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## **May 10 gas pipeline forum on Alaska's economic future**

The federal coordinator's office for the Alaska natural gas pipeline will sponsor a public forum May 10 on Alaska's economic future with and without a gas pipeline.

"As North Slope oil production continues to decline, and as Alaska's leaders work to attract more investment into the state, the public needs to understand how a gas line could make a difference in the state's economic future," said Federal Coordinator Larry Persily.

The Office of the Federal Coordinator for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects will bring together panelists knowledgeable about the state's economy and the importance of the oil and gas industry to jobs and public revenues to discuss how the gas pipeline could affect North Slope production and Alaska's future.

"Alaskans have lived a fairly comfortable, tax-free life since oil started flowing down the pipeline in 1977," Persily said. "The economy has grown substantially over those years, but what about the next three or four decades? Can the Alaska economy continue to be healthy, wealthy and wise without a natural gas pipeline to serve Alaskans and Lower 48 markets?"

"Can the gas line by itself make a significant difference in the state's economy in the years ahead? And would the lack of a gas line make it harder to attract oil and gas investment dollars?" Persily asked. "The forum will not provide guaranteed answers to all those questions, but we will try to find useful answers as Alaskans face tough public policy decisions on the multibillion-dollar project."

The forum is set for 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 10, at the University of Alaska Anchorage Fine Arts Building Recital Hall (Room 150). The event will be carried live on the web and broadcast at a later date on 360 North, the Alaska statewide public TV channel that also carries Gavel-to-Gavel coverage of the Legislature. The forum is open to the public, and there will be time for questions. Seating will be limited, though overflow space will be available in the music room next to the recital hall for people to watch via closed-circuit TV.

The federal coordinator's office also will arrange for viewing locations outside of Anchorage for Alaskans to see the forum live May 10, with the cities and locations to be announced in April.

Congress established the Federal Coordinator's office in 2004 to expedite and coordinate federal permitting for a pipeline to deliver natural gas from Alaska's North Slope to U.S. markets.

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