

For Immediate Release – December 04, 2009



Sealaska to Convert Plaza to Biomass Fuel

Juneau, Alaska— In 2010, Sealaska Corporation’s corporate headquarters in Juneau will become the first commercial building in Alaska to convert to renewable bio-energy. Sealaska will convert its corporate headquarters to a wood pellet fired boiler system. The Sealaska Plaza is currently heated by over 35,000 gallons of heating oil per year. Sealaska’s goal is to establish a green energy model that can be applied throughout Southeast Alaska. The effort is one element of Sealaska’s green initiatives to build sustainable Southeast Alaska economies. We believe this project will show that conversion to biomass can save money, reduce hydrocarbon-based footprints and create anchor demand for resources that can be manufactured within the region.

Sealaska studies show that there are ample underutilized wood biomass resources available in Southeast Alaska to support regional biomass energy needs, according to Sealaska President and CEO Chris E. McNeil, Jr. By creating new demand, consumable biomass manufacturing facilities can be built in Southeast Alaska. “Our model to convert our headquarters to renewable energy can be replicated throughout the region and will reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and lead to greater energy independence within the region,” said McNeil. “Sealaska has been working at the national policy level to encourage the development of renewable energy,” said McNeil. “Sealaska should be a leader of renewable energy in the homeland of our tribal member shareholders,” he said.

The Alaska congressional delegation and Juneau’s municipal leadership are encouraging Sealaska to help lead alternate energy development strategies in the region. According to Dr. Rosita Worl, Sealaska board vice chair and chair of the committee overseeing policy for Sealaska Plaza, Senator Lisa Murkowski has been very clear that she expects Sealaska to do its part to create new wood products manufacturing in the region. “We believe that this conversion is the first step to new manufacturing opportunities in Southeast,” Worl said. “The board is excited to support this project which will contribute to reaching economic, energy and green goals starting right here with Sealaska Plaza.”

“Given Southeast’s huge biomass resources, it only makes sense that businesses in the region lead the effort in promoting a market for utilizing renewable fuels. Sealaska by this effort is taking the lead in creating an economic market for new uses of wood products from the forest. It’s both an economically and environmentally sound effort that should fuel new jobs and economic activity in the region,” said U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski.

“Sealaska’s leadership on developing new biomass energy sources will help create new manufacturing in Southeast Alaska, creating sustainable jobs in communities throughout the region,” said U.S. Senator Mark Begich.

The project is partially funded by a \$510,000 grant from the Denali Commission to support the development and implementation of alternative and renewable energy projects. The award falls under the Emerging Energy Technology Grant (EETG) program.

“This is an exciting development and I am glad Sealaska Corporation is pioneering this effort,” said Juneau Mayor Bruce Botelho. “The Juneau Assembly recently adopted a resolution to reduce Juneau’s carbon footprint by 20% and this project will help achieve that reduction.”

“The greatest obstacle to building a biomass mill in Southeast Alaska is that there simply is not enough people using pellets to support one,” said Russell Heath, a partner in Alaska Mills, LLC which is building a pellet mill on Prince of Wales Island. “I hope other businesses and government agencies that are concerned about the environment will recognize the benefits of making use of biomass as a source of energy and follow Sealaska’s lead.”

Other Sealaska renewable energy service programs include energy projects more suited to Southeast villages including renewable eco-friendly hydroelectric and tidal energy, ethanol, wind and other alternate energy technologies.

Sealaska, a Growing Tradition

Sealaska has strengthened business with culture since 1972. We are a Native corporation owned by more than 20,000 tribal member shareholders and guided by our traditions of environmental stewardship and positively impacting our communities. Learn more at www.sealaska.com

###

Contact:

Todd P. Antioquia

Director of Corporate Communications

907.586.9295 direct

907.723.4129 cell

todd.antioquia@sealaska.com

Find Sealaska online: www.sealaska.com