

Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

September 2002

The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to ensure dignity and independence for Alaska's seniors and to assist them, through programs and services funded by the Commission, to lead useful and meaningful lives.



Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger is a monthly publication of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

Commissioners

Chair

Marjorie Hays Soldotna

Doris E. Bacus Kodiak

Peggy Burgin Anchorage

Ella Craig Anchorage

Alison Elgee Juneau

Jesse L. Gardner Anchorage

Bob Gregovich, Jr. Juneau

Banarsi Lal Fairbanks

Dan Karmun, Sr. Nome

Ventura Samaniego Anchorage

Jonathan Sherwood Juneau

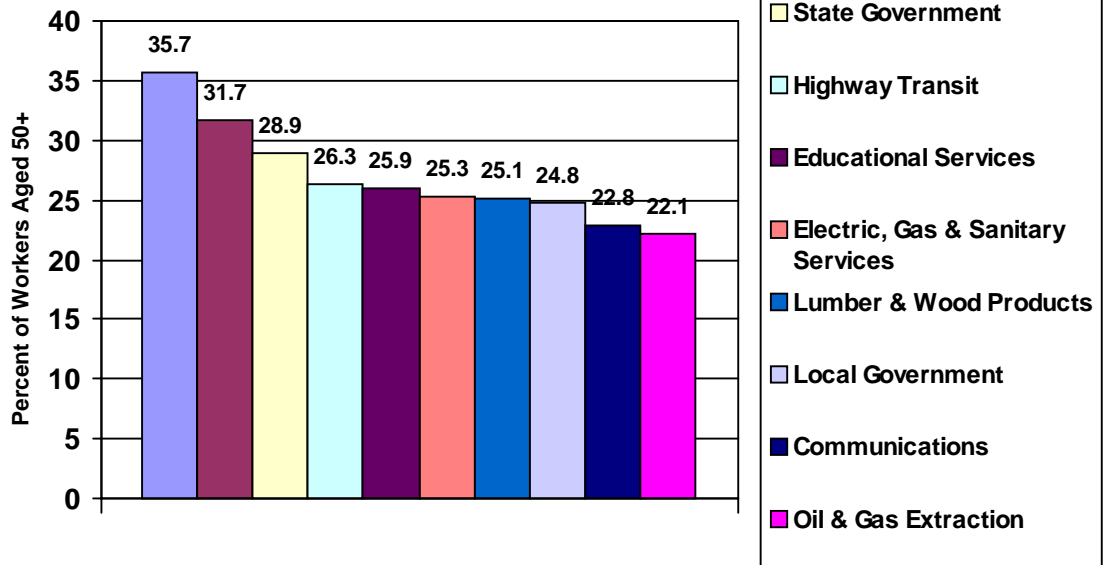
Acting Executive Director

Bob Taylor, Ph.D. P O Box 110209

Juneau, AK 99811-0209 (907) 465-3250

Bob_Taylor @admin.state.ak.us

Industries with Largest Percentage of Alaskans Aged 50+



Industries with the largest percentage of Alaskans aged 50+ cover a wide spectrum of skill and income levels. The average age of Alaskans in these industries is just over 42 years old. Data was collected from Permanent Fund Dividend and Voter Registration information by the Alaska Department of Labor Research and Analysis Division.

Employ the Older Worker Week, September 22 – 28

Governor Tony Knowles on August 27 signed a proclamation recognizing September 22 – 28 as Employ the Older Worker Week. The proclamation notes that “employers across the state...need to be aware of the changing dynamics of Alaska’s workforce and need to renew focus on the qualifications, dependability, and skills of the older worker.”

According to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the number of Alaskans age 65 and over is expected to triple from 32,729 in 1998 to 92,356 in 2018 and will comprise 12% of the state’s total population. This means that Alaska’s workforce will age proportionately. Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna area, Fairbanks, the Kenai Peninsula, Juneau, Ketchikan, Valdez-Cordova, and Kodiak are expected to account for 85% of this growth.

The Alaska Commission on Aging is expected to pass a resolution on Employ the Older Worker Week at its upcoming meeting in Bethel (see page 4). The wording of the resolution encourages employers of all types to hire mature, experienced, older workers to fill vacancies within their business or agency.

Douglas Office Manager Named Alaska's Outstanding Older Worker



Jim Tyner, at his desk at Capital Services, Inc. in Juneau, has been recognized as Alaska's Outstanding Older Worker for 2002.

Jim Tyner of Douglas is Alaska's candidate for Most Outstanding Older Worker for 2002. As such, he is eligible for the Prime Time Award. Experience Works, the country's largest provider of mature-worker training and employment, launched the Prime Time Awards Program in 1998 to highlight the accomplishments and contributions that older workers make in the workforce. The ACoA Recognition Subcommittee, which includes Commissioners Doris Bacus, Peggy Bugin, Jesse Gardner, and Marjorie Hayes, chose Mr. Tyner from a group of seniors nominated by fellow Alaskans.

Mr. Tyner started his working career at the age of 16, pumping gas. At that time gas was 15 cents a gallon and required rationing stamps. Mr. Tyner served his country as an Army private in World War II, joining in 1944 at the age of 18. At the end of the war he returned to work for two years before enlisting in the United States Coast Guard in 1947. He advanced from Third Class Radioman to become a Chief Warrant Officer. He was charged with oversight of several different communications centers on the west coast, including the center at Air Station Kodiak. While serving as a radioman in Juneau, Mr. Tyner picked up distress signals from the *Princess Kathleen*, a tour ship that sailed the waters of Southeast Alaska. She had hit a rock at Lena Point, on the road system north of Juneau. He received the distress message and drove out with a photographer to help in the rescue effort. Everyone aboard escaped to land before the ship sank.

After retiring from the Coast Guard, Mr. Tyner sold mobile homes for awhile, then learned computers while keeping the finances and helping out in the office of a local taxicab company. This eventually led to being asked to work for the Union 76 gas station, now Capital Service, Inc., as bookkeeper and office manager in 1989. Even though Jim told the owner then that he didn't know much about accounting, Mr. Tyner has been
(Concluded on Page 3.)

Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers

The Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers is a collaborative workforce development taskforce funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. The Alliance's primary focus is to address the increasing need and subsequent shortage for direct service workers in all four of the Trust's beneficiary areas including Older Alaskans, Developmental Disabilities, Mental Illness and Substance Abuse. The Alliance is overseen by the Governor's Council on Disabilities and is divided into three committees, each of which addresses a specific problem area identified by the Alliance. These committees are the *Recruitment Committee*, the *Retention Committee*, and the *Wages and Benefits Committee*.

The *Recruitment Committee* created a set of tasks to be accomplished that will result in a multi-media, cross beneficiary campaign to increase public awareness of direct service workers and to recruit new workers to the field.

Patrick Kelly has been hired to develop a media campaign that includes the creation of a Web site, a recognizable logo, video to be used in a statewide media campaign, radio spots, and brochures and flyers about the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers. Mr. Kelly has been traveling around the state talking to front line workers in each of the four beneficiary areas as well as partnering with Alaska One-Stops (Job Centers) and Career Education Programs at the high schools.

The focus of the *Retention Committee* has been to develop a recognition and continuing education program that will culminate once a year at the Full Lives Conference. The first annual conference was held in Anchorage this past April with record-breaking attendance. It will become an ongoing event for the recognition and education of direct service workers across the state.

The *Wages and Benefits Committee* has employed Steve Hamilton to collect information from agencies about the wages and benefits of front line workers in a variety of occupations. This information will be used in future planning and will be taken to our legislators to illustrate the need for increased funding for social services.

(Concluded on Page 4.)

Alaska's Outstanding Older Worker (continued from page 2)

with the company ever since, learning the job along the way.

When the ownership at the service station changed, Jim set up the business administratively and made sure that it was in compliance with state laws and regulations, including the lengthy and time-consuming process of incorporating the business.

Mr. Tyner feels that dedication, industriousness, and loyalty are the most important attributes a worker can bring to the workplace. He urges older people to continue working, if possible. He says it keeps you young and is good for your health, both mentally and physically. As for overcoming obstacles, he claims he hasn't had to yet. "I'll worry about that when I'm old!" he says.

Mr. Tyner turns 75 this October. He and his wife have four children and two grandchildren.

Mr. Tyner will join Outstanding Older Worker nominees from other states at the Prime Time Awards banquet in Washington DC this month.

