

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

News from the House Majority

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For Immediate Release: **November 7, 2003**

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Kott Swears In Stepovich **Legislators Shuffle Committee Assignments**

ANCHORAGE – House Speaker Pete Kott (R-Eagle River) administered the oath of office to newly appointed Representative Nick Stepovich (R-Fairbanks) this morning at the House Majority Retreat.

“Nick is going to be a welcome addition to the Republican majority. He brings a wealth of business experience to the table, and that’s going to be needed this legislative session,” Kott said.

Stepovich represents Fairbanks and replaces Jim Whitaker who was recently elected mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Stepovich believes his family’s history in alaskan politics has prepared him for the position. He said, “People sit around the breakfast or lunch table all across the state, and they discuss issues that they want to do something about. Well, now I get the chance, and that’s exciting.”

Committee assignments were also a focus of the retreat. Representative Hugh “Bud” Fate (R-Fairbanks) left his chairmanship of the House Resources Committee for a position on the House Finance Committee. Representative Nancy Dahlstrom (R-Eagle River) and Representative Beverly Masek (R-Wasilla) were named co-chairs of the House Resources Committee, and Representative Jim Holm (R-Fairbanks) became sole chair of the Transportation Committee.

Of Rep. Fate’s appointment, Speaker Kott said, “Bud has a wealth of experience as a businessman in the Fairbanks area, and I’m sure he will fill a void that was created when Jim [Whitaker] left his position in finance.”

Representative Fate was equally pleased to be selected, “I’m honored to have the position, and I think it is important that the interior be represented on the Finance Committee.”

Speaker Kott was enthusiastic about the caucus’s selection of Representatives Dahlstrom and Masek as resource co-chairs. “This is the first time that I can recall that we’ve had two women as co-chairs. Both are very, very familiar with resource development issues. I’m sure their going to do a superb job for all Alaskans.”

“I am really honored that the majority has selected me to co-chair the Resources Committee. I am eager to move forward on all of the issues we have to deal with, whether they are statewide concerns or issues that affect local districts.”

“As the Governor has said, resources are where we are going to pick the pieces up and make things run effectively and efficiently in the state. I support him in that and look forward to this opportunity to serve the State of Alaska,” Representative Dahlstrom said.

With Representative Masek becoming co-chair of the Resources Committee, Representative Holm became the chair of the Transportation Committee. “I have a number of issues I want to address as chair of the Transportation Committee. One is to make sure we assert our right-of-ways and that we have access and egress to the resources of the state. It is very important. I also want to go forward with a natural gasline.”

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