

FISCAL YEAR 2025

ANNUAL REPORT



KENAI PENINSULA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	1
STAFF	2
PROJECT OVERVIEW	3
ENERGY SECTOR	4-9
ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES	10-11
WORKFORCE & HUMAN CAPITAL	12
INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND USE	13-14
INFRASTRUCTURE SPOTLIGHTS	15-16
BUSINESS CLIMATE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP	17-19
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS	20-22
STATE OF THE ECONOMY	23-25

Board of Directors

The Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) is a private non-government resource focused on the responsible and sustainable economic development of our region. Using a 30,000ft view of the economy, we locate financing and orchestrate community collaboration for economic planning and business incubation. We support infrastructure projects, workforce development and regional industries.



BRIE WALLACE
KPEDD Appointee



KEVIN BUETTNER
City of Kenai



JASON BICKLING
City of Seward



TIM REDDER
KPEDD Appointee



KARIN MARKS
City of Homer



TYSON COX
Borough Official



TODD SMITH
KPEDD Appointee



BRUCE RICHARDS
KPEDD Appointee



CHRIS HOUGH
KPEDD Appointee



TYSON COX
Borough Official



BRAD ANDERSON
KPEDD Appointee



SARA BIEBER
KPEDD Appointee



RUSTY SWAN
KPEDD Appointee



JEFF HETRICK
KPEDD Appointee



LINDA MITCHELL
City of Soldotna



JAN YEAGER
City of Seldovia

Our Team



CASSIDI CAMERON Executive Director

As she enters her second year as Executive Director and her sixth year with KPEDD, Cassidi Cameron continues to lead the organization in its mission to enhance the quality of life for residents of the borough. Cassidi's professional focus includes community development, identifying potential investment opportunities, and creating networks that cultivate a thriving economic atmosphere for the future of the Kenai Peninsula. She is instrumental in orchestrating community collaboration for economic planning, business incubation, and developing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Kenai Peninsula.

Cassidi is dedicated to making the Kenai Peninsula a thriving and essential part of Alaska's economic infrastructure. Her work also involves managing special projects, connecting businesses with grant opportunities, supporting workforce development, and promoting regional industries like mariculture and broadband expansion. Ms. Cameron brings a strong background in local government and a deep understanding of community engagement to her position. She's known for her ability to "matchmake projects with communities" and effectively navigate complex initiatives to drive regional growth.



CAITLIN CORESON Program Manager

Caitlin Coreson moved to the Kenai Peninsula with her family in 2006. She earned her bachelor's degree in business administration and management, with honors, from the University of Alaska Southeast, along with an associate of applied science for business administration. She began her work with the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District in 2014 where she focused on building economic resilience in the region through resource development and financial management. Caitlin looks forward to continuing her work to improve the quality of life for Peninsula residents.



Project Overview

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) serves as a strategy that we hope people will utilize for project development, funding opportunities, community planning, and improving quality of life goals and standards. By accurately representing the key elements of our communities—such as schools, thriving neighborhoods, healthy business sectors, affordable housing, and access to quality healthcare and safe neighborhoods—we can develop a plan that attracts developers to invest in and cultivate opportunities for those who call the Kenai Peninsula home.

With funding provided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough and Economic Development Administration, KPEDD gathers pertinent data and leads stakeholder engagement to publish the CEDS plan, incorporating broad regional representation. The four years proceeding its development focuses on the implementation of the identified goals and strategies outlined in the plan.

2021-2026 CEDS Goal priorities;

1. **Technology and Telecommunications**
2. **Workforce and Human Capital**
3. **Infrastructure and Land Use**
4. **Business Climate and Entrepreneurship**
5. **Regional Partnerships**



The CEDS Strategy Committee guides the development of the plan and its implementation. Leaders are selected based on their connection to main economic sectors to best represent the interests of the region, contributing to and benefiting from improved economic development in the Kenai Peninsula. This committee has undertaken a collaborative and effective planning process to meet the goals and directions outlined by regional stakeholders in the initial 2021 plan.

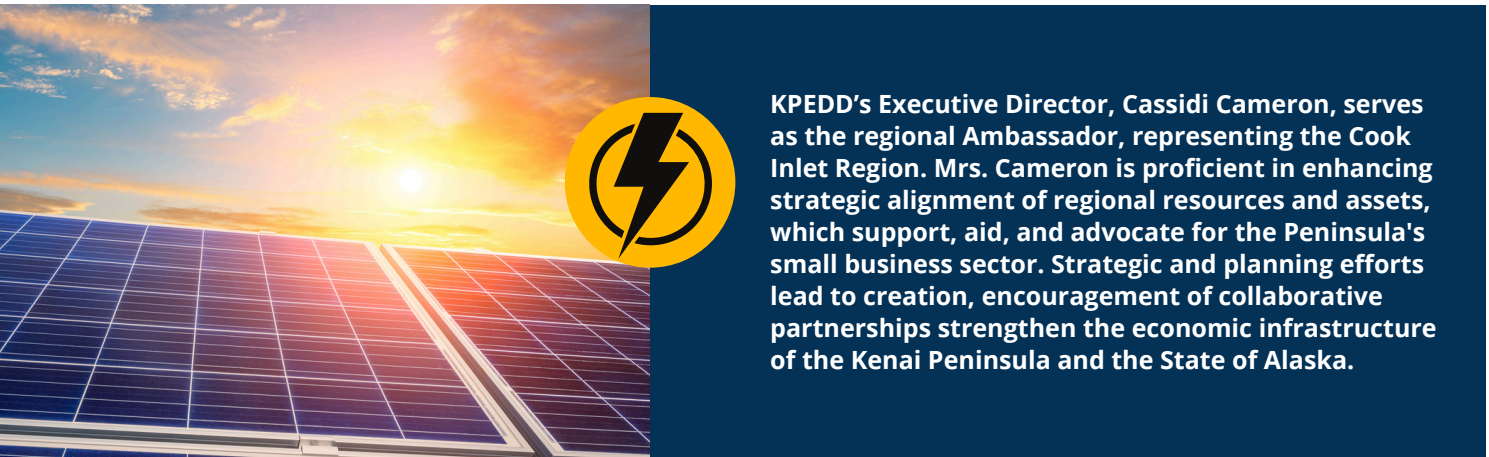
We are currently in the process of developing an updated and revised version of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) draft for 2026-2031. A top priority for this round of development is to engage and communicate with community leaders, organizations, stakeholders, and industry leaders. Effective outreach and engagement with our community members are essential for creating a useful and relevant CEDS document.

Energy Sector

Arctic Energy Ambassador Program

The Arctic Energy Ambassadors program provides training and support to develop regional energy leadership in the state for selected, experienced practitioners (“Energy Ambassadors”) to improve energy security across Alaska’s Arctic region and beyond. Through the deployment of energy projects and support for grant applications and technical assistance, the U.S. Department of Energy is delivering resources and partnerships for the Arctic region, aligned with the DOE Arctic Strategy. Arctic Energy Ambassadors work to ensure that these resources are shared widely with the Arctic regions in Alaska to tap into these programs, answer questions, and prepare for clean energy transitions in their communities to combat the climate crisis and build climate resilience.

The Arctic Energy Ambassadors program is led by the Arctic Energy Office, in partnership with the Denali Commission, Alaska Municipal League, and with additional funding from the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and the Office of State and Community Energy Programs.



KPEDD’s Executive Director, Cassidi Cameron, serves as the regional Ambassador, representing the Cook Inlet Region. Mrs. Cameron is proficient in enhancing strategic alignment of regional resources and assets, which support, aid, and advocate for the Peninsula’s small business sector. Strategic and planning efforts lead to creation, encouragement of collaborative partnerships strengthen the economic infrastructure of the Kenai Peninsula and the State of Alaska.

PROGRAM GOALS: Arctic Energy Ambassador Program

Goal 1: Articulate community and regional energy needs through a cohort of local champions.

Goal 2: Connect stakeholders and promote professional and regional capacity development through ongoing DOE training and engagement.

Goal 3: Provide regional technical assistance to advance project development.

Goal 4: Develop regional or statewide projects, with solutions to energy issues that could be replicated throughout the Arctic.

Goal 5: Vet projects through an online project clearinghouse/portal for energy community funding sources including federal, State, and local/private sector opportunities with the Alaska Municipal League.



2025 KPEDD Regional Priorities

Funding Program Opportunities Identification: KPEDD plans to develop a shareable database of potential funding sources, eligibility criteria, application deadlines, contact information, and support resources for communities, tribes, and organizations to consider pursuing. KPEDD will provide communities, tribes, local governments, and project developers with a comprehensive, accurate, accessible, and relevant workbook to consider and utilize for funding pursuance and project development.

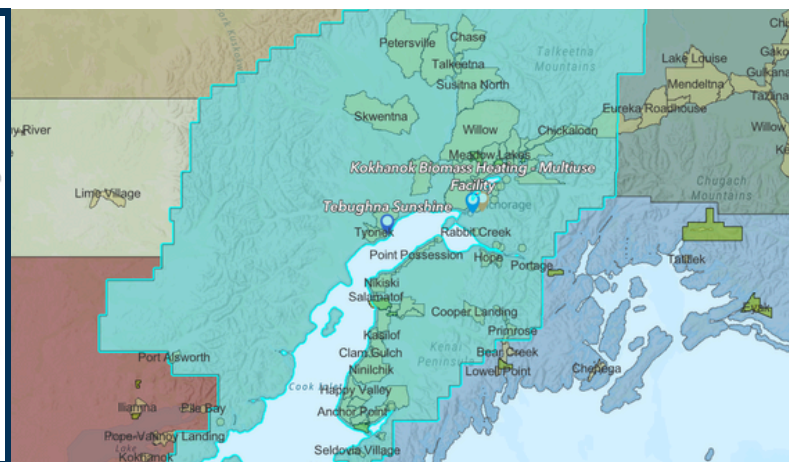
Regional Student to Career Workforce Launchpad Events: KPEDD has, and will continue to, facilitate the Kenai Peninsula Student to Career Launchpad Cohort; a collective group of industry educators within energy, oil and gas, vocational, health care, planning and management. The group combines efforts to meet rural Alaskan middle-high school students, where they are to connect with industry and career pathways, help identify interests and complementary skills to pursue jobs, education, training, and certification for their futures. REAP - ANEEE, KPC, AVTEC, ARE, ASA, DOL, KPEDD, KPBSD, and other industry partners travel to small, rural schools on the Kenai Peninsula to host career-oriented work sessions and events. This program strengthens Alaska's communities by empowering youth with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. KPEDD will continue to collaborate with industry leaders, educators, and community members to provide accessible and equitable career pathways and inspire the next generation of Alaskan leaders to build a brighter future for the state.

Ambassador Role

Ambassadors are passionate, community-focused communicators from Alaska's Arctic territories serving a two-year term as an Arctic Energy Ambassador for the U.S. Department of Energy.

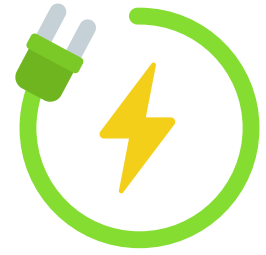
Project Type

- Building Energy Efficiency & Conservation Improvements
- Electric Generation
- Fuel Storage
- Grid Resilience Improvements
- Other
- Repairs, Upgrades, or Expansions to Existing Facilities
- Space Heating



Energy Sector

Ongoing Regional Energy Initiatives



ALASKA ENERGY PROJECT:

TEBUGHNA SUNSHINE

Harnessing renewable energy aligns with the traditional Dena'ina Athabascan value of stewarding and honoring the land.

Tebughna Foundation's solar program was founded to accomplish the energy goals of the NVT 10-Year Strategic Plan, which states "Pursue renewable energy options... to lower our electric bills." Tebughna Foundation, with support from College and Community Partnership Program, Thriving Earth Exchange and the Environmental Defense Fund, published the NVT Alternative Energy Report, which concluded that a solar farm would be the most viable renewable energy source.

Solar energy infrastructure in Tyonek

THE CHALLENGE:

Tyonek is off the road system, but on the Railbelt grid. 75% of residents report that they use electricity to heat their homes, in combination with other heating sources such as wood, coal, and diesel. Exorbitant electricity and heating has exacerbated the already high cost of living, as Tyonek's residents have reported electrical bills up to \$800 in the long, cold winter months. Tyonek's Tribal Center, the office of the Tribal government and a cherished community gathering place, has reported monthly electrical bills exceeding \$5,000.

The solar program has identified four focus areas:

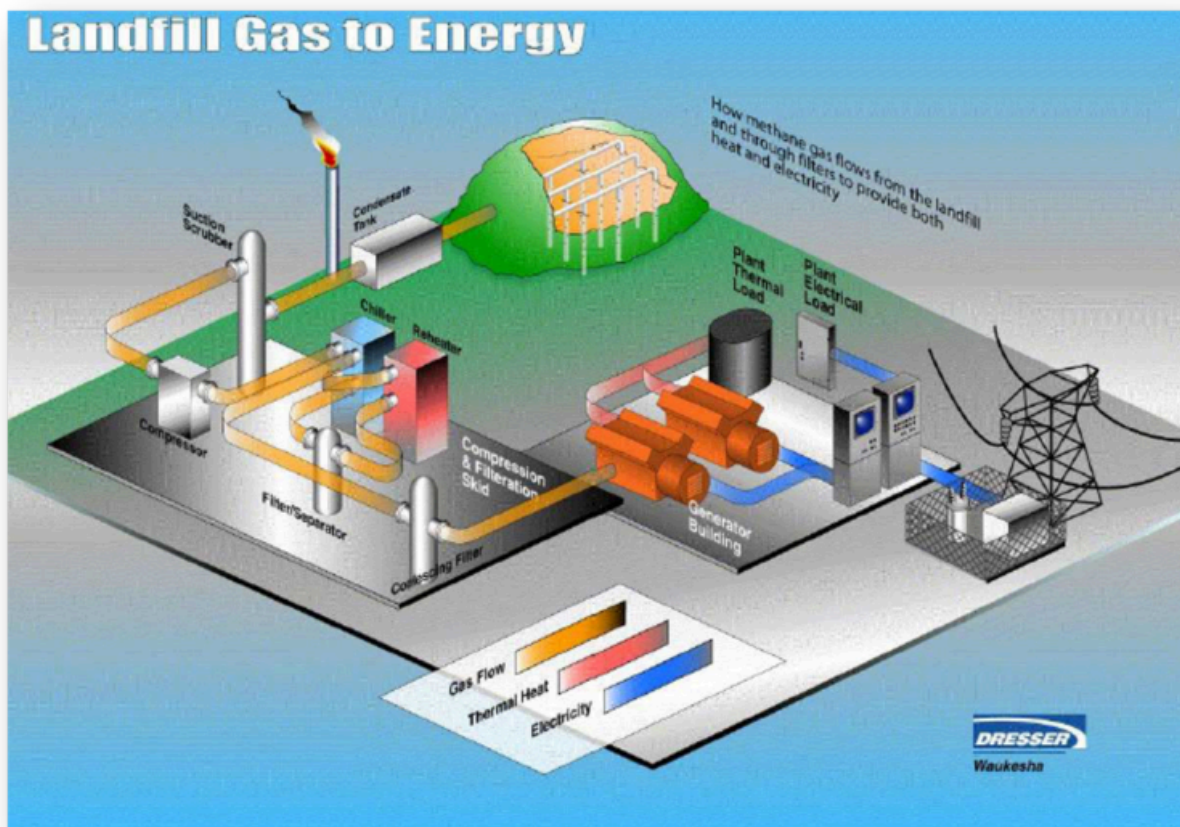
- Install a 25 kW solar array at the Tyonek tribal center;
- Install solar-assisted heat pumps in Tribally-owned residential buildings in Tyonek;
- Facilitate the design of a utility-scale community solar independent power producer, a.k.a. "the solar farm";
- Prepare the local workforce to work in the renewable energy industry by providing vocational scholarships.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT VISIT
WWW.TEBUGHNAFOUNDATION.COM/SOLAR-PROGRAM/**



HEA Renewable Project: Soldotna Landfill Gas Project

In partnership with the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB), Homer Electric Association (HEA) continues to study the feasibility of a Landfill Gas Project. The proposed project would capture the methane gas produced from landfill garbage and convert it to electricity in an internal combustion engine generator. The waste heat from the combustion engine would then be used to run the landfill leachate evaporator. HEA would benefit from an inexpensive fuel source to generate electricity and it would eliminate the KPB's gas costs associated with current leachate evaporator operations. Additional benefits include the improvement of explosive hazards, odors, and the reduction of landfill generated methane released into the atmosphere which is a more potent greenhouse gas than the CO₂ generated by the internal combustion engine.



For more information on this project visit www.homerelectric.com

Ongoing Regional Energy Initiatives

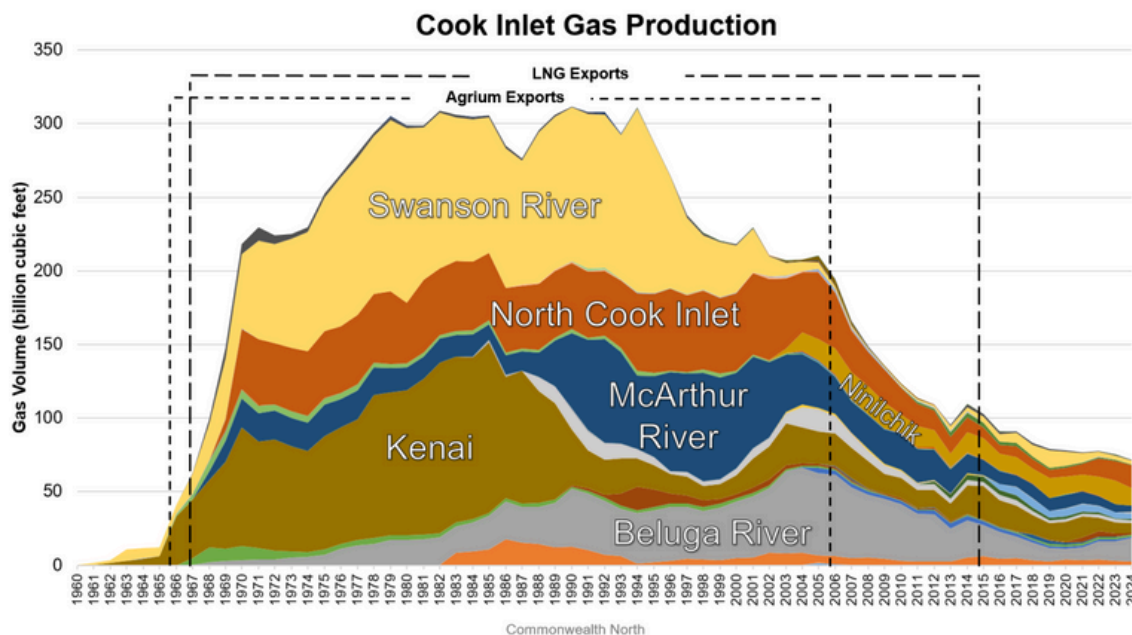
Alaska LNG Project: Growing Partnerships & Commitments

In March of this year, Glenfarne Alaska LNG, LLC, and the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation (“AGDC”) signed definitive agreements for Glenfarne to become majority owner of Alaska LNG, the sole federally permitted LNG export project on the U.S. Pacific Coast, and lead its development to construction and operations of the entire project. Alaska LNG is designed to deliver North Slope natural gas to Alaskans and Alaska utilities and export up to 20 million tonnes of LNG per year. Alaska LNG’s three subprojects are an 807-mile 42-inch pipeline, the 20 MTPA LNG export terminal in Nikiski, Alaska, and a North Slope-based carbon capture plant to remove and safely store 7 million tons of carbon dioxide annually.

In light of steadily declining gas production from Cook Inlet, which has historically been Alaska’s primary in-state natural gas basin, phase one of the project will kick off immediately, prioritizing the development and final investment decision of the pipeline infrastructure needed to deliver North Slope gas to Alaskans as rapidly as possible.

The Alaska LNG project has the potential to provide exponential growth in numerous sectors of the Kenai Peninsula economy, providing new opportunities and increasing existing challenges, such as workforce, housing, and childcare limitations. KPEDD recognizes the importance of working with local leadership to prepare for these possible changes. We will continue to provide the public with updates as they occur, meeting with industry and government decision-makers along the way.

Gas Production History

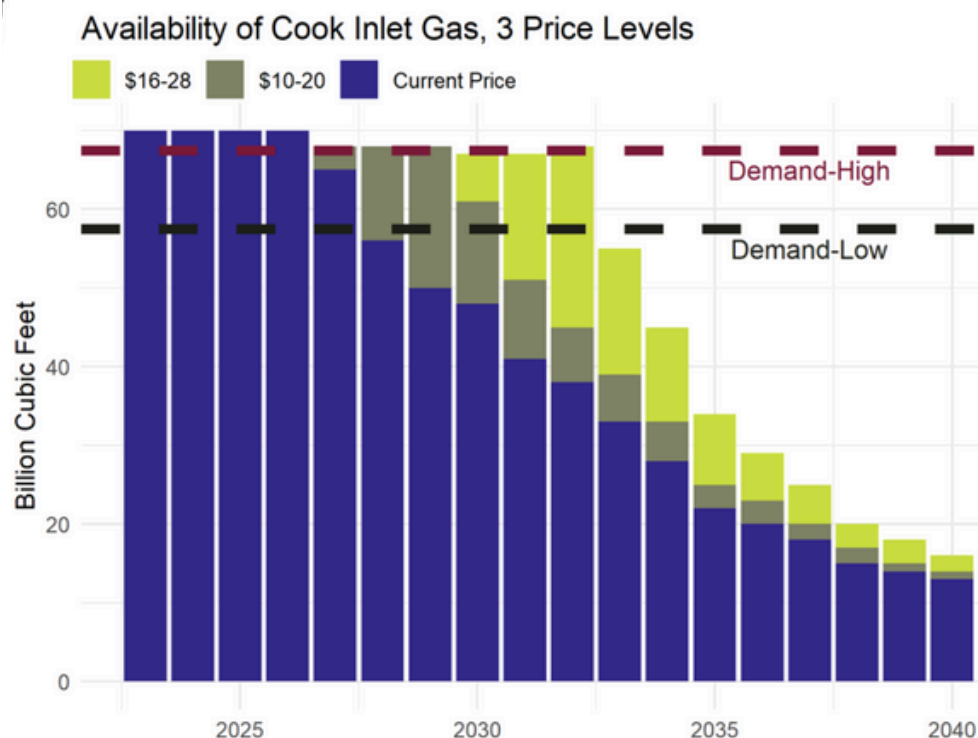


5/20/2025

Commonwealth North

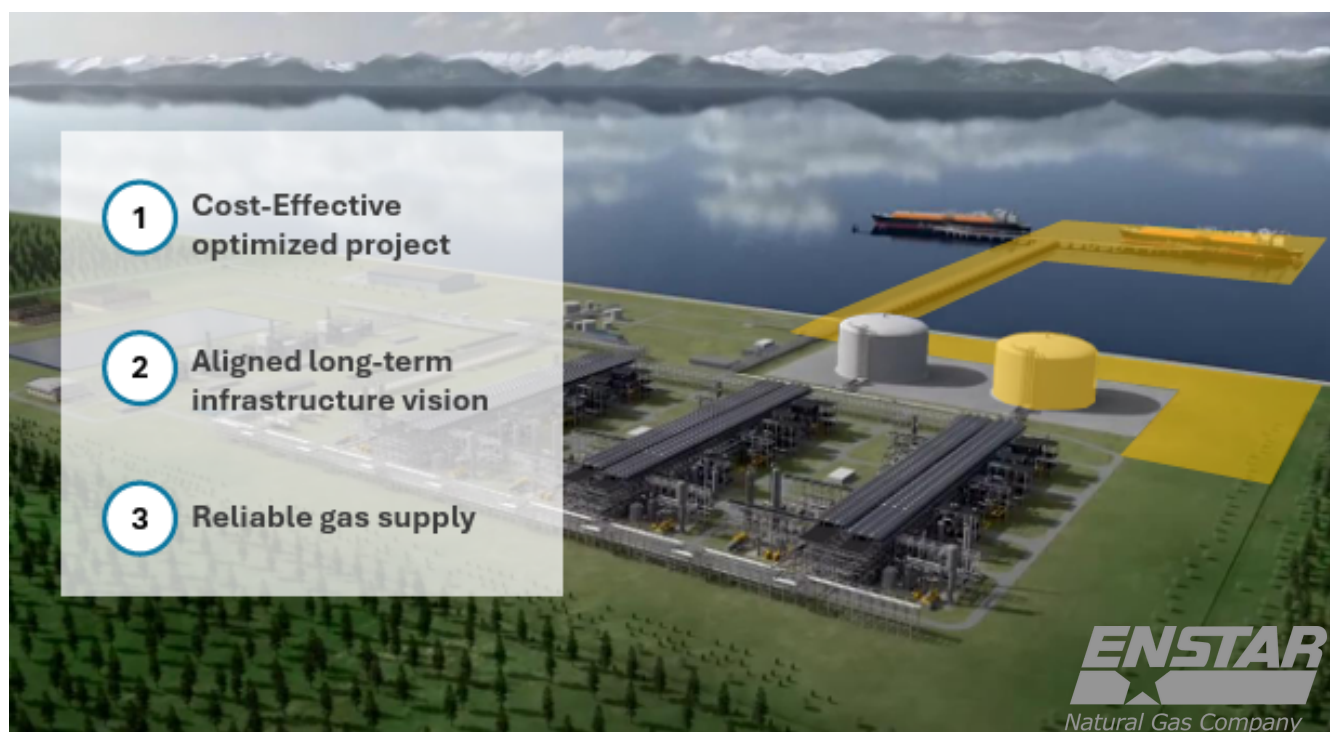
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Alaska LNG Project: Continued



Like all mineral assets, Cook Inlet gas costs have declined with technology and increased with depletion. Bringing in marginal gas will be much more expensive than current prices.

Partnered investments, including Enstar and HEA infrastructure, will ensure cost-effective development and long-term reliability for Kenai Peninsula Borough residents. Continued progress will be documented on the Alaska LNG partnered site.



For more information on this project visit www.alaska-lng.com

Project information provided by Alaska Business Magazine, Business Wire, Enstar Natural Gas, Homer Electric Association and Kenai Peninsula Borough

Additional Energy Opportunities for the Kenai Peninsula



The American Tidal Energy Project's (ATEP) objective is to develop an Alaska-based 1 megawatt (MW) to 5 MW tidal site that integrates the best available tidal energy technologies to provide power to the grid and alternative end users.

Tidal power in Cook Inlet can provide more than 100% of energy needs in the South Central Alaska region. The tidal energy resource potential of Cook Inlet is estimated to be 80 terawatt hours per year (TWh/yr)—this is more than 15 times the present-day electricity consumption of the Alaska Railbelt grid running 700 miles from Fairbanks to Homer.

www.americantidalenergy.com

Alaska Marine Power has the potential to harness electricity from the offshore wind project to make hydrogen that could be converted into ammonia, a potential maritime fuel, or combined with carbon dioxide to produce a sustainable aviation fuel for the cargo aircraft that stop to gas up in Anchorage on trips between Asia and the Lower 48 states. AMP is currently seeking investment opportunities to harness the Cook Inlet's wind energy, growing Alaska's economy and cooling the planet.

David Clarke, the project's Engineering Director, and Simon Harrison, Commercial Director, hope to supply up to 8% of Japan's low-carbon hydrogen requirements in 2040. Phase development is scheduled to begin in 2030 using Cook Inlet's significant renewable energy resources.

www.alaskamarinepower.com



Funding Opportunities for Energy Advancement



The latest Alaska Heat Smart (AHS) program, ACES, in partnership with the Southeast Conference, is rolling out the ACES program with the aim of slashing heating costs for coastal Alaska homeowners across the region. The 5-year, \$39M program will help families from Ketchikan to Kodiak surmount the often prohibitive cost of converting fossil-fuel home heating systems to energy-efficient heat pumps in Alaska's southern and central coastal communities. Generous financial incentives coupled with empowering home energy assessments will enable the installation of up to 6000 heat pumps in 43 coastal communities.

To be eligible for the ACES program, your home must meet the following criteria:

- Your home is located within the ACES region – coastal communities from Ketchikan to Kodiak.
- The address for which you are applying is your primary dwelling.
- The home's primary heating system must currently use oil, propane, gas, or wood.
- If you are a renter, you must have a signed tenant-property owner agreement in place prior to starting the project. Property owners cannot apply for a property that is not their primary residence. The tenant living at that address must apply, and will receive the incentive payment upon project completion.
- Unfortunately we cannot provide retroactive incentives for households that have recently or are currently installing heat pumps. You must fill out an application to the ACES program, be approved, and receive a home energy assessment prior to starting your heat pump project including any equipment purchases. Projects that are started prior to approval will not be eligible.

For more information on this project visit www.akheatsmart.org/aces/

Workforce & Human Capital



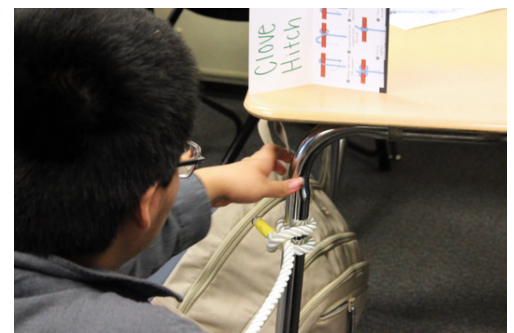
PHOTOS BY ASHLYN O'HARA / KDLL

Student to Career Launchpad

More than 100 students participated in a hands-on career fair event in February earlier this year in Ninilchik. The event was organized by KPEDD and aimed to connect students at small, rural schools to post-graduate opportunities.

KPEDD partners included the Alaska Resource Education, Alaska Workforce Alliance, REAP, Alaska's AHEC Program, Alaska Center for Rural Health Workforce, Kenai Peninsula College, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Alaska Vocational and Technical Center in Seward and the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's JumpStart and Middle College.

Cassidi Cameron shared that “Part of the core of this program, and this concept, is to reach out to our rural, small community schools and the students that are there that don't typically have capacity or resources or the opportunity to go to the large career fairs up in Anchorage or in Kenai.”



KPEDD staff routinely work with educational institutions and industry leaders to identify gaps in workforce and training. It is KPEDD's goal to match residents with high-paying, stable jobs located on the Kenai Peninsula. For a list of the top 40 opportunities, wages, requirements, and scholarship opportunities, please see our workforce website at:

www.KenaiPeninsulaWorkforce.org

Infrastructure & Land Use

Emerging Industry Highlight - Mariculture

KPEDD has, and will continue, to work closely with organizations that seek to build economic prosperity in our communities. Both Southeast Conference (who leads the Alaska Mariculture Cluster project) and Kachemak Kelp seek to grow Alaska's mariculture cluster, creating opportunities for our most vulnerable populations to export locally grown and manufactured products.

The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is a coalition that includes members of Alaska's mariculture industry, tribal organizations, regulatory agencies, university system, Economic Development Districts, trade organizations, and others. In September 2022, the U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded Southeast Conference a \$49 million Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant to catalyze a sustainable mariculture industry for the long-term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment, and communities.



Until recently, Alaska's mariculture industry has lacked the initial public investment needed to de-risk the sector and stimulate the private investment needed to develop a viable value chain and introduce shellfish and seaweed products in international and domestic markets. The components of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster grant are designed to lay the groundwork for the industry to advance with a heartbeat of equity and sustainability.

Kachemak Kelp Hub collaborates and works with a range of partners to refine processing approaches and research, develop value-added kelp products and markets, and share what is learned. Beginning in 2022, Kachemak Kelp has focused on developing and testing energy efficient methods of stabilizing kelp post-harvest, including drying in a high tunnel greenhouse modified with supplemental air circulation, heat and dehumidifying capacity. They are also running trials to test the efficiency and effectiveness of different types of dryers, and different approaches to kelp stabilization.

The Hub's work to increase market access includes connecting with existing businesses buying minimally processed kelp as a food or nutraceutical ingredient, for incorporating in textiles, bioplastics, or soil amendments, and as animal feed supplements. We've also developed and produced a collection of kelp seasonings and are working with partners to explore local production of skin care and plant biostimulant applications using Alaskan seaweed.



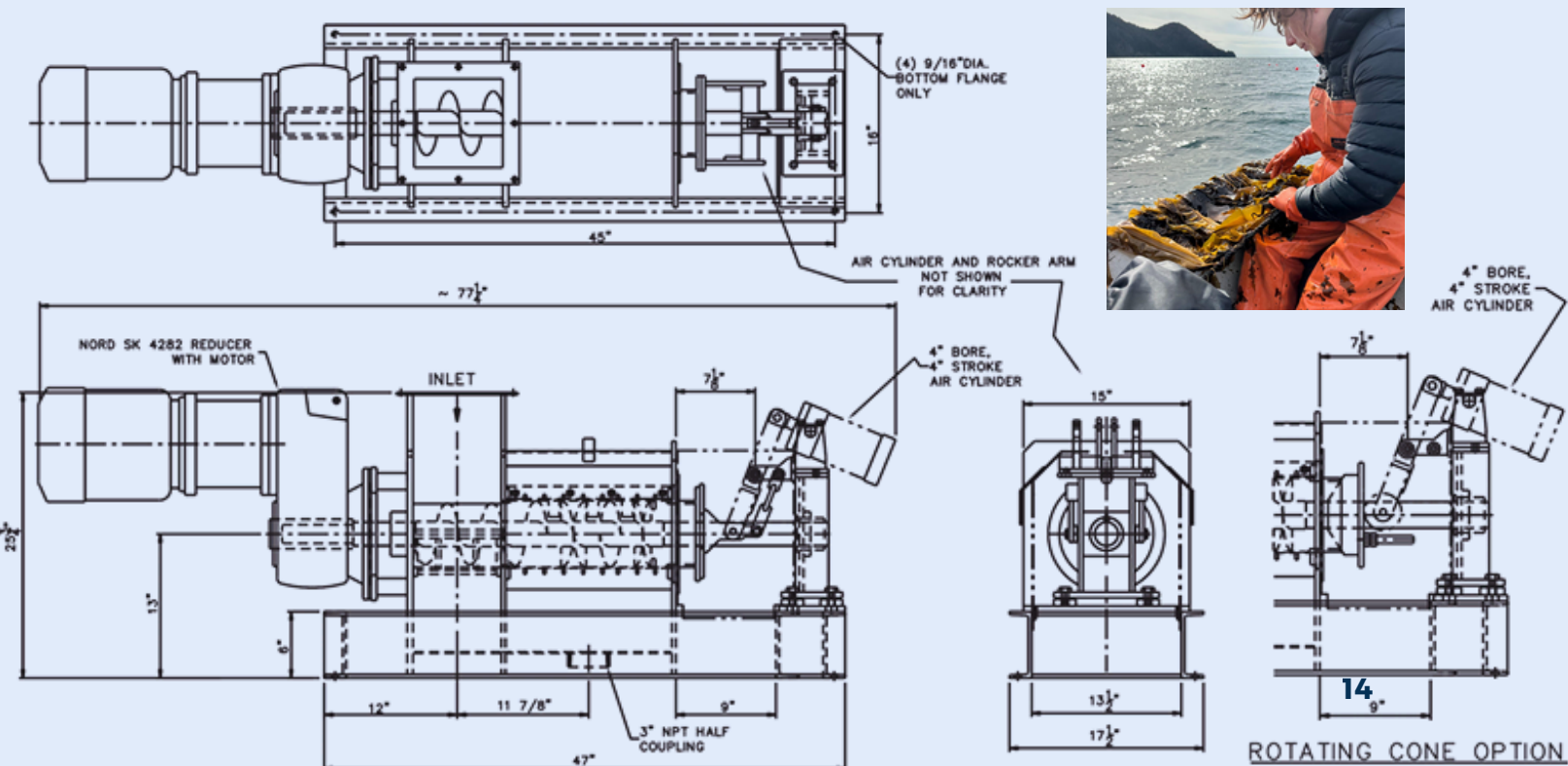
EMERGING INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHT - MARICULTURE

The Kachemak Kelp Hub-KPEDD Processing Equipment Partnership (PEP) was awarded funding in June of 2025 to supply kelp processors with necessary equipment to support and grow the local mariculture industry. The proposed equipment purchases will strengthen a successful regional seaweed processing facility by dramatically increasing capacity and allowing for the production of a range of products with strong market potential.

Unlike many coastal Alaskan communities, Homer is on the road system and has a large airport with regular freight service to Ted Stevens International Airport, both used by fishermen and local aquaculture farmers to distribute their product. It has an established commercial and recreational fishing community and a robust port facility with extensive seafood processing infrastructure. This infrastructure (e.g., boats, barges, ports, cranes, warehouses, blast freezers) and skilled maritime workforce facilitate the delivery of harvested seaweed to this central location, supporting commercial-scale processing. A strong and growing small-farm and local food sector in Homer also offers additional infrastructure (e.g., greenhouses, commercial kitchens) and potential markets. Regional capacity to grow kelp is far greater than the capacity to process and limited primary stabilization capacity remains a bottleneck that will inhibit the growth of the seaweed sector in the Kenai region.

While the Kelp Hub successfully processed and sold increasing volumes of locally grown seaweed between 2022-2024, their processing capacity remains at the minimal pilot scale. In 2024, they diversified their processing strategy with successful, small-scale biorefinery test runs, which moderately increased capacity. However, they could still not process all the seaweed the region's farmers grew—and the farmers only planted a fraction of the space available on their farms. Lack of efficient, scaled processing and absence of confirmed buyers were the primary reasons for reduced farm production and processing output.

The procurement and installation of this equipment will not only contribute to the current market momentum in Alaskan mariculture, but also enhance processing capacity, stimulate regional mariculture activities, and enable safe, cost-effective handling and processing of seaweed. Additionally, it will support the Kelp Hub's profit margins by reducing operating costs and increasing capacity to meet market demand.



Infrastructure Spotlight

THE SOLDOTNA FIELD HOUSE

The Soldotna Field House is a 54,000 square foot athletic and community event facility with a multi-purpose sport court, removable turf field, and an ADA-accessible elevated walking and jogging track. It was designed with input from multiple community stakeholders, and is the culmination of a decades-long effort to build an indoor recreational facility in the central Kenai Peninsula. The facility is designed to maximize flexibility, and is large enough to host statewide tournaments and other major events. The Field House is adjacent and provides access to the Soldotna Regional Sports Complex, which hosts a commercial kitchen, conference suite, and Olympic-sized ice rink. Construction began in early 2024, and will be opening its doors in August of this year.

Part of the magic of this facility is its versatility. The Field House is equipped with modular hardwood flooring AND removable turf. This means we are able to offer different playing surfaces for different seasons. Though the flooring is not-permanent, it is not an easy changeover from one surface to the next. We have planned a tentative schedule for flooring changes that we believe meets the needs of most user groups.



Infrastructure Spotlight

SEWARD CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL



PHOTOS BY THE SEWARD COMPANY



Coming in 2026

The Seward Company is a real estate developer formed to revive, reimagine, and rebuild cruise port infrastructure in Seward, Alaska. This public-private project, made up of the Alaska Railroad, Royal Caribbean Group and Turnagain Marine, will replace the outdated pier and completely modernize the cruise infrastructure. This new development users in a new era of cruise passenger hospitality excellence and economic growth for Seward, Southcentral, and other communities served by the Railbelt.

The largest community building in Seward, the Cruise Terminal is designed for year-round functionality. Under one roof, the terminal is divided into 41,500 square feet of enclosed space and 27,000 square feet of open, pass-through luggage transfer layout. During the cruise season, the terminal's layout accommodates embarking and debarking travelers. In the winter, the flex space transforms into winter storage and community event space.



Initially funded by the U.S. Congress in 1914, the Port of Seward secured freight and passenger transfers from the Gulf of Alaska to Fairbanks. Since its update in 1965, the port has welcomed millions of travelers, thousands of cargo vessels, and moved tons of ore with minimal improvements. It's time to return the Port of Seward to a world-class facility and reestablish itself as the gateway to Alaska's future.

Business Climate & Entrepreneurship

KPEDD EVENTS

KPEDD continued to focus on communication, relationship cultivation and management amongst business sector participants, community leadership and chamber development to nurture a strong business climate that celebrates and supports entrepreneurial ideas and economic diversification.

2025 Industry overview Forum

During the project period KPEDD held the annual Industry Overview Forum in Kenai. The event features field specialists and works to grow industry networks, present on opportunities and threats impacting communities, and provide economic forecasts for community decision makers. The forum was well attended, and included Tribal entity leaders, legislators, business owners, non-profit organizations and entrepreneurs.



PHOTO BY THE HOMER NEWS

KPEDD Launched a new webinar series: Data for Grant Writers & Data for Decision Makers

The Kenai Peninsula Data for Grant Writers and Kenai Peninsula Data for Decision Makers webinars, held on January 23rd and January 30th, were highly anticipated events focused on leveraging data for effective grant writing and informed decision-making. The Grant Writers Webinar was filled to capacity within the first week, with 15 participants attending. Dr. Alyssa Rodrigues's session covered how to identify, collect, and implement trusted data in grant applications. A key discussion point was locating grants, as many participants were unsure where to start. Other major topics included finding crime statistics and understanding what qualifies as a trusted data source.

The Decision Makers Webinar also met registration capacity with 20 sign-ups, though only 7 attended. This session focused on why data is essential, how it can be used for forecasting and best practices for comparing datasets to ensure accuracy. Participants found the information valuable, with feedback highlighting the variety of available data sources and the usefulness of the Data Resources Sheet provided.

A promotional flyer for a webinar. At the top, it says "SPECIAL OFFER" in a yellow banner. Below that, "DATA FOR KENAI PENINSULA GRANT WRITERS" in white text on a dark blue background. Then "FREE VIRUTAL WORKSHOP" in red text. The date and time "23 January, 2025 10:00 am - 12:00 pm" are in white. The presenter "Dr. Alyssa Rodrigues" is shown in a small circular photo. A list of topics is provided: "Where can I find the data?", "What data can I trust?", "How can I understand the data?", and "How can I use the data to create a story that will make my application succeed?". A large red banner with white text says "SAVE THE DATE". At the bottom, it says "ONLY 20 SEATS AVAILABLE! REGISTRATION OPENING SOON".

Business Climate & Entrepreneurship

KPEDD WEBSITE

KPEDD completed the platform buildout for the new KPEDD website in 2024, with ongoing updates in 2025. The new site provides a collective space for changing economic data, community profiles, reports, goals and progress for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and maps with imbedded data layers tied to our economic prosperity.

2025 Industry Overview Forum
Leadership to foster and promote responsible and sustainable economic development

Stats for Kenai Peninsula Borough

The Kenai Peninsula Borough's population has grown faster than the rest of Alaska since 2020. The typical KPB resident is about six years older than the statewide median age, but the area has seen populations of children and young adults grow faster than elsewhere in Alaska. The Borough is also home to many retirees, whose numbers have grown at about the same rate as Alaska overall.

Population	2023	Change vs. 2020	AK Change vs. 2020
Total	60,698	3.6%	0.5%
Children (01-14)			
Young Adults (15-24)			
Working Age (25-59)			
Seniors (+60)			
Median Age			

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Quality Education

- KPBSD School Locations & Attendance Map
- Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
- Alaska Vocational Technical Center
- Kenai Peninsula College

Prominent Medical Care

Numerous Career Opportunities

Limitless Recreational Opportunities

Education on the Kenai Peninsula

We are proud to offer a wide range of educational opportunities across the Kenai Peninsula. Our region includes the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, which comprises forty-two schools, as well as Kenai Peninsula College...

[READ MORE](#)

Healthcare on the Kenai Peninsula

The Kenai Peninsula in Alaska offers robust healthcare through multiple hospitals and medical centers, providing comprehensive services ranging from emergency care to specialized treatments for the local and surrounding communities.

Cost of Living on the Kenai Peninsula

While the cost of groceries on the Kenai Peninsula aligns closely with that of Anchorage, housing prices are significantly lower, making it one of the most affordable housing markets in Alaska. Additionally, many parts of the Peninsula benefit from access to natural gas.

The Region

The Kenai Peninsula Borough stands out as a remarkably diverse area in Alaska, both economically and geographically. Spanning over 24,752 square miles, it offers residents a superior quality of life characterized by extensive recreational ...

[READ MORE](#)

Business Climate & Entrepreneurship

KPEDD DATA

Data dissemination is a key activity for Economic Development Districts, who support informed decision-making, improved services, transparency, community engagement, and resiliency planning. Good data helps local leaders and organizations to identify and address their community and consumer's needs. Data shows where public services like healthcare, education, transportation and housing are most critical. When decisions are backed by data and shared publicly, it builds trust between officials and the community, and allows citizens to track progress on goals, budgets, and social outcomes.

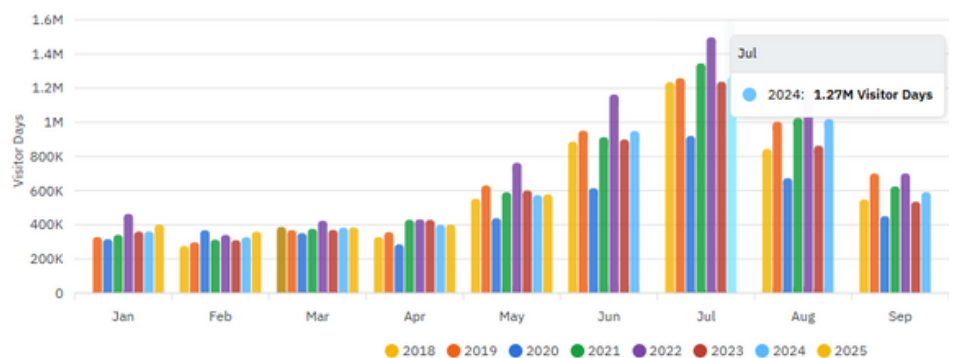
KPEDD currently uses two major platforms for data collection and representation: Datafy and ESRI.

KPEDD uses Datafy to capture and illustrate tourism data to measure economic impacts, plan for areas of development, and support marketing investments across the Borough. Tourism contributes significantly to our individual and regional economy.

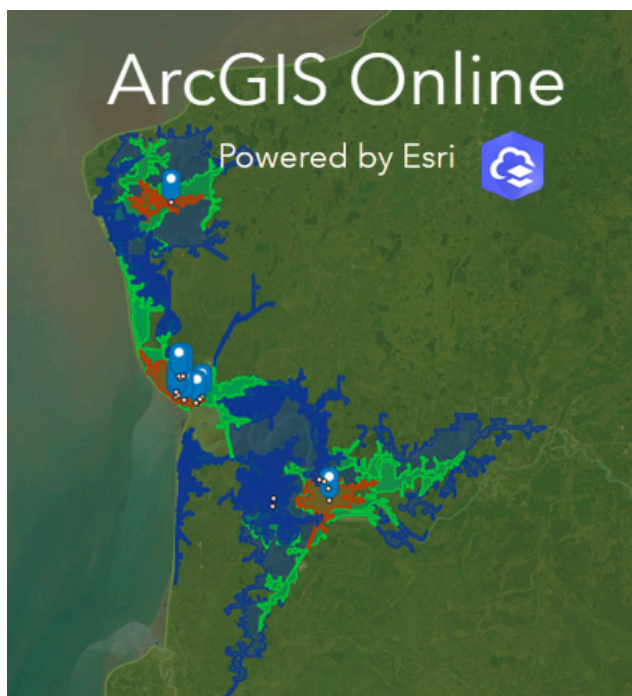
Datafy utilizes large data sources to assess travel between geofences, spending patterns by consumers, and the overarching demographics of our markets.

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days

All Main Dates vs Compare Dates



DATAFY



Arc GIS is a geospatial mapping tool which allows us to layer and analyze critical elements of our economy. GIS connects data to a map, integrating location data (where things are) with all types of descriptive information (what things are like there). This provides a foundation for mapping and analysis that is used in science and almost every industry. GIS is used by KPEDD to understand patterns, relationships, and geographic context.

The scene to the right outlines 5, 10 and 15 minute drive times from child care centers in Kenai and Soldotna, highlighting the areas of need that impact workforce capacities. KPEDD is continuing to build out the mapping gallery to include overlapping public transportation routes, short term vs. long term rental trends in key locations, workforce locators and trending educational opportunities, migration changes from one community to another, and the progress and sites of proposed capital improvement projects.

Published data will be displayed on the KPEDD website as data layers are developed, to continue supporting our communities and businesses in their development decisions.

Regional Partnerships

By recognizing and acknowledging community projects and initiatives, KPEDD supported various regional projects that aligned with several of our CEDS goals.

Goal 1: Technology and Telecommunications

- **Modernizing Alaska's Port Facilities to Support Energy Independence:** KPEDD supported the Alaska DOT&PF's application for the Rural and Tribal Assistance (RTA) Program to further pursue planning for modernizing port facilities in coastal Alaska. Strong transportation systems build resilient communities and are critical to economic vitality in the region. Utilizing locally available energy sources to support port and vessel operations will create stronger transportation system to serve our communities, local businesses and continued economic development opportunities.

The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) is in the process of modernizing its fleet with more efficient and modern technologies including the ability to utilize local power sources when available. KPEDD is interested in working with AMHS to explore providing shore power as capacity allows to vessels while moored and other port modernization efforts to match the capabilities of new innovative vessel designs that will allow the community and AMHS to harness the full potential of technological advancements.

This project will have a direct and lasting impact on the community of Homer and the greater transportation system within the region:

- Promoting energy independence by utilizing locally available power sources to create a transportation system that is less reliant on imported power sources.
- Support economic vitality through using a power source that has more stable pricing, better enables expansion of service, and supports increased mobility in the region.
- Aligning regional long-term development goals outlined in regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that continues to prioritize building strong and healthy communities.

Goal 2: Workforce and Human Capital

- **Mountain Group's affordable housing project in Soldotna:** As a 501(C)(3), the express goal of The Mountain Group is to create affordable housing opportunities for those in the 80-115% area medium income bracket to encourage family stability and support the local community. Most affordable housing organizations focus on lower income and senior housing projects which is where many of the federal grants target funding.

Located within the city limits of Soldotna, the nonprofit organization owns the land where they will develop the affordable housing project. The hurdle they face is to have sufficient funding for the group to connect into the City of Soldotna existing water and sewer systems. With a grant to this organization would provide them with funding to connect with the existing infrastructure allowing for affordable housing construction to commence.

Goal 3: Infrastructure and Land Use

- **Chugachmiut WAV Energy Project:** Through the WAV Energy initiative, Chugachmiut offers an alternative path forward for the Kenai Peninsula via renewable, sustainable, zero-emission marine energy. Marine energy's immense potential is limited only by the sheer power of the ocean and is a viable full-replacement option for fossil fuel combustion in electricity generation. Marine energy is superior to the intermittent power generation potential of solar and wind energy solutions, as the physical forces of the oceans are consistent, reliable, and very little affected by changes to the seasons and weather.

WAV Energy will be a transformative project for the Kenai Peninsula and the State of Alaska. Renewable marine energy will stimulate economic growth through infrastructure investment, accelerate workforce development through marine energy operations, and strengthen the resiliency of Kenai Peninsula communities against electrical outages

- **Cottonwood Eastland Multi-Use Trail System project:** As noted in the CEDS, Kenai Peninsula Borough residents desire healthier, recreational opportunities. This project will create 11.5 miles of professionally designed, multi-use trails in the Cottonwood Eastland unit of Kachemak Bay State Park, providing much-needed recreation infrastructure on the north side of the bay. These trails are also expected to significantly boost local economic development by attracting outdoor enthusiasts year-round, driving visitation and spending in the region.

The trail system will position the Kenai Peninsula as a hub for outdoor recreation, creating opportunities for new businesses, events, and community partnerships. The project aligns with both state and regional economic development goals by fostering sustainable tourism, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the region's appeal to both visitors and residents. Additionally, outdoor amenities like these contribute to workforce attraction and retention, a critical factor in maintaining a thriving local economy.

- **Jakolof Bay Dock Replacement Project:** Jakolof Bay Dock is one of Seldovia's critical infrastructure assets that can help to protect the community's economic future, especially if the AMHS ferry service continues its downward trend. Seldovia and KPEDD both recognize just how critical marine transportation is to the success of this community. The City's commitment to working on protecting its marine transportation assets should be recognized as the community works to increase its resiliency and independence.

The cost of living in Seldovia, a remote, off-road community, is substantially elevated. In 2021, heating fuel costs were 46% higher than in nearby Homer. Marine transportation is vital for Seldovia's economic sustainability and residents' quality of life. The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS), which connects Homer and Seldovia, has seen a five-year decline in passenger traffic, directly linked to reduced operating budgets and service. This decline, identified as a critical threat in the 2021-2026 CEDS, has significant economic implications for Seldovia. As AMHS service diminishes, the burden on Seldovia's marine infrastructure intensifies, underscoring the necessity of a viable, safe, and reliable Jakolof Bay Dock.

KPEDD, in its role as a champion for rural Alaskan communities, expresses its firm support for the City of Seldovia's endeavor to enhance and upgrade the Jakolof Dock through the Denali Commission's funding opportunity.

Goal 4: Business Climate and Entrepreneurship

- **US Army Corps of Engineers Homer Spit Revetment General Investigation:** With support through KPEDD, the City of Homer's requested funds to reauthorize and re-engage the Homer Spit Revetment General Investigation, a project currently listed in the Alaska District's Work Plan. Coastal erosion along the Homer Spit is a real threat to Alaska Highway 1, a vital transportation and critical infrastructure corridor supporting the US Coast Guard and other Federal agencies who operate out of Homer Harbor, State assets like the Alaska Marine Highway and public safety personnel, and is a critical link in the marine transportation network on which Southcentral and Western Alaska depend.

The Homer Spit is also an asset that underpins economic activity, public safety, and long term resilience for the region – it is the primary transportation corridor for one of Alaska's most vital commercial, tourism, and maritime hubs. Each year, thousands of visitors and residents rely on this route for access to businesses, commercial, sport and personal use fisheries, access to medical care and essential services.

- **Federal Appropriation Request for the University of Alaska Anchorage:** The Alaska Cooperative Development Center has supported co-ops in our area and provides a useful source of information about the cooperative business model. For the last two years it has been working closely with a local peony cooperative researching value added products that can be made from peonies. One of the products they are looking at, dried peony petals, may fit well with our ongoing work to bring cutting edge drying technology to support our fish processing industry.

Goal 5: Regional Partnerships

- **Proposal Submitted to the Board of Fish:** In partnership with the Kenai Peninsula Borough, Cities of Kenai and Soldotna, and the Kenai and Soldotna Chamber of Commerce; KPEDD wrote and submitted a formal proposal to the Alaska Board of Fish, requesting consideration that future Upper Cook Inlet Fisheries Regulatory Meetings be rotated to the Central Peninsula. The Board of Fish has not held a Regulatory Management meeting for the Upper Cook Inlet on the Peninsula since 1999 - limiting public participation and process with all user groups of the area. KPEDD believes it is time to allow the meeting to occur in the communities that are most impacted - from a socio-economic perspective.

State of the Economy

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY WINK CONSULTANTS FOR KPEDD

KPEDD partnered with Wink Research and Consulting during the 2025 fiscal year to study emerging market trends, build data sets for our region, and illustrate changing economic landscapes. Identifying the gaps and opportunities in our communities helps us to address industry and workforce-specific challenges. These efforts align with the goals of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, addressed earlier in this report. Partnering with Economists and research firms to study the Kenai Peninsula Economy lays the groundwork for meaningful conversation about what capacity building efforts would best support the development of the region.

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Andy Wink, the owner of Wink Research & Consulting, is an economist, market analyst, and economic development professional specializing in the seafood industry. Andy provides market research, economic benefit studies, white papers to inform policy discussion, program/business evaluation, crisis management, and customized research and consulting services. Andy has written articles for the Trends report for the Alaska Department of Labor, served as the Labor Economist for the State of Alaska, and was the Institutional Investment Officer for the State - managing over \$30B in assets.

Wink Consulting will continue to study industry trends, population statistics, socioeconomic data, and livability metrics including but not limited to:

- Employment and income by industry, (including resident hire)
- Relevant data for key economic sectors (oil and gas, tourism and sportfishing, construction, commercial seafood, health care, and government),
- Business development, local GDP and income statistics,
- Population, including demographics and migration,
- Unemployment rates, job opening projections, and training program outcomes,
- Housing affordability and availability,
- Cost of living (including sales tax, local spending metrics, and local tax burden metrics)

The proceeding report provides an overview of the changing economic and market conditions for the Kenai Peninsula Borough Region.



STATE OF THE ECONOMY

April 2025

The April 2025 State of the Economy report reviews population and migration patterns, analyzes trends for employment, wage and salary growth, local GDP and spending, housing market, large scale potential projects, industry sector changes, and provides data profiles for each of the incorporated communities.



The full report can be found on the KPEDD website at:
www.kpedd.org/resources/reports/



**STATE
of the
KENAI PENINSULA
BOROUGH
ECONOMY**



APRIL 2025

Report Highlights

- The KPB's economy has fared much better than most other places in Alaska in recent years. The economic outlook for 2025 is relatively positive in the KPB. However, a variety of trends and situations mentioned in the report require monitoring and response planning.
- Petroleum activity is expected to expand in 2025, with new wells being drilled locally and on the North Slope. The Alaska LNG project and the Dixon Diversion Hydro projects have the potential to create many temporary and long-term jobs, but funding is not yet guaranteed.
- The outlook for the 2025 salmon season is generally better than 2023 or 2024; but there is still much uncertainty. For now, U.S. salmon exports to China are exempt from their retaliatory tariffs and U.S. tariffs on imported farmed salmon should benefit Alaska producers.
- The KPB has a relatively healthy labor market and has seen employment rebound faster coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Income trends are relatively positive. Large potential construction projects could create an intense need for specialized labor. These workers will need to be either housed (being sourced from other areas) or ideally pulled/trained from the local labor pool.
- KPB has relatively fewer children and 20-something residents; while it has gained more residents and children migrating in since 2020, it lost children in 2024. The KPB needs more housing in growing communities, more economic development for east side communities, continue to attract/retain young workers, and ensure the region has enough health care capacity to serve its growing senior population.





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.
PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS:**

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Articles: <https://www.kdll.org/local-news/2025-02-11/hands-on-career-fair-brings-resources-to-rural-students>

