The Division of Agriculture Activities

March 31, 2011

Find us on the web at:
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag

Director of Agriculture
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Questions or Comments?
E-Mail or call 907-761-3864.

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Director's Note

April is almost here, which means that Alaska Agriculture Day is quickly approaching. This year, the recognized day falls on Tuesday, May 3rd, and provides an excellent opportunity to educate fellow Alaskans about the benefits of agriculture. Contact Vicki Naegele with Ag in the Classroom, at (907) 982-2219, your local Soil and Water district, Farm Bureau Chapter, or the Division of Agriculture, to see how you can help educate fellow Alaskans about the benefits of Agriculture and purchasing Alaskan Grown.

The legislative session continues to move forward with the Division watching several bills that were already introduced (HB18, HB93, HB97, HB121 & SB68) as well as several new introductions; HB186 – "Regarding the importation or relocation of wood bison in the state"; HB187 – "An act relating to game management of bison"; HB191 - "Act establishing a Department of Agriculture & Food"; HB195 – "An act relating to the regulation and use of pesticides and broadcast chemicals"; and HB202 – "An act relating to the sale of food products by the producer to the consumer". You can track these or any other bills of interest on Alaska Basis - www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/.

The Environmental Protection Agency has passed new fuel storage tank requirements, known as the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeassure (SPCC) Program, that may affect your farm. The SPCC applies to a farm which:

- Stores, transfers, uses, or consumes oil or oil products, such as diesel fuel, gasoline, lube oil, hydraulic oil, adjuvant oil, crop oil, vegetable oil, or animal fat; and
- Stores more than 1,320 US gallons in aboveground containers or more than 42,000 US gallons in completely buried containers; and
- Could reasonably be expected to discharge oil to waters of the US or adjoining shore lines, such as interstate waters, intrastate lakes, rivers, and streams.
- If your farm meets all of these criteria, then your farm is covered by SPCC.

For more information on this program visit epa.gov/emergencies/docs/oil/spcc/spccfarms.pdf.

Please take the time to review the Division Calendar to stay up-to-date on statewide agriculture events. If you would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list, would like to post an upcoming agriculture event on the Division calendar, or have any questions, comments or concerns, please give us a call - (907) 745-7200.

-Franci Havemeister

"If you're riding ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there."
-Will Rogers

Agriculture Calendar

- 4/2: **Kenai Peninsula Ag Forum**, Ninilchik (*details here*).
- 4/7 - 4/22: **Plant Materials Center Spring Seed Sale**, Palmer (*details here*).
  Info: Peggy Hunt, 745-8721
- 4/26: **Farm to School Summit & Webinar**, Juneau.
  Info: Johanna Herron, 374-3714
- 5/3: **Alaska Agriculture Day**, Statewide
  Info: Vicki Naegele, 982-2219

As we learn about new agriculture events throughout Alaska, we will add the details to the calendar. If you have an event that you would like to add, please contact Lora Haralson.

Marketing Section

Marketing Section Welcomes Marketing Assistant

New to the Division of Agriculture Marketing Section is our recent hire, Kristi Krueger, as the Marketing Assistant. Her alma mater is Colorado State University where she graduated with a B.S. in Natural Resource Management.

Kristi's main focus will be outreach and promotion of the Alaska Grown program. Her past experience working with the Mat-Su Chapter Alaska Farm Bureau as Apparel Director allowed her to step into this role with ease as both programs objectives include promotion of Alaska Grown produce. We are excited to have Kristi on staff and look forward to her contributions to the

Farm to School Update

So far the farm-to-school program has 130 people in the contact database, it has been presented to 20 audiences (almost 400 people), and has received a lot of attention by interested stakeholders. We are proud to announce the success of two school / farm tours this month.

Palmer School Farm Tour

Recently, the farm-to-school program conducted a tour of facilities in the Matanuska Valley. In attendance were representatives from VanderWeele Farms, Palmer Produce, the Division of Agriculture, Mat-Su Borough School District, Food Service Professionals, and a graduate student interested in the farm to school program.

The event started with a discussion about potential product options and logistical challenges. We then toured the central production kitchen, visited two schools during lunch, and were treated to lunch back at the central production kitchen. We later visited the carrot production line at VanderWeele farms, and toured the potato production line the following morning.

Highlights from the tour included:

- The potential for utilizing the central production kitchen in the summer months, while it is dormant. Logistics considerations include maintenance issues (i.e. costs to keep boilers running), facility use forms, and the need for a contract/ agreement between the school district and producers making use of the facility.
- A 'Seasonal Harvest' promotion. A rough schedule would be to feature a local salad mix (lettuce and cabbage) for the last week of August through the first freeze, carrots for a couple months, potatoes (wedges preferred) for a few months, and possibly a grain at some point.
- After touring the potato production at VanderWeele Farms, it was noted that a particular size potato (small), which currently has no market, may be perfect for use in schools. A 5 pound bag of potatoes was taken back to the kitchen to explore menu possibilities. The next week, three additional varieties of potatoes were requested for trials in the kitchen.
- Equipment possibilities. After the kitchen staff test the potato wedge idea, there is potential that the Division of Agriculture could assist in the purchase of equipment to streamline the processing of these potatoes as a pilot project.

Fairbanks School Farm Tour

The farm-to-school program also conducted a tour in Fairbanks. In attendance were representatives from Wrigley Farm, Home Grown Market, the Division of Agriculture, and the Fairbanks School District Food Service. A discussion was started about potential product options and logistical challenges, followed by a tour of the central production kitchen. We have plans to visit Wrigley and Brasier Farms this summer. The summary highlights from the tour were:

- There is interest in recipe development, utilizing barley and wheat flour, to increase the demand for these products.
- There is interest in exploring supply, regulatory and cost issues affecting the purchase of barley and wheat flour for use in school recipes.
- An assessment of supply, regulatory, and cost issues pertaining to the purchase of lettuce for use in school meals is needed.

We are looking forward to presenting the strategic plan at the next farm to school summit, April 26th, and hope there will input provided from many perspectives. If you have any questions, please contact Johanna Herron, at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714.

Marketing Staff

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_ms.htm

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Save the Date

Farm to School Summit

April 26th, 2011 | 1pm – 4pm
Department of Natural Resources Office,
400 Willoughby Avenue - Juneau

(Also broadcast as a webinar. Email Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov to participate)

We are thrilled to announce a remarkable guest speaker for the next Farm to School Summit. Anupama Joshi is the director of the National Farm to School Network. Anupama has over 15 years experience working in various countries, with expertise in nutrition and health, food systems and agriculture. Her current goals include the promotion of the "Farm to School" model in the United States and internationally.

Farm to School programs link school students and farmers in a way that improves foods offered in schools, educates kids about healthy eating and local foods, and creates income opportunities for farmers supplying to schools. As Director of the National Farm to School Network, she is helping to build the national movement of Farm to School initiatives across the United States.

The National Farm to School Network provides training and assistance for program development and evaluation, networking opportunities, policy advocacy, and informational resources, as well as media and marketing materials. Anupama recently co-authored a book titled "Food Justice" (MIT Press, October 2010).

Anupama will share success stories from around the nation. We will then present the strategic plan and ask for discussion and input. We hope to have a great turn out, and hear perspectives from many stakeholders.

Inspection Section

USDA Export Certification

We at the Alaska Division of Agriculture provide the service of phytosanitary certification of plant material & products eligible for export. This 'plant health' certification is managed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ).

What constitutes plant material that may require certification? This could be a houseplant, fruits and vegetables, package of seeds, a container of logs, etc. Basically, anything that has the potential to harbor a pest needs to be inspected.

How are products & plant material determined eligible for export? The requirements differ depending on the commodity and to which country it will be exported. Each country has import requirements based on its own regulatory framework.

Please note: Although foreign countries have established plant quarantine regulations that U.S. applicants are required to meet, the U.S. **does not** require export certification of commodities.

The certification process has several steps. First, an application must be completed, identifying the commodity type, amount, origin and destination, etc. This application can be completed online using the USDA Phytosanitary Certification Issuance and Tracking (PCIT) System, at https://pcit.aphis.usda.gov/pcit/. You can also fill out the required 'Plant Protection & Quarantine' form (PPQ572) and or fax to our office, at (907) 745-7254.

Next, the importing country's phytosanitary requirements are identified. The inspection staff at the Division of Agriculture will perform this research, utilizing USDA databases or other official communication. Once the eligibility and import requirements have been identified, the import requirements must be verified.

What is an example of an import requirement? It may involve a specific protocol for inspection and / or treatment, the establishment of pest free areas, permit verifications, or other paperwork associated with the commodity.

see **Export Certification**, *page 4*

Inspection Staff

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_is.htm

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Export Certification

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After the import requirements have been verified and inspections conducted, a user fee is collected and the phytosanitary certificate is issued. If you have any questions about the certification process, please contact the Division of Agriculture's Inspection office, at (907) 761-3857.

Northern Region / Pest Detection Section

Pest Detection Surveys Planned for 2011

Each year, the Alaska Division of Agriculture coordinates pest detection surveys with various cooperators throughout the state. The surveys are conducted as part of a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) known as the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, or CAPS.

The national CAPS program is a partnership among all 50 states and the USDA to detect and monitor exotic pests of importance to international trade, as well as pests of state and national concern. The Alaska CAPS Program, through the Division of Agriculture, facilitates the detection of plant pests through survey, outreach, and educational activities.

In 2010, the Division conducted surveys for Green Alder Sawfly, Emerald Ash Borer, Gypsy Moth and other forest moth species of concern that could potentially be introduced from Asian Far East countries. Additionally, surveys of Potato Cyst Nematode and Golden Nematode, as well as Paratrichodorus and Trichodorus spp. of nematodes that vector the Peony Mosaic virus were conducted. 2010 also saw an exotic slug and snail survey, and a Giant Hogweed survey in response to a first in state discovery of the phototoxic plant growing in Kake.

During the summer of 2011, we plan to continue with the same surveys as 2010, with the addition of conducting searches for the **Spotted Wing Drosophila fly** (*Drosophila suzukii*), a pest of soft ripening fruit such as blueberries, that has extended its range northward along the Pacific Coast. This fly was first detected in California in 2008 and can now be found in Washington and Oregon. However, not all of the survey cooperative agreements with USDA-APHIS have been finalized.

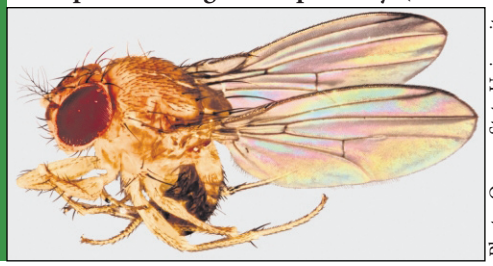

Photo: Oregon State University

Most of the surveys that are conducted by the Division of Agriculture are for serious pests that are assumed not to be present in Alaska, and we hope that we do not find them. Occasionally, we do have positive detections, indicating that some of these pests are making their way to Alaska, but this is the exception. Usually, and fortunately, the Alaska CAPS program survey result are negative.

This negative data is extremely important for several reasons. First, negative results can help to facilitate international trade in plant materials. Also, if we should find a serious pest in one of our surveys, this early detection would assist in determining the scope of the problem and improve our chances of eradicating the pest before it became established in Alaska. No pests of quarantine or regulatory concern were detected in any of the 2010 surveys we conducted in Alaska.

For more information about the Alaska CAPS program, or if you would like to participate, please contact the Division of Agriculture's Northern Region office, at (907) 328-1950.

Fairbanks Office

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Plant Materials Center

http://plants.alaska.gov/

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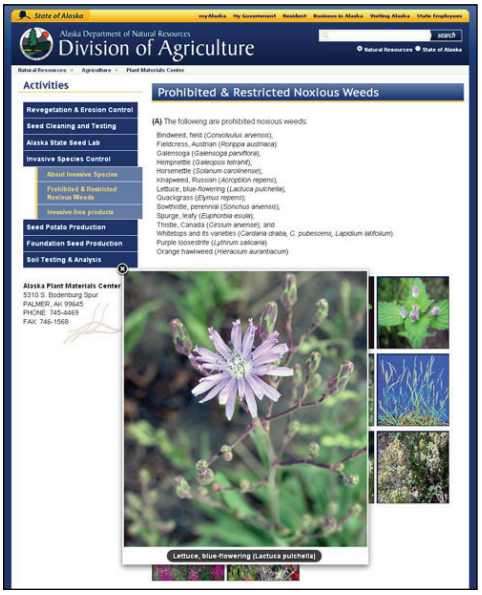
Plant Materials Center

New Look for the PMC Website

The Alaska Plant Materials Center has recently revamped its web presence. New features include a greatly expanded invasive plants section, and the 7th edition of the Directory of Alaska Native Plant Sources.

The Plant Materials Center website matches the new State of Alaska look and feel. Expect to see many Alaska.gov web pages transitioning to this new, wider style in the coming months.

You can visit the Plant Materials Center website, at plants.alaska.gov, and have a look at the new design. If you have any comments or suggestions for the website, contact Brennan Low, at (907) 745-8092, or brennan.low@alaska.gov.



Why Use Certified Seed Potatoes

Alaska's potato crop is free from many serious pests and diseases that are common in the lower 48. Imported potatoes could introduce problems such as Late Blight, Root Knot Nematode, viruses and other destructive organisms. Certification is designed to identify and remove from use those seed lots which have become diseased or are otherwise of reduced value for use as seed.

Alaska's certified seed potato growers start with disease tested stock and increase this seed in accordance with the strict certification standards. Growers manage their seed production to limit the possible exposure to diseases, but re-infection can occur from soil or other sources. The procedures used by the seed growers enable them to supply end-users with excellent quality planting stock of named varieties. Only those plantings meeting the minimum disease tolerance are allowed.

Seed potatoes are regulated because the potato is vegetatively propagated, and many afflictions can be carried in or on the potatoes used for planting. Excluding diseases from seed stock is critical. Diseases can travel long distances by the wind or insects or br transferred on contaminated equipment. Planting Certified seed will help you produce a good crop and will help protect your neighbors as well.

If you would like to know more about certified seed production in Alaska, including supplier contacts, please contact Bill Campbell, at (907) 745-8724, or William.Campbell@alaska.gov.

ARLF Services

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_arlf.htm

Candy Easley - Loan Officer
907-761-3869
Candy.Easley@alaska.gov

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm

Dan Proulx
907-374-3716
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Land Management

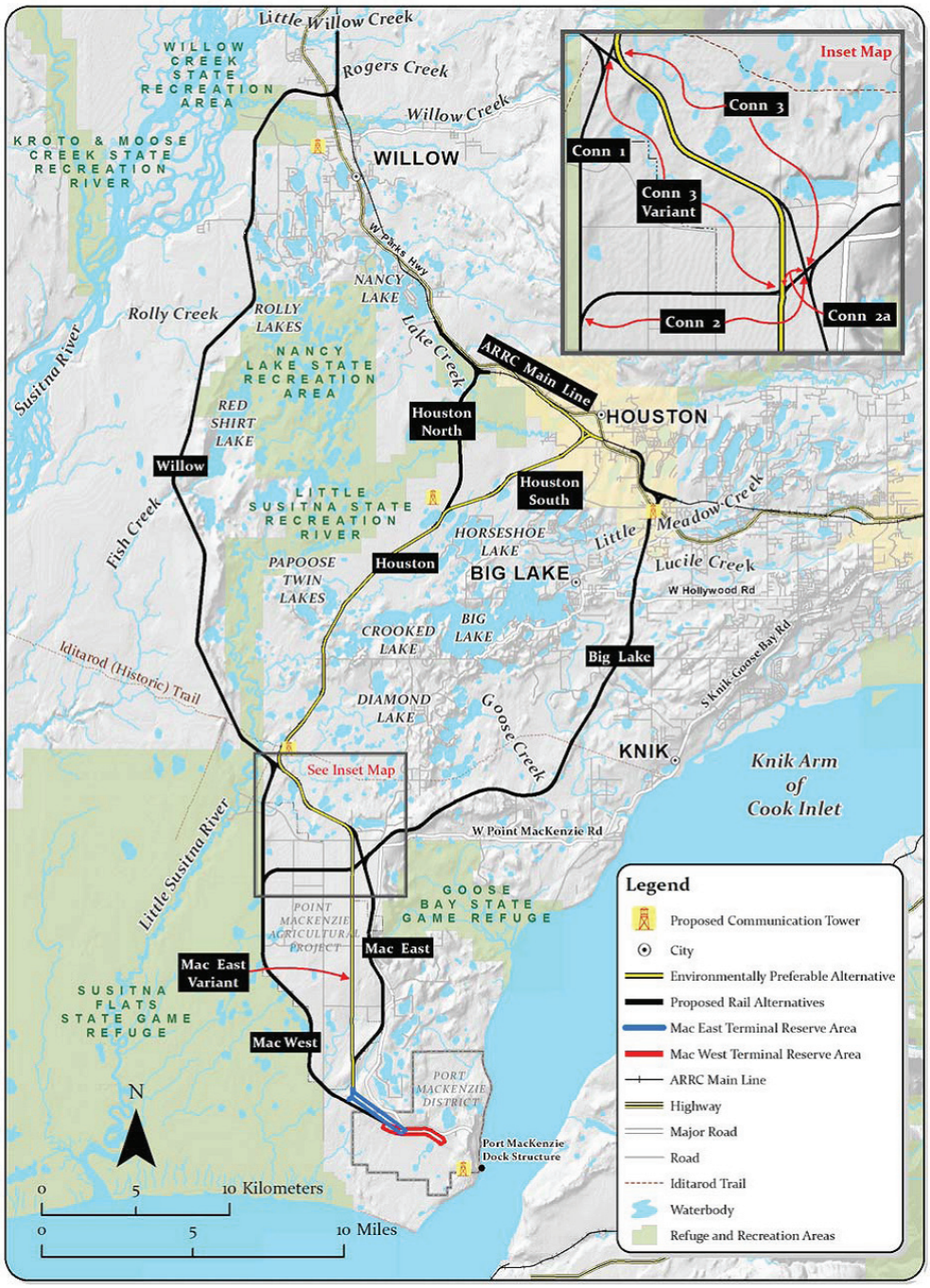
Port MacKenzie Rail Extension Environmental Impact Statement Released

The Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) released the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension, recommending the Mac East Variant (Mac Central) and Houston South as the rail route for STB approval. This route affects several Point MacKenzie Agricultural Project landowners.

Learn more about the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension project at an Open House, scheduled for 6:00 - 8:00 pm on April 7, 2011, at Evangelo's Restaurant (2530 E. Parks Highway, Wasilla).

To read the full final EIS, please follow this link: www.stb.dot.gov/decisions/readingroom.nsf/WEBUNID/23F2838CFE793947852576E300555BAA

If you are an affected farmer and wish to learn about the land acquisition process please visit the Federal Highway Department's Office of Real Estate Services webpage, at www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/act.htm.



Public Notices

Plant Materials Center Spring Seed Sale: April 7th through 22nd

Are you a certified seed producer, or do you want to be? The Plant Materials Center is the only source for foundation seed, which is used to produce registered or certified seed. The PMC is also offering 'selected class' seed varieties of native plant species that have been released by the Plant Materials Center. Act now, as this seed is only available during specified allocation periods in the spring and fall. The upcoming seed sale starts on 7th April and continues until the 22nd.

To learn more about the species offered for sale, or to place an order, please visit the Plant Materials Center website, at plants.alaska.gov/seedsale/, or contact Peggy Hunt, at (907) 745-8721 or Peggy.Hunt@alaska.gov.

Preliminary Findings and Decisions

Proposed State Agricultural Land Sale – AS 38.05.035(e) Kobe North Agricultural Parcels

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture (DNR/DoAg) in cooperation with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water (MLW) proposes to offer approximately 4100 acres of State agricultural land. The land will be offered for sale in a sealed bid auction. This state land has not been previously offered for sale. Minimum purchase price will be established at the appraised fair market value for each parcel.

Kobe North Agriculture Project is located near Milepost 275 of the Parks Highway, Approximately 75 miles south of Fairbanks. The project area is composed of Sections 4-9 and the NE1/4 of Section 16, Township 8 South, Range 9 West; Fairbanks Meridian. The Department of Natural Resources proposes to exclude from the sale the S1/2SE1/4SE1/4 of Section 8 and the ROW crossing the NE corner of Section 4. The project is located in USGS Fairbanks Quadrangles A-5 & B-5.

Copies of the preliminary decision and maps are available at the DNR/DAg office in Fairbanks and online at www.dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/landsale.

Pursuant to **AS 38.05.945**, the public is invited to comment on this proposed action. Comments on this proposal may be submitted by mail to the attention of: Daniel Proulx, Division of Agriculture, 1648 S. Cushman Ste 201, Fairbanks AK 99701; by email to Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov; or by fax to (907) 328-1951. The comment period ends at 4:00 PM May 13th , 2011.)

For more information please contact Daniel Proulx at (907) 374-3716 / Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov, or Erik Johnson at (907)745-7200 / Erik.Johnson@alaska.gov.

If public comments in response to this notice indicate the need for significant changes in the above decision, additional public notice for the proposed sale will be given in May of 2011. DNR reserves the right to modify the number of proposed parcels from this offering at any time. Deleting a parcel from the final offering will not be considered a significant change to this decision.

If no significant change is required, the Preliminary Finding and Decision, including any deletions, minor changes, and a summary of public comments, will be issued as the Final Finding and Decision of the Department of Natural Resources without further notice. A copy of the final decision will be sent to any person who submitted timely comments on the proposed decision and will be available at the above address. The final decision will set out the applicable process for appealing the decision under **AS 38.05.035(i)–(m)**. To be eligible to appeal, a person must submit a timely comment during the public comment period.

If these recommendations are approved, the state will publish a brochure that will be distributed in nearby communities and be advertised in a statewide newspaper. The brochure will contain information about available parcels and how to participate in the auction.

see **proposed land sale**, *page 8*

proposed land sale

continued from page 7

You may contact one of DNR's Public Information Centers for information on how to get a brochure or visit the web at www.dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/landsale for current land offering information.

Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special modifications should contact the Public Information Center (PIC) in Fairbanks, between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, at (907) 451-2705, or TTY (907) 451-2770, or email: fbx-pic@dnr.state.ak.us.

DNR reserves the right to waive technical defects in this publication

Properties for sale by the Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC):

The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources is offering two properties for sale.

513 South Valley Way, Palmer

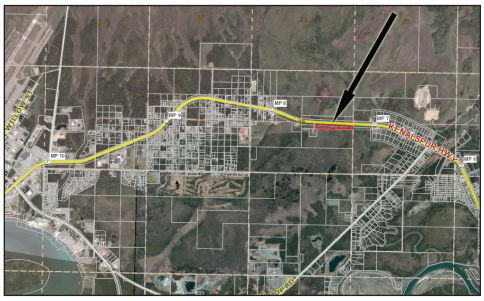
Former Matanuska Maid Manufacturing Facility: Real Property and Improvements

This property sits on 3 acres in downtown Palmer, bounded by E. Dogwood Ave, Dahlia Ave, and Denali St.

ARLF LAND SALE #09-01
Over-The-Counter Offering:
Purchase Price $975,000.00.

7411 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai

7.4 acres of commercial zoned land, between the cities of Kenai and Soldotna. Lot dimensions: Approx: 330 ft. x 1900 ft.



ARLF LAND SALE #11-01
Over-The-Counter Offering:
Purchase Price $14,000.00.

Properties are offered as fee-simple real estate, surface estate only. Financing from the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund may be available, but is not guaranteed. For more information on these OTC offerings, please visit dnr.alaska.gov/ag/.

Questions or comments regarding the sale process may be directed to Director Franci Havemeister, at 761-3867 or by email to Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov.

Opportunities

Sign-up period for 2012 EQIP funding is now through June 15th, 2011

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) sign-up period for fiscal year 2012 funding is now through June 15, 2011. These funds have been used to fund installation of seasonal high-tunnels across Alaska.

By capturing solar energy, seasonal high tunnels create favorable conditions enabling farmers to grow vegetables, berries and other specialty crops in climates and at times of the year in which it would otherwise be difficult. Farmers who sell their high tunnel produce locally benefit from the extra income, and the community benefits from the availability of fresh, locally grown food.

Seasonal high tunnels are manufactured kits made of metal pipe and covered with UV resistant 6 mil plastic. Easy to build, maintain and move, high tunnels provide an energy-efficient way to extend the growing season. Unlike greenhouses, they require no energy, relying on sunlight to modify the climate inside to create favorable conditions for growing vegetables and specialty crops.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is providing financial assistance for seasonal high tunnels as part of a trial to determine their effectiveness in reducing pesticide use, maintaining vital soil nutrients, and increasing crop yields.

For information on EQIP funding, visit the NRCS Mat-Su Service Center at:

1700 E. Bogard Rd.
Suite 203, Building A
Wasilla, AK 99654

Or call (907)373-6492 ext. 101.