

Update from the Chair – Fall 2014

We have been busy these past few months and hope that you were able to attend one of our forums or came to our annual meeting last May. As you know, our organization put on five well-attended and well-received forums on Alaska's important issues. Four of these five non-partisan forums covered the ballot propositions Alaskans voted on this year. The fifth was an all-day event addressing Alaska's biggest and most complicated problem—the fiscal challenge caused by falling oil production and the threat of oil prices lower than expected.

These events had an extensive reach:

- More than 800 people saw these events in person
- More than 100 listened on audio livestreams
- More people listened and/or viewed these events on Alaska Common Ground's website
- Thousands more got the chance to see or hear media coverage before or after the forums

Links to the audio and video of each of these five forums are available on this website under Forums.

Along with doing all this in 2014, we also sponsored the Let's Talk Alaska dialogues on Wednesday evenings and held our annual meeting in May.

Alaska Common Ground was fortunate to have a lot of help in putting on these events. All our forums were co-sponsored by the Anchorage Public Library, the League of Women Voters of Anchorage, the League of Women Voters of Alaska, and Alaska Integrated Media. The University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) partnered with us on the Forum on Alaska's Fiscal Future, which was also co-sponsored by Northrim Bank, First National Bank Alaska, Commonwealth

North, and C.M. Bidwell and Associates. The co-sponsorship of Alaska Integrated Media (AIM)—a company owning five radio stations—led to the airing of more than 2,000 commercials promoting the forums, significantly increasing our visibility to audiences not typically reached by Alaska Common Ground.

Alaska Common Ground is a small non-profit organization run by and for Alaskans. Most of our work is accomplished by our volunteers—both our board of directors and our members—but some of what we do necessarily costs money. Alaska Common Ground needs money, for example, to pay for advertising for our events and for wages for our part-time staff member. Some of that money comes as grants from institutional sponsors, but most of it comes from individual members like you.

After much consideration—and after not raising the levels for a number of years—Alaska Common Ground has increased the membership levels to reflect the amount and quality of the work we do. This year the membership levels are:

- Individual \$50
- Supporter \$75
- Contributor \$100
- Sustainer \$250
- Benefactor \$500

In addition, we still offer our \$10 membership for a person on a limited budget or a student.

I thank our existing members, and I welcome our new members for their support of Alaska Common Ground and this important work. I urge you to send us a check or go on-line to renew your membership—today. Please consider upgrading your membership category to help Alaska Common Ground to continue to put on high-quality, unbiased events of importance to Alaskans.

Thanks again, and I look forward to seeing you at an Alaska Common Ground event soon.

Sincerely,

Cliff Groh

Chair, Alaska Common Ground

P.S. One of the accolades for our events making me most proud came from Alaska Dispatch News columnist Mike Dingman. Writing about Ballot Measure No. 1, the oil tax referendum on the August ballot, Dingman commented "...I would encourage you to watch the Alaska Common Ground forum on the topic. That forum is different than most because it was two hours long, and allowed a significant amount of time for the answers to questions and tasked the spokespeople for each side with posing questions to one another."