tromso. Nils lives in Juneau with his family.



Commissioner Randy Bates, AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Randy was appointed Commissioner-designee in May 2025 and confirmed by the Alaska Legislature in May 2026. He has served the state for more than 25 years with a majority of that time as the director of the Water Division (Department of Environmental Conservation), Habitat Division (Department of Fish and Game), and the Division of Coastal and Ocean Management (Department of Natural Resources). In each of these positions he was responsible for establishing public policy, resource management directives, and permitting requirements in Alaska as they relate water, fish habitat, ocean resources, and more. Randy values and thrives when working with appointed state and federal agency officials, agency staff members, resource industry proponents and opponents, municipalities, Alaska Native Tribes and Regional Corporations, conservation organizations, and interested members of the public to evaluate, explain, and resolve natural resource issues and conflicts. His passion and appreciation for the environment, clean water, and plentiful natural resources in Alaska began around the age of 6, battling salmon nearly his own weight. He commercial fished through his schooling years, earned a B.S. in Fisheries from Oregon State University, and continues to commercial fish in southeast Alaska's gillnet and hand troll fisheries.



President Richard Peterson, Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Richard (Chalyee Eesh) Peterson, grew up in Kasaan, Alaska and is a lifelong Alaska Native resident of Southeast Alaska. Prior to being elected as president of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida), Richard served as CEO of Prince of Wales Tribal Enterprise Consortium, LLC (POWTEC), president of the Organized Village of Kasaan (OVK), mayor/city council member for the City of Kasaan, and member of the Southeast Island School District Board of Education. He has been a delegate to the Central Council since 2000. He also served on the Southeast Conference Board of Directors, rising to Vice-President before stepping down after his election as Tlingit & Haida President. Economic Development. Partnership. Tribal Sovereignty. Community Sustainability. These are all words that describe Richard's mission as President of the largest regional tribe in Alaska. His ability to bring culture and business values together through collaborative and proactive partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and municipal governments has gained him national recognition. Richard has developed the skills necessary to effectively represent and communicate the needs of our Native people of Southeast Alaska. He is adept at negotiating and team building and has worked to continually build lasting relationships that prove to be mutually beneficial to all stakeholders. Richard believes in a proactive approach to achieve win-win scenarios and continues to shape the future of the economic and social well-being of our tribal citizens through collaborative efforts and local economic development initiatives. It was no surprise when Richard was unanimously re-elected to a third term as President in 2018 by over 100 Delegates that make up Tlingit & Haida's governing body.



Robert Venables, Executive Director, Southeast Conference

Often referred to as “Mr. Southeast”, Robert has lived and worked in Southeast Alaska since arriving in Haines in 1984. Robert managed the local branch for a regional wholesale distributor and served for seven years on the Haines Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, with 2 terms as the Chamber’s president. He went on to work with the local municipality, first as the Economic Development Director and then as the Haines Borough Manager. Robert’s involvement with Southeast Conference began in 1997 through the Haines Chamber of Commerce. He then joined the SEC Board of Directors in 2001 and served as Board President in 2005. Robert stepped down from the board in 2008 to take the role of Energy Coordinator. In this new role, Robert helped facilitate the development of the first regional energy plan (SE IRP), was a member of the Alaska House Energy Committee Stakeholder’s Group (2010 Alaska State Energy Policy) and worked with utilities and communities to develop key infrastructure of hydros and interties throughout the region. In 2014, Robert’s role expanded to include transportation projects with a focus on reforming the Alaska Marine Highway System. This multi-phase, statewide project brought together a dynamic and diverse group of stakeholders and contractors that developed both the methodology and recommendations for the next generation of AMHS service. He served as a member of both the state’s Marine Transportation Advisory Board and the Governor’s AMHS Reshaping Work Group. In 2017, Robert was appointed as the Southeast Conference Executive Director. After more than 30 years in Haines, Robert and his wife moved to the “big city” of Juneau where he continues to pursue his passion for sustainable communities, capacity building, and love of the great outdoors.



Ron Curtis, General Manager, IFA

Mr. Curtis is an operations professional having held senior level positions in multi-national companies over a 30 year career. In 2013 he founded the Management Consulting firm Fundamental Insights and is the President and CEO. Ron joined the IFA in 2019 based on his commitment to S.E. Alaska and a passion to serve and make a difference. Ron has served on many Boards over the years including the Salt Lake Rescue Mission, Military Affairs Committee of the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce, and others. In addition to his service to the IFA, Ron currently serves on the Hollis, AK Community Council, as a Volunteer ETT and Volunteer Firefighter.



Commissioner Ryan Anderson, AK DOT&PF

Ryan serves as commissioner of the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. Under his direction, the department is responsible for the planning, design, construction, and the maintenance and operation of Alaska's transportation system, public buildings and facilities. He believes that a sound transportation system is a foundation for community vitality, and that connecting people and cultures through infrastructure provides economic opportunities that improve people's lives. Anderson moved to Alaska in 1993 to attend the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and graduated in 1997 with a degree in Geological Engineering. His career has spanned both mining and transportation, where he earned his Professional Civil Engineering license in 2003 working for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. Throughout his career he has taken lead roles in the development of large capital works projects,

operations of multi modal transportation networks, and working with culturally diverse communities throughout Alaska.

Ryan Leighton, Executive Director, Metlakatla-coming soon!



Sarah Cripe, Waterways & Freight Planner, AKDOT&PF

Sarah earned a Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) from the University of Idaho, specializing in environmental administration. She has a diverse professional background, including roles as a City Planner, QC/ESH Manager, QA Specialist, and Base Operating Support Contract (BOSC) Manager for Materials Management and Transportation on Andersen Air Force Base. Sarah also previously served as an Area Planner for the Juneau Field Office of the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF). In her current role as a Waterways Planner with DOT&PF, Sarah focuses on multimodal transportation planning, with an emphasis on waterway infrastructure. She manages the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant, assists in identifying

funding opportunities, and prepares federal discretionary grant applications. Sarah collaborates with local governments and stakeholders to assess waterway facility needs, communicate funding opportunities, and provide policy updates related to the Waterways Program. Additionally, she is actively involved in project delivery, reviewing memorandums of understanding (MOUs), and supporting capital programming efforts. Sarah represents DOT&PF in Harbors, Marine, and Waterways capital programming and advocates for statewide marine infrastructure needs.



Susan Bell, VP Strategic Initiatives, Huna Totem

A lifelong Alaskan originally from Nome, Susan has helped communities and organizations thrive throughout her career. She recently joined Huna Totem Corporation as Vice President of Strategic Initiatives. Susan spent many years as an owner and project manager for McDowell Group, now McKinley Research Group. The research and consulting firm has more than fifty years of service to clients throughout Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. Susan recently helped the University of Alaska plan and launch an Arctic Leadership Initiative. She served as Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; Goldbelt Vice President; and many years in Alaska tourism marketing and operations.

Vicky Roberts, Southcoast Regional Director, AKDOT&PF-coming soon!