

Update from the Chair 2016

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Dear Alaska Common Ground Members,

You did it, and I thank you. Your membership has helped Alaskans confront difficult issues affecting our state and helped Alaska Common Ground reach its 25th year! I am writing to invite you to a special celebration and to ask you to renew your membership.

The support you have provided in membership dollars and volunteer hours has allowed Alaska Common Ground to organize and hold well-attended and important events over the past year:

- A highly regarded health care forum at our annual meeting in May, 2015;
- A well-received forum on Alaska's fiscal and economic challenges in September that attracted well over 300, including over 20 percent of the Alaska State Legislature, the Director of the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, and members of the Governor's cabinet;
- An informative and well-attended forum addressing Alaska's changing climate featuring many experts and Alaskans from around the state;
- We also cosponsored a panel on the history and future of refugees in our state in conjunction with the Anchorage Concert Chorus during the Defy Fear week, this on the same evening we supported a Let's Talk Alaska program on "Making Ends Meet" hosted by Bill Hall. Earlier in the year we cosponsored another panel exploring our place in the global economy with the Alaska World Affairs Council.

To celebrate your support as members of Alaska Common Ground, we are hosting a membership reception to celebrate Alaska Common Ground's 25th anniversary. We will look back over 25 years and forward to the next 25. Please come join us on Tuesday, May 17, at Cyrano's Theatre at 411 D St. in Anchorage from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

This event will be fun! (As if our usual gatherings are not...) Instead of focusing on a single issue, we are celebrating 25 years of successes and looking forward to the issues that will shape Alaska for the next 25 (or more) years. We want to hear from you about what Alaska Common Ground has done well in the past and what issues you would like to explore in the future.

With your ongoing support we are also planning a follow-up forum on Alaska's fiscal and economic challenges in the fall of 2016 and are beginning to plan other forums and events.

We want to thank you, our members, for your continued support. Alaska Common Ground is a member-supported organization. It takes lots of time, energy, and money to put on our forums, and we are expanding and growing our organization so that we can continue to put on multiple forums each year.

We encourage you to renew your membership and consider upgrading your membership to a higher level, or contributing financial support for a particular forum to support this work.

As always we invite your ideas and suggestions and welcome you to participate in planning and presenting these events. Thank you for your continued support! It's what keeps us motivated and able to present forums on important Alaskan public policy issues.

Sincerely,

Cliff Groh, Chair

P.S. Links to the audio and video of the events on health

care, Alaska's fiscal and economic challenges, and Alaska's changing climate are available at our website at www.akcommonground.org.

P.P.S. We look forward to seeing you on May 17th at Cyrano's!