



# Senate Majority News

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## **First Session Lays Foundation for Alaska's Future** **Senate Majority Moved Forward With People's Mandate**

(JUNEAU) – The first session of the Twenty-Third Alaska Legislature adjourned late Wednesday night after majority Senators spent the past 121-days working to fulfill the mandates laid out by the people of Alaska this past November.

Senate President Gene Therriault said he is proud of the work done this year and reminds everyone that this adjournment does not signify an ending, but rather a first step in addressing and fixing the issues facing Alaska.

“I said at the beginning of the year that it would no longer be enough to say Alaska is open for business, but that we must change the way we do business,” said Therriault. “This year we were able to start making some of those changes.”

Therriault stresses that the key issues the majority made great strides in addressing this year was revitalizing Alaska's position as a resource based economy. Streamlining the permit process, encouraging oil producers to continue pumping more oil and making Alaska more attractive to new exploration and resource development, were a central theme of the first session of the Twenty-Third Legislature.

The Constitution of Alaska calls on the Legislature to “provide for the utilization, development, and conservation of all natural resources belonging to the State.”

“We have a duty to all Alaskans to address the fiscal situation facing Alaska,” said Therriault. “We must go back to our roots as a resource based economy if we are going to turn our fiscal situation around, this is not just a priority we addressed this year, but a responsibility we are instructed by the Constitution to address.”

According to Therriault progress was also made on:

- Reducing the size and cost of government;
- Producing both an operating budget and a capital budget that are responsible and address the needs of the State; and
- Holding back on the implementation of any last minute broad-based tax plan until more input from the public could be heard.

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“I really believe we have started to point Alaska back in the right direction,” said Senate Majority Leader Ben Stevens (R-Anchorage). “We came to Juneau and did the people’s work, and I believe Alaska will be a better place tomorrow, because of the steps we took today.”

For more information about the accomplishments of the first session of the Twenty-Third Alaska State Senate please contact your local Senator or feel free to call the Senate Majority Press Office at (907) 465-3803. The second session will convene January 13, 2004.

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