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May 10 public forum panelists announced

The federal coordinator's office for the Alaska natural gas pipeline today announced the four panelists for its May 10 public forum on Alaska's economic future, with and without a large gas line. The Alaska panelists will share their knowledge of the state's economy, the importance of oil and gas revenues to public services, and the workings of oil and gas reservoirs.

"Alaska's economy is overwhelmingly dependent on oil, and if Alaska is going to maintain a healthy economy years into the future it needs more oil and it also needs a gas line," said Federal Coordinator Larry Persily. "Without billions of dollars in new investment, the longevity of the oil line is in serious question. A gas line would improve Alaska's chances of attracting those investment dollars if explorers can profit from both oil and gas."

The forum is set for 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 10, at the University of Alaska Anchorage Fine Arts Building Recital Hall (Room 150), and will be streamed live on the web at the Federal Coordinator's website, www.arcticgas.gov. The forum is open to the public, and there will be time for questions after the presentations. 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 office also has set up sites for residents in Fairbanks, Juneau, the Matanuska Valley and Kenai Peninsula to watch the forum live that evening. In Fairbanks, Deputy Federal Coordinator Frank Richards will welcome viewers at the University of Alaska Museum of the North auditorium on the Fairbanks campus. In Juneau, the public can go to the Butrovich Room at the Capitol. And the forum will be shown live via the web stream that evening at the Legislative Information Offices in Wasilla and Kenai.

360 North, the Alaska statewide public TV channel that also carries Gavel-to-Gavel coverage of the Legislature, will rebroadcast the forum at 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. Friday, May 13; 1 p.m. Sunday, May 15; and 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday, May 16.

In addition to Persily, the panelists include:

- Scott Goldsmith, professor of economics, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage. Goldsmith's research includes regional economics, Alaska fiscal policy and energy demand. He is principal author of the ongoing *Fiscal Policy Papers* series, examining the implications of oil's dominance on Alaska's public revenues and economy.

- Brian Rogers, chancellor, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Rogers has served as the university system's finance vice president, four years in the state House and eight years on the university board of regents. In 1996, he established Information Insights, one of Alaska's leading economic and public policy consulting firms, and later assisted in the state's efforts to analyze local impacts of gas pipeline construction.
- Bill Van Dyke, a petroleum engineer with Petrotechnical Resources Alaska. Van Dyke has worked for more than 30 years on oil and gas issues, both in the industry and for the state. While working for the Department of Natural Resources, Van Dyke was responsible for statewide leasing, royalty, audit, commercial, unitization and resource evaluation programs.

Forum information, including complete biographies of the panelists, supplemental materials about state oil and gas economics, directions to the forum sites, access to the live stream of the forum, and a link to electronically submit questions for the panelists during the forum can be found on the Federal Coordinator's website, www.arcticgas.gov.

Congress established the Office of Federal Coordinator for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects 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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