



Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, Sitka's Harrigan Centennial Hall



**Zakary Kirkpatrick, Chief Marketing Officer, Allen Marine Group**

Zakary Kirkpatrick was born and raised in Juneau and developed a passion for showcasing his home state from a young age. After working as a naturalist and captain for Allen Marine Tours, Zak graduated with a degree in Advertising with an emphasis in Account Management from Brigham Young University, and was determined to apply his education in the state and industry he loved. Zak now lives with his wife and three sons in Sitka, where he serves as the Chief Marketing Officer for the Allen Marine family of companies, including Alaskan Dream Cruises, Allen Marine Tours, and shipyard Allen Marine, Inc.



**Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor, City of Sitka**

My Sitka residency began in 1992, only leaving to serve in the United States Marine Corps. After my enlistment, I returned home to Sitka and began my adult life here. During this time I have worked in Real Estate, Corrections and own Russell's, a third generation family owned store with my wife Ashley, which recently opened a second location called Trailhead Supply Co. Next year my son Fisher will start Kindergarten here. My volunteer duties have included the Sitka Fire Department as a Lt. Firefighter, EMT and Search and Rescue, member of the Gary Paxton Industrial Park Board, Chamber Board Member, Police and Fire Commissioner and Downtown Revitalization Group. Additionally serving Sitka over the last 10 years on the assembly with 4 as Mayor, I had liaison opportunities with the Gary Paxton Industrial Park Board, Tree and Landscape Committee, Sitka Economic Development Association, Sitka Community Hospital Board and Tribal Counsel.



**Yeidikook'áa Dionne Brady-Howard, Chairwoman, Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Council**

Yeidikook'áa (Dionne Brady-Howard) is Yéil (raven) moiety, Kiks.ádi (frog) clan, X'aaká Hít (Point House). She is a child of Teikweidí (brown bear) clan. Yeidikook'áa was born and raised in Sitka by grandparents who were active in the Tribe and community. She has worked as dance show coordinator for Sheet'ká Kwáan Tribe/Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Yeidikook'áa is a culture-bearer and educator. She taught social studies at Mt. Edgecumbe High School for more than two decades, and currently teaches at Outer Coast College. She is a graduate of Mt. Edgecumbe High School and has a bachelor's degree from Sheldon Jackson College. She leads the Sheet'ká Kwáan dancers, serves as President of Sitkans Against Family Violence Board, and coordinates local Native events in Sitka. She serves on the Council to assert and protect our Tribal sovereignty and ensure we are serving our citizens' needs.



**Meilani Schijvens, Rain Coast Data**

A lifelong Juneaunte, Meilani has 20 years of professional and academic experience with Southeast Alaska's economic, transportation and natural resource issues. Meilani is a past Executive Director of Southeast Conference, and has previously worked at the Juneau Economic Development Council, Sheinberg Associates, and the McDowell Group. Additionally, she has taught a course on Alaska natural resource history at the University of Oregon, worked as an environmental technician at the Greens Creek Mine, and was a staffer in Washington DC for the US Senate Minority Leader. She holds a master's degree in Natural Resource Policy from the University of Oregon and a B.A. in history from Colby College. Her company, Rain Coast Data, allows her to be a serious "data-nerd", which is an asset to many agencies in SE AK.



**Robert Venables, Executive Director, Southeast Conference**

Often referred to as "Mr. Southeast", Robert has lived and worked in Southeast Alaska since arriving in Haines in 1984. Robert managed the local branch for a regional wholesale distributor and served for seven years on the Haines Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, with 2 terms as the Chamber's president. He went on to work with the local municipality, first as the Economic Development Director and then as the Haines Borough Manager.



**Alana Peterson, Executive Director, Spruce Root**

Alana's Tlingit name is Gah Kith Tin, from Diginaa Hit, Luknahadi. She grew up and currently lives in Sitka, a small island community in Southeast Alaska. Professionally, Alana earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at Charleston Southern University. After graduating from college, she joined the Peace Corps where she served as a Small Business Development volunteer for two years on the southern coast of Peru. She obtained her master's degree in business administration from Northern Arizona University. She has continued to work in economic development in her current role as Executive Director at Spruce Root.



**Scott Habberstad, Director of Sales & Community Marketing, AK Airlines**

Scott Habberstad is a lifelong Alaskan currently residing in Anchorage with his lovely bride Amy, daughter Catheryne, and son Jack. Scott graduated from Ketchikan High School in 1989, and then attended flight school, earning his multi-engine commercial land and sea ratings. He returned to Ketchikan to fly for Taquan Airlines in the summer and attended college in the fall at Boise State University. Scott graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing in 1997 and returned to Ketchikan to continue his flying career; shortly after returning, however, he decided to pursue a business career, and accepted a position with the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau as the Director of Marketing. In 2001, Scott went to work for Alaska Airlines as an account executive in Anchorage and was later elevated to Manager of Regional Sales, Alaska; today, he is the Director of Sales & Community Marketing-Alaska. Scott is active in the community serving on the many boards.



**Susan Bell, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Huna Totem**

Susan Bell is Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for Huna Totem. A lifelong Alaskan originally from Nome, Susan has lived in Southeast since 1987. Her career and numerous volunteer activities have been dedicated to strengthening communities, economies, and organizations. Susan's primary responsibility is developing Aak'w Landing, a new dock and upland development in downtown Juneau. She is also helping Huna Totem build new partnerships, cultural tourism experiences, and economic opportunities throughout the state. Susan recently worked with the University of Alaska to plan and launch the Arctic Leadership Initiative, accelerating Alaskan-led solutions and opportunities in the rapidly changing Arctic. Former roles include commissioner of the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; McKinley Research Group President; and many years in tourism marketing and operations. Susan also serves on the National Forest Foundation and Juneau Symphony board of directors.



**John Leach, Administrator, City and Borough of Sitka**

John Leach has served as the Municipal Administrator for the City and Borough of Sitka since March 2020, where he oversees 14 departments, nearly 200 employees, and an annual operating budget of over \$45 million. In this role, he directs day-to-day operations, supervises department heads, and advises the Assembly on finances, policy, and community priorities. Prior to his current position, John retired as a Commander from the U.S. Coast Guard in 2020 following a 20-year career. He amassed nearly 4,000 helicopter flight hours as an instructor pilot and aeronautical engineer, serving in assignments from counter-terrorism aviation with the Maritime Security Response Team to engineering leadership at Air Station Sitka. His final staff role was as Chief of Aeronautical Engineering Systems Management at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. John is



a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy with a degree in Operations Research and holds a Master's in Industrial Administration from Purdue University's Krannert School of Management. John and his wife Andrea have called Sitka home since 2015. With their two sons now away at college, they continue to be deeply rooted in the Sitka community, enjoying its small-town atmosphere, natural beauty, and opportunities to stay engaged in civic and community life. In addition to his role as Administrator, John serves as President of the Alaska Municipal Management Association and actively contributes to regional and statewide conversations on economic development, resilience, and the visitor industry.



**Heather Haugland, VP McKinley Research Group LLC**

Heather has been studying Alaska's tourism industry since she joined MRG in 1999. She has overseen surveys of tens of thousands of visitors and regularly conducts tourism industry research including economic impact studies, resident opinion surveys, market analysis, and port development planning. She has worked for ports and municipalities across the Pacific Northwest and Alaska including Juneau, Sitka, Skagway, Ketchikan, Haines, Anchorage, Anacortes, Seattle, and Prince Rupert.



**Renée Limoge Reeve, VP of Government and Community Relations, CLIA**

Renée Limoge Reeve grew up in Vermont and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and English from the University of Vermont. She moved to Alaska in 2003, holding various roles in state government. Renée has over 20 years of experience in government relations, working in the US Senate, the Alaska State Legislature and Alaska-based trade associations. Most recently, Renée served as State Director for U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan. Renée joined Cruise Lines International Association Alaska in 2021 as Vice President of Government and Community Relations for Cruise Lines International Association Alaska. Renée serves on the American Cancer Society Alaska Advisory Board. She lives in Anchorage with her husband Michael.



**Katie Ringsmuth, Alaska State Historian, Alaska State Historic Preservation Office**

Katherine Ringsmuth, PhD, serves as the Alaska State Historian and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. She works within the Office of History and Archaeology, which is part of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation in the Department of Natural Resources. As the State Historian, Katie oversees the National Register program for Alaska, the new Alaska Maritime Heritage Preservation Program, and is currently co-chair of the America250-Alaska Commission. In addition to working for the State, Katie teaches Alaska and



U.S. History at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Since graduating with an MA in Northern Studies from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and a PhD in History from Washington State, Katie has enjoyed a 20-year public history career in Alaska. From cannery slimer, park ranger, to Alaska Historical Society Board President, she has drawn on her vast experience to curate several museum exhibits on a range of topics, including *"Home Field Advantage: Baseball in the Far North"* at the Anchorage Museum and *"Mug Up: The Language of Cannery Work"* at the Alaska State Museum. She launched the Tundra Vision Lecture Series with Mountain View Library. She has authored numerous National Register nominations and NPS publications, as well as books and articles, including *"Alaska's Skyboys: Cowboy Pilots and the Myth of the Last Frontier."* She currently lives in Eagle River with her husband, Eric, and their two boys, Ben and Tom.



**Ryan Anderson, P.E., Commissioner, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities**

Ryan serves as commissioner of the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. Under his direction, the department is responsible for the planning, design, construction, and the maintenance and operation of Alaska's transportation system, public buildings and facilities. He believes that a sound transportation system is a foundation for community vitality, and that connecting people and cultures through infrastructure provides economic opportunities that improve people's lives. Anderson moved to Alaska in 1993 to attend the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and graduated in 1997 with a degree in Geological Engineering. His career has spanned both mining and transportation, where he earned his Professional Civil Engineering license in 2003 working for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. Throughout his career he has taken lead roles in the development of large capital works projects, operations of multi modal transportation networks, and working with culturally diverse communities throughout Alaska.



**Christopher Goins, P.E., Director of Southcoast Region, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)**

Christopher Goins, P.E., is the Director of the Southcoast Region for the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and has spent 20 years in the public works and transportation industry. Chris began his career with DOT&PF in 2014 as a Design Project Manager, and has held positions of Design Group Chief, Head of Construction, and now as Director overseeing the region's aviation, shoreside marine, and state highways in Southeast Alaska and the Aleutian Chain. Before joining DOT&PF, Chris spent nearly a decade gaining valuable engineering experience with the City of Albany in Oregon. His roles included designing and constructing roadways, clean water systems, sewer systems, and development of a post-construction stormwater pollution program, a citywide hydromodification study,



local improvement district (LID) development, and citywide master planning. Chris is a licensed Professional Engineer and holds a degree in Civil Engineering from Oregon State University (2006). He is deeply honored to serve the people of Alaska and contribute his expertise to the state's transportation infrastructure.



**James A. Crawford, Assistant Secretary, US Department of Transportation**

US DOT Assistant Secretary James A. Crawford is a member of the Forest County Potawatomi Community located in Northern Wisconsin. He was awarded the Madison 365 Wisconsin's most Influential Native American Leaders 2023 and the BizTimes Media Wisconsin 275 Most Influential Business Leaders in 2024. James was the initial Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Potawatomi Business Development Corporation, which is now Potawatomi Ventures. James has spent the past 39 years working for his Tribe including being elected to the roles of Vice-Chairman, Council Member, Secretary and most recently resigning his Tribal Chairman position to take on the role of US DOT Assistant Secretary. As Tribal Chairman James was the fourth tribal leader to sign a Self-Governance Compact with the US DOT. A strong advocate for Tribal Sovereignty James enters this role from the viewpoint of a Tribal Leader and looks forward to advancing the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program.



**Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator**

Lisa Murkowski, Alaska's senior U.S. Senator, is a third generation Alaskan proudly serving as the first Alaskan born senator. Murkowski was born in Ketchikan and raised in towns across the state, including Wrangell, Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. She is married to Verne Martell, and they have two grown sons. Lisa loves spending time in the Alaska outdoors. She's an avid skier, has hiked on glaciers, enjoys fall duck hunts, and has a pretty impressive King Salmon mounted on her office wall. Since joining the Senate in 2002, Senator Murkowski has worked tirelessly for Alaskans and earned a reputation in the Senate for her ability to work collaboratively and across the aisle to reach common sense solutions. Murkowski is well known for her love and dedication to her state, which means putting Alaska first.



# ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

2025 SOUTHEAST ALASKA ECONOMIC SUMMIT & 67TH ANNUAL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 16-18 2025 ★ SITKA, ALASKA



## **Marilyn Romano, Regional VP, Alaska Airline**

Marilyn Romano is Alaska regional vice president for Alaska Airlines. She started with oversight over Alaska in 2011 and added the state of Hawaii to her area of responsibility in 2016. She shapes and executes a range of areas for Alaska Airlines including strategic external relations, corporate giving, sales and marketing, communications and governmental affairs. Before working for the airline, she spent nearly two decades with the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, the second largest paper in Alaska, including 11 years as publisher. She was the newspaper's first woman top executive. Romano serves on the boards of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation and Alaska State Chamber of Commerce. She also serves on the Governor's Aviation Advisory Board, is a trustee for the University of Alaska Foundation, and is vice-president of the Alaska Airlines Foundation. She is also a member of the American Heart Association statewide board and has led Go Red for Women events in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Her contributions have brought recognition including a Top Forty Under 40 award from the Alaska Journal of Commerce, Woman of Distinction from the Farthest North Girl Scouts, and the Cashen Award for meritorious service to University of Alaska Fairbanks. In 2014, she was inducted into the ATHENA Society, which honors female leaders who work to set an example for the next generation of leaders. In 2020, she was named a YWCA of Alaska "Women of Achievement," a statewide honor that recognizes those who work for the YWCA mission of empowering women, eliminating racism and promoting opportunity for all. Romano and her husband, Brian, live in Anchorage.



## **Larry Persily, Former Dep. Commissioner, Owner, Wrangell Sentinel**

Larry Persily has written about, commented on and also worked on public policy issues in Alaska for almost 50 years as a journalist, newspaper owner and state/federal/municipal official. He currently owns the Wrangell Sentinel weekly newspaper; his opinion columns appear in newspapers statewide.



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**Ron Curtis, General Manager, Inter-Island Ferry Authority**

Mr. Curtis is an operations professional having held senior level positions in multi-national companies over a 30 year career. In 2013 he founded the Management Consulting firm Fundamental Insights and is the President and CEO. Ron joined the IFA in 2019 based on his commitment to S.E. Alaska and a passion to serve and make a difference. Ron has served on many Boards over the years including the Salt Lake Rescue Mission, Military Affairs Committee of the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce, and others. In addition to his service to the IFA, Ron currently serves on the Hollis, AK Community Council, as a Volunteer ETT and Volunteer Firefighter.



**Carl Ramseth, General Manager and Co-Owner, Alaska Seaplanes**

With over 30 years of experience in Southeast Alaska aviation, Carl has worked in many facets of the business, from Dispatch and Flight Control to his current position overseeing the daily functions of Alaska Seaplanes in the areas of Customer Service, Cargo, Revenue, Communications and Scheduling.



**Dan Kelly, Vice President, Alaska Marine Lines**

Dan started his career in marine transportation in Juneau in 1989. He remained in SE Alaska until he was promoted to Vice President of Alaska Marine Lines and moved to Seattle in 2018. He lived in Juneau and Ketchikan and continues to travel the region regularly. During his time in SE Alaska, he volunteered time to several community commissions and boards including the Ketchikan Planning Commission, State of Alaska's Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB) and many others. He continues to serve on the board for SEAPRO (Southeast Alaska Petroleum Response Organization) and currently is chair of the Seattle Freight Advisory Board. His wife, Shannon, was born and raised in Ketchikan. Five of their children and 3 of their grandchildren still reside in the State of Alaska between Dillingham, Anchorage and Ketchikan.



**Herb Pond, Mayor, City of Price Rupert**

Herb was re-elected mayor of Prince Rupert in 2022, after a 14-year sabbatical. He previously served as mayor during the tumultuous years of 2002 to 2008. In the worst economic collapse on record, his team focused on driving down costs and attracting new employment, culminating in the opening of Fairview Container Terminal in 2007. Herb credits partnerships as the key to the community's recovery - partnerships with labour, industry, First Nations, other communities, and senior governments. Herb has broad industry experience in diverse sectors - forestry, transportation, tourism, energy - and has owned several small businesses. He and his wife Sandy, raised four children in Prince Rupert and are currently exploring the joys of longdistance grandparenting. Herb has been a fierce advocate for stronger ties between Alaska and British Columbia and proudly touts his connection to SE Conference as an honorary lifetime member



**Kaitlyn Jared, Transportation and Special Projects Manager, Southeast Conference**

Kaitlyn Jared has served as Southeast Conference's Transportation and Special Projects Manager since 2023. She holds a Bachelors in Business Administration with a minor in Economics and an Associates in Accounting from University of Alaska Anchorage as well as a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Alaska Southeast. While in college, Kaitlyn was most inspired during her tour of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, appreciating the organization's approach of community-based and driven economic development. Prior to joining SEC, Ms. Jared worked for the Skagway Development Corporation and the Port of Skagway, during which time she served on the Board of Directors for SEC and Board President. Currently she supports Southeast Conference and works with a team on a large portfolio of regional efforts and community needs including ferry, non-motorized transportation, natural disaster, fisheries, municipal solid waste, forest industry products, broadband, workforce development, visitor industry, childcare, housing and more.



**Julie Decker, President, Pacific Seafood Processors Association**

Julie began working for Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) in 2011 as the Development Director. Julie became the executive director on January 1, 2014. Julie has 20 years of experience working in the Alaska seafood industry. Her family owns and operates a commercial fishing vessel in Southeast Alaska. She worked as a part of the executive management team at a seafood processing facility in Alaska which designed and implemented a \$7 million conversion of a salmon cannery into a high



quality, efficiency, and volume fresh and frozen salmon processing facility during the mid-2000's. She was also the executive director of the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (SARDFA) which grew this industry from a "new and developing fishery" with an annual ex-vessel value of approximately \$3 million to an annual ex-vessel value of \$10-15 million. Decker has a BA from Northwestern University and a Master of Public Administration (MPA) with a concentration in natural resource policy from UAS. Decker was awarded the 2013 Ernest Gruening MPA Excellence Award for outstanding graduate student in her field. Decker has also served on numerous boards and committees (i.e. Southeast Conference, Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, United Fishermen of Alaska, AFDF, City & Borough of Wrangell's Assembly and Economic Development Committee, and the SE AK Ocean.



**Kristy Clement, CEO, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation**

Originally from the Village of Port Lions on Kodiak Island, Kristy discovered her love for the ocean in her youth while fishing alongside her father on his seiner. Raised in a family connected to subsistence traditions, Kristy developed a profound respect for Alaska's rich waters and lands. She enjoys harvesting and processing fish and shellfish, amongst other family traditions. With over two decades of leadership experience, Kristy is a visionary committed to supporting Alaska's maritime stakeholders. Beyond her role at AFDF, she has spearheaded initiatives to enhance healthcare, social well-being, and economic health in Alaska and its communities. Kristy holds a BA in Organizational Management from Alaska Pacific University and an Executive MBA from the University of Washington.



**Greg Smith, Communications Director, ASMI**

Greg Smith was hired as the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute's Communications Director in June 2023. He was born and raised in Juneau and graduated from Juneau Douglas High School. He went Outside for school, where he graduated and then worked at Oregon State University. He participated as a crew member for three seasons on Southeast gillnetters, as well as a short opener in the Southeast troll fishery. He has worked on and advised numerous political campaigns, as well as contracted with small businesses and a nonprofit. Greg has worked nine legislative sessions, as an assistant to a lobbyist, legislative staff, and the legislative liaison in the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. Greg is honored to serve on the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly.



**Douglas Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

Doug Vincent-Lang spent his 34-year public service career at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game before accepting the position of commissioner in January 2019. A scientist with a focus on fulfilling the department's mission, Vincent-Lang began work at the department as a fisheries research and management biologist for the Division of Sport Fish in 1981. He held the positions of regional management and research coordinator and assistant director for 28 years in the Division of Sport Fish. During his tenure at the Division of Sport Fish, Vincent-Lang worked on a number of high-level research and policy issues for the state. He evaluated habitat needs and instream flow requirements of fish while working on the feasibility assessment of the Susitna River Hydro-electric project. He was instrumental in integrating planning into the management of Alaska's recreational fisheries by leading an effort to develop and implement the first-ever strategic plan for the Division of Sport Fish. In 2012, he was named Director of the Division of Wildlife where he managed Alaska's wildlife under the sustained yield principles and public trust doctrine principles. He led legislative wildlife issues on the state, national and international levels. In addition to his experience in both fisheries and wildlife management, Doug has served as the Endangered Species Act Coordinator for the State of Alaska. He has represented the State of Alaska on a wide range of policy issues including climate change, arctic, and marine policy issues. He holds a B.S. degree in biology/population dynamics from the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay and a M.S. degree in Biological Oceanography from the University of Alaska – Fairbanks. Vincent-Lang lives in Anchorage with his wife of 35 years. He has three children and is teaching his granddaughter to fish, hunt and enjoy Alaska's outdoors.



**Mayor Albert Smith, Metlakatla Indian Community**

Before being elected Mayor of the Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC), Albert Smith honed his leadership skills as a successful commercial salmon fisherman and captain. The people of Metlakatla elected him several times to serve as a member of the Council, and he has fulfilled the roles of Acting Mayor, Chairman of the MIC Natural Resources Committee, and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for Metlakatla Power & Light. Thanks to his considerable experience in the realms of both fisheries and governance, Mr. Smith has become adept at navigating through troubled waters, marshalling resources, performing well under pressure, and bringing out the best in his crew. As Mayor/City Manager, Mr. Smith is committed to upholding and strengthening the principles of sovereignty and self-sufficiency. He works collaboratively with the Council in order to achieve its strategic goals to revitalize Metlakatla's economy and provide more opportunity for MIC Members. His straightforward, no-nonsense management style is especially well-suited to these uncertain times. Most importantly Mayor Smith's heart is for the People.



He works hard to meet the needs of today while doing all he can to ensure the next generation will inherit a modern and prosperous Community, rooted in Metlakatla's rich culture and traditional values.



**Linda Behnken, Executive Director, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association**

Linda has fished off Alaska since 1982, both as a deckhand and vessel owner operator. After earning a Masters degree in resource management from Yale University, she took over as director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, a position she still holds. Linda served nine years on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and as a Commissioner to the International Pacific Halibut Commission; she is a current board member of the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust, the Halibut Coalition, the Marine Resource Education Program, and the Alaska chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Linda received a National Fisherman Highliner Award, a White House Champion of Change for Sustainable Fisheries award, and the Heinz Foundation award in the Environmental category. She lives in Sitka when she

isn't fishing or traveling to fish meetings.



**Rebecca Himschoot, District 2 Representative**

In 2020, Rebecca was elected to the Sitka Assembly, where she served as liaison to the Sitka School Board and the Tree and Landscape Committee. In 2022, she was elected to represent House District 2, the coastal communities from Yakutat to Hydaburg. As a member of the Education Committee, the Community and Regional Affairs Committee, and the Special Committee on Fisheries, she is using her experience as an educator, a local elected official, and an advocate for healthy ecosystems to bring her district's voice to the decisions that are made in Juneau.



**Jeremy Bynum, District 1 Representative**

Mr. Bynum served as an assembly member on the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly beginning in 2020. As an assembly member, he co-chaired the Assembly/School Board Liaison Committee as well as service on the University of Alaska Southeast Ketchikan Campus Advisory Council. He was also a member of the Board of Directors for Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA). He remains connected and invested with his fellow Veterans as an active member of the American Legion, Joseph T. Craig, Post 3, serving as an executive board member. He also enjoys providing service to others as a

Rotarian and active member of First City Rotary. In 2010, he earned his Professional Engineer (PE) license in electrical engineering. He was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives in 2024.



**Andi Story, District 3 Representative**

Andi Story has lived in Southeast Alaska for over 40 years, raising her three children Ellen, Mallory & Ryan while her husband Mike ran a small engineering firm. She has served in the State House of Representatives since 2018. She currently serves as Co-chair for the House Education Committee, Vice Chair of the State Affairs Committee, and is a member of the Tribal Affairs Committee. She also serves on the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the University of Alaska Southeast School of Education External Advisory Committee, the Council of State Governments Education and Workforce Development Committee, the National Conference of State Legislatures Higher Education Task Force, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Legislative Advisory Committee. She served on the Juneau School Board for 15 years and has regularly advocated for increased focus on education and equity in Alaska schools before the legislature, as a co-founder of Great Alaska Schools, and as president of the Alaska Association of School Boards. Andi has a master’s in social work. She enjoys walking outdoors, cross-country skiing, and time spent with family and friends.



**Jesse Kiehl, State Senator**

Jesse Kiehl is the senator for District B—representing Juneau, Haines, Skagway, Gustavus, and Klukwan. Born and raised in Anchorage, Jesse graduated from Whitman College in the late 1990's after internships with US Sen. Ted Stevens in Washington, DC and Gov. Tony Knowles in Juneau. Alaska’s capital city has been his home ever since. He and his wife Karen raised their two daughters here. Jesse worked for the governor, staffed the State Board of Education & Early Development, then worked more than 18 years as a legislative aide for Southeast senators. He served almost eight years on the Juneau Assembly, including as chair of the finance committee. This is his seventh year in the Alaska Senate. He serves on the Finance, Judiciary, Education, and Transportation committees, along with the Legislative Council.



**Bert Stedman, State Senator**

Senator Bert Stedman, a fourth-generation Alaskan raised in Petersburg and Sitka, brings extensive experience in both the private and public sectors. Before joining the Alaska State Legislature, he ran a successful investment services firm for thirty years and spent over a decade serving in Sitka’s local government. Since beginning his tenure in the Alaska Senate in 2003, he has served as Co-Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee for 14 years. Senator Stedman is widely recognized for his expertise in energy, taxation, public finance, and state budgeting. In addition to his work in the Alaska Legislature, Senator Stedman has twice chaired The Energy Council, a U.S.-Canada organization of energy-producing states that addresses oil and gas policy. He also serves as a member of the National Petroleum Council, a federal advisory committee that provides recommendations to the Secretary of Energy on oil and gas matters. Senator Stedman’s strong financial background has greatly benefited the state, and he hopes to continue doing so in the years ahead.



Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, Sitka's Harrigan Centennial Hall



**Cathy Munoz, Commissioner, AK Dept of Labor and Workforce Development**

Deputy Commissioner Cathy Muñoz is a life-long Alaskan, small business owner, and the mother of two. She served three terms in the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly and was elected in 2008 to the Alaska House of Representatives, where she served four terms. Workforce development has been a key priority throughout Muñoz's public service career. In the Legislature, she served as chairwoman of the Community and Regional Affairs Committee and was a member of the House Finance Committee. She advocated for the University of Alaska vocational training programs, and secured funding for Alaska's first mining simulator. She also sponsored a provision in state law allowing for tax credit contributions to vocational education programs. Muñoz holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, and is a graduate of the Emerging Leaders Academy at the University of Virginia. She serves on numerous boards and commissions including the Salvation Army Advisory Board, the Juneau Parks Foundation and the Advisory Board of the University of Alaska Southeast. Deputy Commissioner Muñoz is the mother of Matthew and Mercedes and is married to Juan Muñoz. In 2014 she was adopted into the Raven Coho clan. Her Tlingit name is Kee Nax i Klaa, an honored name given to her by the Kunz family of Juneau, Alaska.



**Crystal Koeneman, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation**

Crystal Koeneman (KEY-nuh-men) is the Deputy Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). A lifelong Alaskan with roots in Southeast's temperate rainforest, she brings more than 20 years of experience in state government, much of it devoted to DEC policy and regulatory programs. Crystal works closely with communities, agencies, and lawmakers to balance responsible resource development with protecting Alaska's natural resources and environment, reflecting DEC's mission to enhance the health, safety, and economic and social well-being of Alaskans.



**Commissioner John C. Boyle III**

John Boyle has served as the Commissioner of Alaska’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR) since early January 2023 – leading a 1,200-person team in the department’s mission to develop, conserve, and maximize the use of Alaska’s natural resources consistent with the public interest. After graduating law school, John moved to Alaska in 2010 for a judicial clerkship in Fairbanks with the Alaska Court System. At the end of his clerkship, he moved to Utqiagvik to serve the North Slope Borough as an Assistant Borough Attorney and later as Chief Advisor to the Mayor and Director of the Borough’s Government and External Affairs department. In 2016 he went to work at BP as Director of Government Affairs before joining Oil Search (now Santos) as Government Affairs Manager in 2019. John holds a Juris Doctorate from J. Ruben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University, and a Bachelor of Science in Management and Finance. He lives in Anchorage with his wife, Rosie, and two young children.



**Anna Latham, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development**

Anna Latham is the Deputy Commissioner for the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED). Appointed in January 2025, she brings over a decade of experience focusing on labor and commerce policy within Alaska government. Her career has included roles such as Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Labor, Deputy Director of the Division of Insurance, and Deputy Legislative Director in the Office of the Governor. As Deputy Commissioner, Ms. Latham oversees the department’s six public-facing divisions and collaborates closely with leadership to implement policy reforms and special projects. She also serves as the department’s delegate to the Alaska Student Loan Corporation Commission and the State Bond Committee. Ms. Latham is a graduate of the University of Alaska Southeast, and her roots span several Alaskan communities including Yakutat, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau. Ms. Latham resides in Juneau with her husband and two children.



**Tessa Axelson, Executive Director, Alaska Forest Association**

Ms. Axelson is a life-long Alaskan with 20+ years of executive management, community planning, program and project administration, and facilitation experience. She spent 15 years with the Denali Commission, a federal agency focused on rural infrastructure development in Alaska. Ms. Axelson was responsible for the annual development and implementation of the agency's \$100+ million program budget for transportation, energy, health facilities, solid waste, housing, training, and economic development. Ms. Axelson is highly skilled in project and program management, funding strategies, federal contracting, facilitation and planning, project scoping, data gathering, technical writing, and working with communities to identify needs, create goals, and implement vision and value strategies.



**Deantha Skibinski, Executive Director, AK Miner Association**

Deantha was born and raised in Anchorage and Big Lake, Alaska and is a graduate of the University of Alaska. She is excited to have a career that will ensure she spends a lifetime in Alaska. She came to AMA from the Resource Development Council, where she worked as projects coordinator for seven years. In that role, she led issues and policy for the mining and tourism industries. She managed RDC's efforts on the cruise ship head tax and mining shutdown ballot initiative campaigns and administered the Alaska Alliance for Cruise Travel, an organization promoting Alaskan-owned tourism businesses. Deantha is a Board Member for the Armed Services YMCA of Alaska and volunteers for the Alaska Resource Education program as well as the American Cancer Society. In 2006 she was one of 55 delegates to the first-ever Conference of Young Alaskans. Deantha was named to The Alaska Journal of Commerce "Top Forty Under 40" for 2015. She enjoys fishing, hunting, snowmachining, and running with her chocolate lab, Hank.



**Leila Kimbrell, Executive Director, Resource Development Council**

Born in Soldotna, Leila is a lifelong Alaskan whose family homesteaded on the Kenai Peninsula just after statehood. She recently took on the role of Executive Director for the Resource Development Council of Alaska, Inc., whose mission is "Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development." Leila previously served as the State Director for United States Senator Lisa Murkowski for over four years and prior to that practiced law. She cut her teeth in the halls of the legislature in Juneau and, all combined, has nearly 20 years of experience in law and public policy at all levels and before all branches



of government. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and her law degree from Willamette University College of Law.



**Ashley Reed List, Deputy Director for Forestry, Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection**

Ashley Reed List is the Deputy Director for Forestry at the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection. She has worked as a natural resource manager and forester in Alaska for over twenty years. She began working as a forestry technician in Southeast and as a forester on the Kenai Peninsula; she is now based in Anchorage. She has worked on cooperative forestry management and forest planning for the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection, and has also worked on land management policy and planning for the Alaska

Department of Fish and Game. She holds a B.S. in Forest Resources and a Master's in Natural Resources, both from the University of Idaho.



**Jill Weitz, Government Affairs, Tlingit & Haida**

Jill Weitz serves as the Government Affairs Liaison within Tlingit & Haida's Office of the President, focusing on natural resource policy and advocacy. She holds a graduate degree in Natural Resources Law and Policy from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law and has worked extensively with tribes, communities, and stakeholders for nearly two decades to defend Southeast Alaska's salmon-producing rivers and the livelihoods they support.



**Angie Bowers, Assistant Professor, University of Alaska Southeast**

Angie Bowers is an Assistant Professor in the Applied Fisheries program at the University of Alaska Southeast in Sitka where she has developed hands-on and online programs in Aquaculture. Before beginning her teaching career, Angie was the Aquaculture Director at the Sitka Sound Science Center (SSSC) and before that spent 10 years working for Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (NSRAA), working as the Hatchery Manager at Medvejie Hatchery in her last few years with them. Angie has her Master's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife administration from Oregon State University and a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.



**Markos Scheer, President, Seagrove Kelp**

Markos moved to Southeast Alaska in 1982. Over the next several decades, he lived in Thorne Bay, Hollis, Klawock, and Ketchikan, including graduating from Ketchikan High School in 1986. Markos spent more than a dozen years working for Silver Lining and NorQuest Seafoods before attending law school and practicing fisheries business and maritime law for nearly 20 years. Now, Markos returns to his roots by pursuing kelp and oyster farming in Southeast Alaska.

The pull of being part of the growth of a sustainable, environmentally friendly, and non-extraction based business was too great. Kelp and oyster farming also provides a new opportunity for sustainable, environmentally friendly, and renewable industries supporting economic growth for coastal Alaskans. Markos is the current President and has been a board member of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation since 2007. AFD promoted the Alaska Mariculture Initiative which resulted in the creation of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force.



**Dan Lesh, Southeast Conference**

Dan serves as Southeast Conference's deputy director, bringing a deep background in economic development in coastal Alaska. He adds capacity as the organization develops and implements partnerships and projects in mariculture, energy, transportation, fisheries, and other topics.

Prior to joining SEC, Dan served as a senior consultant at McKinley Research Group (formerly McDowell Group). In his seven years at that firm, he led teams completing market assessments, economic development plans, feasibility studies, and other assignments for a wide variety of clients across

Alaska and beyond. A lifelong Alaskan, Dan's professional experience includes policy analysis for the Alaska Legislature; tourism operations; serving on the Gustavus City Council; and renewable energy program development. He holds an undergraduate degree from Grinnell College and an MBA from the University of Illinois.



**Blue Shibler, Executive Director, SEA-AEYC**

Blue has been working in the early learning profession in Juneau for 23 years. During those years, Blue covered the full spectrum of child care roles from being a teaching assistant and then assistant director at Juneau Montessori school, to owning a family child care program, a group home, and a large child care center. Blue considers herself a master of circle times and transitions, and loves to hear children tell their stories. Though she will miss working with children every day, Blue sees her work at AEYC as the natural next step in her journey to support early learning professionals through direct technical assistance and public advocacy. Blue holds a Bachelor's of Business



Administration from UAS and 30+ ECE credits from UAF. In her free time, Blue enjoys cooking, gardening, and playing board and card games with family.



**Jill Melcher, Southcoast Region Planning Chief, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities**

Jill Melcher is a seasoned transportation planning expert with a career spanning over two decades with the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. Currently, she serves as the Southcoast Region Planning Chief in Juneau. In this role, Jill supervises a team of planners who support the Southcoast Region by identifying, prioritizing, and programming projects across all modes of transportation. Jill's educational background includes a Master's degree in Rural, Town, and Regional Planning, and a Bachelor's degree in Resource Management, both from the University of Montana. Jill's expertise, innovative approach, and collaborative spirit make her a respected leader in the field of transportation planning.



**Tom Wetor, Public Works Director, City and Borough of Wrangell and Chair, South East Alaska Solid Waste Authority**

Tom has lived in Wrangell for 13 years and has been the Public Works Director for 5 years. In that time solid waste operations in Wrangell have seen some changes with baling MSW, equipment procurement and construction projects at the transfer station. Before taking over as Chair of SEASWA Tom served as Vice Chair for 2 years. Tom has a diverse background including experience in construction, behavioral health, as a boat captain and guide before moving into public service. He holds degrees from Winona State University and is passionate about building resilient infrastructure and supporting his community. Outside of work, Tom enjoys spending time outdoors exploring the beauty of Southeast Alaska.



**Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator**

Dan Sullivan was elected in 2014 and serves on four Senate committees: the Armed Services Committee, where he is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness; the Environment and Public Works Committee; the Veterans' Affairs Committee; and the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, where he is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Security and the Coast Guard.



**Tim Sandstrom, Chief Operating Officer, Alaska Energy Authority**

Tim Sandstrom is the chief operating officer at the Alaska Energy Authority. He has been with AEA since 2011, and previously served as director of rural programs. Sandstrom oversees AEA's Rural Power System Upgrade, Bulk Fuel Upgrade, Circuit Rider, Emergency Response, and Training Programs. As a member of the senior management team, he is also responsible for the implementation of AEA's strategy and budget management for his programs. With over 35 years in construction, project management, and engineering project management throughout Alaska, Sandstrom brings a broad range of private sector experience to his work.



**Michael Rovito, Deputy Director, Alaska Power Association**

Michael Rovito is the deputy director of Alaska Power Association (APA), where he's worked since 2014. APA is the statewide trade association for electric utilities in Alaska. Michael works closely with APA's member electric utilities to implement an effective government relations program and to help advance the goals of APA's members. He also works on content and planning for APA's many conferences and workshops and hosts the Alaska Powerline podcast. Before coming to APA, Michael spent four years as a chief of staff in the Alaska Senate, and two years as a legislative liaison for the Knik Arm Crossing project. He began his career in Alaska as a reporter at the Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman. Michael is a registered lobbyist in Alaska and carries the professional designation of a Certified Cooperative Communicator from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



**Robert Siedman, CEO, Southeast Alaska Power Agency**

Robert J. Siedman is the Chief Executive Officer for the Southeast Alaska Power Agency headquartered in Ketchikan, Alaska. Siedman has been in the power industry for over 17 years and is a registered Professional Electrical Engineer in the State of Alaska. Siedman spent nearly a decade of his career with the United States Army Corps of Engineers. His last duty station with the Corps was in Portland Oregon, where he was employed as the chief of power for the Hydroelectric Design Center. While currently serving as a board member for the Alaska Power Association, Siedman previously served as the vice chair of the technical committee on the Northwest Hydroelectric Association's board. Siedman earned a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Washington State University, graduating with honors, and has been an Alaskan resident since 2017.



# ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

2025 SOUTHEAST ALASKA ECONOMIC SUMMIT & 67TH ANNUAL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 16-18 2025 ★ SITKA, ALASKA



## **Hannah Wilson, Alaska Programs Manager, Alaska Heat Smart**

Hannah is the Alaska Programs Manager at Alaska Heat Smart, joining AHS in 2025 after several years spent working on sustainable fisheries and mariculture development. Born and raised in Juneau, she is thrilled to bring her life-long love of coastal Alaska to support sustainable living in this special place.



## **Jessie Huff, Southeast Conference**

Jessie Huff brings over 15 years of experience in sustainable energy development and strategic planning, with a focus on rural and community-based solutions. Prior to joining SE Conference, she served as a State Energy Coordinator with USDA Rural Development, where she supported renewable energy and energy efficiency projects and initiatives across Alaska, Oregon, and Arizona. She also worked with the Alaska Energy Authority as a renewable energy development specialist and served on the board of the Alaska Center for Appropriate Technology. In 2010, Jessie helped launch the University of Alaska Fairbanks' first solar installations, the first carbon count of campus and the Office of Sustainability and sustainability fund. She has designed and maintained a range of off-grid and net-zero energy systems and helped to build multiple sustainable buildings and complexes. Her work practices a real-world blend of community-centered, sustainability-focused economics, rooted in systems thinking equity and resource aware development. She is passionate about practical place-based solutions, inclusive collaboration, and building programs that are culturally grounded, technically sound, and responsive to the need for long term economic stability rooted in environmental stewardship.



**Aparna Dileep-Nageswaran Palmer, Chancellor, UAS**

Dr. Aparna Palmer serves as Chancellor at the University of Alaska Southeast. In this role, she is responsible for leading the university in fulfilling its educational mission. Before coming to UAS, Dr. Palmer was a Professor of Biology for 22 years at Colorado Mesa University where she eventually became the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. She then served as Vice President at Front Range Community College and was responsible for the leadership of two of the College’s campuses in Northern Colorado. Dr. Palmer holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences and a B.A. in English from Colorado State University as well as a Ph.D. in Zoology from Washington State University. As a marine biologist, she studies the natural histories and genetics of water bears and seaworms.



**KC Hostetler, Regional Strategic Account Manager, Alaska Airlines**

KC Hostetler is the Regional Strategic Account Manager for Alaska Airlines in the state of Alaska. She is responsible for corporate account management, community relations, and outreach in her region, which spans the southern coast of Alaska, from Adak to Ketchikan. A life-long Alaskan, KC was born and raised in Anchorage. She has worked on the sales and marketing team for nearly ten years with expertise in business development, community networking, and negotiation. KC is a graduate of the University of Alaska, Anchorage holding Bachelor’s degrees in both International Relations and Spanish. She also currently serves on the board of directors for the Alaska Raptor Center, Ketchikan Visitors Bureau, Southeast Conference, and Trend Alaska. KC was named one of Alaska Journal of Commerce’s Top 40 under 40, class of 2020; she also received the Alaska Travel Industry Association’s Emerging Leader Award in 2021.

**Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, Sitka’s Harrigan Centennial Hall**



**Nick Begich III, US Representative**

Nick Begich III is the U.S. Representative for Alaska’s at-large congressional district, having assumed office on January 3, 2025. A native of Anchorage, he has deep roots in Alaska. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Entrepreneurship from Baylor University and earned an MBA from Indiana University Bloomington. Before entering Congress, Begich was a businessman. He founded FarShore Partners, a software development company, and co-founded Dashfire, a venture/investment firm. He has also been active in civic and party organizations—serving on boards including the Alaska Policy Forum, co-chairing the Alaska Republican Party’s Finance Committee, and helping steer campaigns such as that of the late Rep. Don Young in 2020. In Congress, he has focused on issues key to Alaska, including resource development, energy, transportation infrastructure, and ensuring that rural and remote communities receive attention and support. Representative Begich resides in Chugiak, Alaska, with his wife Dharna and their son.



**Shaun Guthrie, Operations & Portfolio Manager, T&H Regional Housing Authority**

Shaun Guthrie is Alaska Native (Tlingit and Tsimshian) from the Gaanaxhidi (Raven/Mink) clan in Klawock, Alaska. A lifelong resident of Southeast Alaska and father of five, Shaun was appointed Lending and Operations Manager for Haa Yakaawu Financial Corporation (HYFC) in December 2022. He previously served as Accountant and Administrator for the President/CEO of Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority (2015–2022) and as Financial Analyst for Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska’s 477 Employment and Training Department (2005–2015). Shaun holds a degree in Business Management with a major in Accounting from the University of Alaska Southeast.



**Randy Hughey, Executive Director, Sitka Community Land Trust**

Randy Hughey retired from a 34 year career in education in 2013 and went immediately to work on Sitka’s workforce housing problem. He served on the Board of the Sitka Community Land Trust then as part time grant writer and project manager and ultimately became the Executive Director. Randy and Carol Hughey lived and taught in Nuiqsut and Angoon before making Sitka their home in 1990.



**Richard Harney, Tribal Planner, Ketchikan Indian Community**

Richard Harney is the Tribal Planner for Ketchikan Indian Community, the local tribe in Ketchikan. He has lived in Ketchikan for over 30 years and graduated from Ketchikan High School. Shortly after completing his Urban Planning degree from Arizona State University, Richard returned to Ketchikan to work in the Department of Planning and Community Development for 15 years, finishing as the Planning Director for five years. He holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Alaska Southeast and a professional certificate in Sustainable Tourism Management. He developed a tourism strategy for the community which was adopted in July 2023 and worked extensively on implementing strategies from the community’s housing assessment. Richard is married and has five children, which is why he has dedicated his career to making Ketchikan a livable and vibrant community in Southeast Alaska. His focus is now geared toward the tribal members but believes through partnerships and working together the Tribe and community will continue to make Ketchikan an amazing place to live, work, and visit.



**Cari-Ann Carty, CEO, Alaska Safety Alliance**

Cari-Ann Carty is the Chief Executive Officer of the Alaska Safety Alliance, where she leads statewide efforts to strengthen workforce development and safety training across industries. With more than 15 years of experience building collaborative workforce strategies, she has guided initiatives that prepare Alaskans for the future of work while advancing community resilience. Under her leadership, the Alaska Safety Alliance and the Alaska Workforce Alliance continue to align industry, education, and policy to address critical



workforce needs. She is passionate about creating opportunities for all Alaskans, fostering a workforce that strengthens industries and sustains economic growth across the state.



**Nils Andreassen, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League**

Nils has a degree in Peace and Development from the University of Bradford in England and his background in rural and international development, Alaska, and Arctic policy issues fit well within AML’s mission to support and strengthen local governments. Nils is currently pursuing a master’s degree in governance and entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas through the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Tromso. Nils lives in Juneau with his family.



**Katie Berry, President, McKinley Research**

Economist Katie Berry joined McKinley Research Group in March 2017. Katie previously worked for Union Pacific Railroad as the finance lead on an interdepartmental capital project team tasked with development of new business processes and elimination of inefficiencies. In 2023, she was appointed President of McKinley Research Group. Katie holds a dual master’s degree in economics and finance from the University of Wyoming. As a Teacher’s Assistant for the Economics and Finance Department, she led discussions for the Financial Markets & Institutions class and supported instruction of the Behavioral Finance and Banking Management & Policy classes. In addition to transportation and infrastructure, Katie is interested in issues that affect Alaska including public health, tourism, and natural resource use. Katie recently returned to Anchorage, where she was born and raised.



**Michelangelo Bustamante, Commercial Lending Officer, Native American Bank**

Michelangelo Bustamante is the Commercial Lending Officer for the Alaska and West Coast market at Native American Bank based in Seattle, specializing in 105(l) lease financing, Title VI loans, and other housing and community development projects. He partners directly with Tribes and Native organizations, walking the land with them to understand why each project matters and helping bring essential community investments to life. Originally from Colorado and a graduate of Colorado State University, Michelangelo is passionate about building relationships that strengthen Native economies and create lasting impact. Outside of work, he is an avid college football fan and loves exploring the outdoors, whether hiking, skiing, kayaking, or cold plunging in the Puget Sound.



**Patrick Cotter, Program Manager, RESPEC**

Patrick Cotter, AICP, has been working with Alaska communities since 2006 to craft plans for development, transportation, climate action, hazard mitigation, and solid waste management. A graduate of UAF, Pat has worked for the State of Alaska, University of Alaska, and Bureau of Land Management, and is currently a principal planner for RESPEC Company. An avid fly fisherman, Pat enjoys exploring Alaska with his wife, two boys, and two Golden Retrievers.