

Alaskan Seniors Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

September 2003

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). It is produced by Mark Zeiger, Publications Specialist II, Senior and Disabilities Services.

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The Alaska Commission on Aging poses beneath the Barrow flag at Barrow City Hall during their autumn quarterly meeting. Commissioners include (l to r) Jesse Gardner, Steve Ashman, Ella Craig, Banarsi Lal, Doris Bacus, ACoA Executive Director Bob Taylor, Dan Karmun, Sr., and Peggy Burgin. Chair Marjorie Hays is seated center. Ray Matiashowski and Gene Kane, who were unable to attend, are not pictured. (ACoA Staff photo.)

Commission Meets on the North Slope

The Alaska Commission on Aging held its autumn quarterly meeting in Barrow September 9th through the 11th. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority provided the majority of funding for the trip. All of the Commissioners were able to attend except Ray Matiashowski and Gene Kane, appointed representatives from the Departments of Administration and Community and Economic Development, respectively.

The Commission prepared for the upcoming reevaluation of their organization as part of the sunset process. By statute, the Commission sunsets every four years. The next sunset year is 2004, and the Legislative Audit Office is currently evaluating the Commission to report to

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Commissioners Visit Barrow for Fall Meeting (continued from page 1)



Commission Chair Marjorie Hays (l) reads the wording of a framed certificate of appreciation presented to Margaret Glassteder (r) for her work as director of the Barrow Senior Center. Margaret's granddaughter, Taaqak, supervises. Ms. Glassteder retired from the the Senior Center recently.

the Legislature. The Commission will ask partner agencies for input and letters of support in the process.

The Commission voted to fully fund the City of Bethel's MASST grant. Full funding had been delayed because the city's proposal had been received late. Since then the full proposal had been received and evaluated, and Commission staff recommended full funding.

The Commission formed a standing Planning Committee, and discussed ways for the Commission to move on issues that are too timely to wait until the next scheduled meeting. They explored ways to do this within required meeting notification rules. The Commission also discussed their priorities for the coming year, including legislation to be supported in the next Legislative session.

The Commission set its meeting schedule into next year. The traditional schedule will shift in 2004 to accommodate new grant deadline requirements that come with the Commission's transition to Health & Social Services. The winter quarterly meeting will be held via teleconference Monday, December 8. The spring quarterly meeting will be held February 18-20 in Juneau, and the traditional summer quarterly meeting will be held April 20-22 (rather than June) in or near Anchorage. This will allow time after the Commission's evaluation and approval of grant proposals for the grant award decisions to be conveyed to Health & Social Services Commissioner Joel Gilbertson by early May.

The Commission emphasized local outreach at this meeting, and were warmly welcomed by the people of Barrow. They met with local seniors at lunch each day of the visit. This became a public forum in which elders and their
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Marjorie Hays Leaves Alaska Commission on Aging

Marjorie Hays, Ph.D. announced in September that she will be stepping down as Chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging, and will leave the Commission November 1st.

Governor Tony Knowles appointed Dr. Hays to the Commission May 21, 1997, and appointed her to a second term November 2000. Her current term was set to expire September 1, 2004.

Dr. Hays has chaired the Commission for the last four years, replacing Alaire Stanton of Ketchikan. She has worked with three different Executive Directors.

Dr. Hays's fellow Commissioners presented her a plaque of appreciation at the autumn quarterly meeting in Barrow. They also took time to praise her for her hard work and dedication to the cause of aging Alaskans.

Dr. Hays lives in Soldotna with her husband, where she's active in the League of Women Voters, serves as a Community Mediator, and teaches psychology at the College of Arts and Sciences, Kenai Peninsula College, University of Alaska.

Banarsi Lal, Vice Chair of the Commission, will begin serving as Chair on November 1.

University of Alaska Geriatric Education Center a Reality

The University of Alaska is successfully taking steps to address the shortage of professionals and paraprofessionals in the field of aging and elder services. The university's Geriatric Education Center was officially funded July 1, 2003 through a five-year, \$2 million grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. The funds will support faculty to incorporate geriatric practice, service learning and distance delivery methods into all courses required for the university's Gerontology Minor Program.

The Alaska Commission on Aging, recognizing the shortage of new entries in gerontology fields that is quickly reaching crisis level, has urged the University of Alaska and its supporters to develop programs that will train competent caregivers.

For more information on the Gerontology Minor Program, contact Sharon K. Araji, (907) 786-1817, afska1@uaa.alaska.edu or Rosellen Rosich, (907) 1739, afmr@uaa.alaska.edu. The program's Web site is www.uaa.alaska.edu/sociology/gerontology.htm.

Senior Advocacy Coalition Monthly Teleconferences

The Senior Advocacy Coalition meets by teleconference from 9:30 to 11:30 AM on the second Friday of every month to address issues affecting Alaska's seniors. The teleconference originates at the Anchorage Senior Center.

For more information on joining a meeting, contact Sue Samet, 261-4140, Brenda Brown, 338-6492, or 261-4848 in Anchorage; Fred Lau, 235-7655 in Homer; or Lisa Morley, 465-4798 in Juneau.

