

Denali Commission awards \$500,000 grant to the Alaska Partnership for Economic Development

The Alaska Partnership for Economic Development (APED), a 501(c)(3) umbrella organization consisting of the 12 designated Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs), has been awarded \$500,000 by the Denali Commission. The grant will be matched with other public and private funding sources to help offset the cost of a statewide comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) and accompanying realistic action plan to identify, prioritize, and implement the state's economic development program. Ultimately, this plan will provide guidance to the Alaska legislature, government policy-makers, regional economic development groups, and local community entities.

"We at the Alaska Partnership for Economic Development are well-positioned to lead this effort and are pleased to have relationships forged with Commonwealth North and state government," said Michael Catsi, president of Alaska Partnership for Economic Development, an alliance of regional economic development groups. "This is an important initiative, and we are excited to do our part."

APED's initiative will be conducted in coordination with Governor Palin's Administrative Order 249, which established the Alaska Diversified Economic Planning Team (ADEPT). ADEPT is tasked with laying out the governor's Legacy Plan, which will establish a framework for responsible growth and workforce development over the next 50 years.

ADEPT is working with industry and economic sector work groups to identify impediments to growth and suggest statutory, regulatory or funding solutions.

"We are pleased to be partnering with APED and industry leaders from around the state at this critical time in Alaska's history," said Mark Davis, deputy commissioner of the state Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, and project manager for Legacy. We know that by tapping the combined experience and expertise in these work groups that we can forge a path to the future that will lead to a better quality of life for all Alaskans."

APED recognizes the importance of these goals and the need to move beyond nearly exclusive reliance on oil and gas to fuel Alaska's economy. As the state moves forward in the 21st century, it will become increasingly difficult, financially, to address Alaska's pressing economic, social and climate change challenges unless the state has a strong and diverse economy.