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2020 Annual Report

First Things First Alaska Foundation (FTFAF) has been active during 2020 in Juneau and Southeast Alaska to encourage economic and resource development.

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Juneau Access and Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan

FTFAF continued educating community members and government officials on the importance of Juneau Access and an integrated transportation plan. Transportation efficiencies and cost savings identified in the *Draft: Reshaping the Alaska Marine Highway System*, Northern Economics, January 2020, became this year's springboard to call for a system-wide planning and project development approach. FTFAF called for a regional transportation system that included effective and efficient air, marine, and roads utilizing both the public and private sectors.

The importance of integrated transportation using all modes was delivered to the region via radio in March and April. FTFAF also presented to the Alaska Marine Highway Reshaping Work Group on integrated transportation planning in October. The Alaska Marine Highway System's success and longevity, especially in a State budget fiscal crisis environment, requires multi-modal planning.

The importance of a Cascade Point ferry terminal was also delivered to the Alaska Marine Highway Reshaping Work Group in the presentation mentioned above. The success of FTFAF's education efforts may be seen by the fact that the draft report to the Governor from the workgroup recommends a long-range transportation planning process and the construction of a Cascade Point ferry terminal.

The idea of a Southeast Alaska integrated transportation mobile app, much like an Uber or Lyft concept for air, marine, and road connectivity was advanced by the Board. An exploratory whitepaper on the idea will be developed to continue issue exploration.

Mining

FTFAF educated the public and government officials of the economic and environmentally responsible importance of mining to Southeast Alaska through radio messaging and written comments to the US Forest Service (USFS). "Mining is good for SE Alaska" ads ran in November and December. The radio spot timing coincided with public comment periods on mine life extension projects at the Greens Creek Mine and the Kensington Mine. FTFAF submitted comments to the USFS for both mines

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highlighting the importance of mining to the region's economy and that each mine operates using sound environmental processes.

Gold Rush Days

FTFAF prepared to have a booth at the 2020 Gold Rush Days. Sadly, the event was canceled this year due to COVID-19.

Roadless Rule

FTFAF engaged the public on the importance of the Roadless Rule's Alternative 6, the full exemption, to the region's economy. FTFAF issued a press release in September when Sec. Purdue announced their Alternative 6 decision as being "the right decision for Alaska." FTFAF also talked about the significance of the Full Exemption to the region on Action Line in August.

FTFAF anticipates attempts at challenging or rolling back Sec. Purdue's full exemption decision and continues to monitor the Alaska Roadless Rule issue. FTFAF remains committed to engagement on the issue in response to events as they unfold.

Solid Waste

New to the FTFAF issue priority list for 2020 was solid waste. The Board determined that issue engagement was vital if a cost-effective solid waste solution for Juneau is to be achieved. Compositing was investigated to determine if this management methodology might play a larger role as a solution to the solid waste management issue. Initial discussions with Juneau Composts! were had, but large-scale operations seemed unfeasible. Additional issue traction did not materialize.

Tourism

FTFAF asked the Alaska Congressional Delegation for their involvement in the emerging COVID-19 impacts to Southeast Alaska's tourism season in March. Letters to Senators Murkowski and Sullivan, and Congressman Young asking for relief from the Passengers Services Act were sent. Canada had closed their ports to cruise ships, and a waiver to the obligatory stop at a foreign port was needed. As the pandemic's fallout increased and the 2020 tourism season was canceled, a waiver became a moot point.

Wants and Needs Campaign

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FTFAF continued the Wants and Needs Campaign in 2020 by engaging in the Juneau discussion regarding Proposition 2 – a \$15 million project bundled general obligation bond proposal. The proposition proposed a \$15 million general obligation bond for vaguely defined community projects for schools, roads, and recreational infrastructure.

FTFAF used radio and social media to provoke voter forethought on the impact on Juneau's high cost of living by a \$15 million bond package. FTFAF advocated for unbundled single-issue bond propositions so that voters can easily distinguish between the funding of community needs versus community wants. FTFAF messaged the difference between community needs such as fixing leaky school roofs and potholes in streets versus discretionary spending, in uncertain economic times, on wants such as vaguely identified park and trail maintenance projects.