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# Forum on Alaska's Fiscal and Economic Future

September 19, 2015 • 9 to 4

Presented by

Alaska Common Ground and  
Institute of Social and Economic Research, UAA



Alaska Common Ground

[www.akcommonground.org](http://www.akcommonground.org)



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# Program

**9:00-9:10 Introduction:** Cliff Groh, chair, Alaska Common Ground

**9:10-9:25 Overview:** What's the Problem? What Steps Could We Take?

A brief description of Alaska's budget problems and potential solutions, by Gunnar Knapp, ISER director and professor of economics; David Teal, director, Alaska Legislative Finance Division; and Larry Persily, former federal coordinator of the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Project, and former deputy commissioner, Alaska Department of Revenue.

Moderator: Cliff Groh

**9:25-10:10 Balancing Alaska's Budget: The Game**

Using a spinning wheel, giant scales, and blocks, players will try their hand at balancing what we spend and how we pay for it. You be the voter: would you keep legislators who tried those solutions, or vote them out?

Gunnar Knapp; Ian Laing, communications consultant and former special assistant to commissioner, Alaska Department of Revenue; Bob Loeffler, visiting professor of public policy, ISER.

**10:10-10:20 Break**

**10:20-11:55 Here's My Proposal**

Four thoughtful and informed Alaskans present and debate their proposals for filling a \$2.5 billion annual budget gap for five consecutive years.

John Havelock, former Alaska attorney general; Brad Keithley, president, Keithley Consulting, and founder, Alaskans for Sustainable Budgets; Liz Medicine Crow, president/CEO, First Alaskans Institute; Gary Wilken, former Alaska state senator.

Moderators: Cliff Groh, Gunnar Knapp, Larry Persily, David Teal

**11:55-12 Vote on Budget Proposals**

The audience ranks the four budget proposals with a straw poll.

**12-1 Lunch and Audience Tries the Budget-Balancing Game**

Audience members will get the chance to try out the budget-balancing game for themselves, onstage and in the lobby.

Gunnar Knapp, Ian Laing, Bob Loeffler

**1:00-2:00 Debate:** Where Is the Alaska Economy Headed? How Will Our Fiscal Choices Affect the Alaska Economy? What Do the Answers to those Two Questions Say about What Fiscal Choices Make Sense?

Bill Popp, president, Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, and Mark Foster, chief financial officer, Anchorage School District, and long-time business consultant.

Moderator: Rhonda McBride, rural affairs editor, Denali Media

**2:00-2:05 Announcement of Straw-Poll Results**

**2:05-2:45 Can We Compromise?**

The four Alaskans who earlier described their budget proposals attempt to develop a compromise onstage.

**2:45-3:45 Panel: What Happens Next?** What Factors Will Influence Decisions Going Forward? How Can Citizens Have More of a Say?

John Coghill, majority leader, Alaska State Senate; David Guttenberg, state representative and member, House Finance Committee; Randy Hoffbeck, commissioner, Alaska Department of Revenue.

Moderators: Cliff Groh and Larry Persily

**3:45-4:00 Wrap-up**