

Introduced by: Hibbert
Date: 06/15/21
Action: Adopted
Vote: 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
COMMENDING RESOLUTION**

**A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE KENAI PENINSULA ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT FOR ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE KENAI
PENINSULA BOROUGH**

- WHEREAS,** the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) assisted 750 businesses seeking financial assistance through the AK CARES Grant by providing information on the program, technical assistance, aid in application completion, and through the appeal process; and
- WHEREAS,** KPEDD Executive Director, Tim Dillon, wrote and advocated for regulation changes in the program that had inhibited businesses (such as commercial fishermen) from applying; and
- WHEREAS,** the Kenai Peninsula Borough received \$49,692,654 in financial assistance with 1,041 approved applications; and
- WHEREAS,** KPEDD also advised all six of the incorporated communities on establishing individual grant programs with the municipality relief funds they received in order to provide additional support for local businesses; and
- WHEREAS,** public engagement for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy began January 6, 2021 during the Economic Future Forum; and
- WHEREAS,** incorporated and unincorporated communities have been integrated into the plan through in-person discussions, online forums, break-out sessions, online surveys, and email blasts disbursed through each Chamber of Commerce; and
- WHEREAS,** the total number of regional participants is currently over 1,500; and
- WHEREAS,** the draft plan will be available for the public comment period in the coming week before final approval of the Board of Directors and EDA submission in June; and
- WHEREAS,** the Economic Future Forum was held online on January 6, 2021 in place of the usual Industry Outlook Forum; and
- WHEREAS,** the event provided important background information of the region, economic updates on demographic and industry changes, gave KPEDD project highlights, and allowed space for open discussion to weigh priorities; and

WHEREAS, 98 registered attendees provided broad representation of the Kenai Peninsula; and

WHEREAS, a few notable attendees included the office of Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chugach Alaska Corporation, Qutekcaq Native Tribe, Native village of Tyonek, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Seldovia Village Tribe, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Alaska Railroad, Homer Electric Association, and Northern Economics; and

WHEREAS, interviews for the UAA Manufacturing Extension Program video are nearly completed and additional footage has been purchased; and

WHEREAS, the video, which is scheduled to be finalized by June 30, 2021, will feature resources available to manufacturers and create a call-to-action for businesses looking to expand or move to the Kenai Peninsula; and

WHEREAS, featured resources will include cost reduction techniques, increasing manufacturing capacity, and identifying new markets; and

WHEREAS, KPEDD reached out to Tribes, and incorporated and unincorporated communities during the reporting period to identify projects potentially eligible for the EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program; and

WHEREAS, the City of Soldotna is currently pursuing a downtown renovation project that would create jobs, encourage private investment, support local entrepreneurs, increase tourism, and further diversify the local economy; and

WHEREAS, during the reporting period, KPEDD worked with the Alaska Fish Nutrition project team to identify sources of funding, investors, product markets, and industry partners; and

WHEREAS, the specialized equipment created by two entrepreneurs utilizes salmon waste through dehydration techniques that preserves the cellular structure of the salmon to retain its nutritional value; and

WHEREAS, this process would provide necessary nutrients during natural disasters, in developing countries, and in communities without a reliable food supply, and the equipment could also be used to preserve other goods, such as second-stem peonies, to create new products and additional non-seasonal jobs; and

WHEREAS, the KPEDD team also participated in discussions with the State of Alaska, Denali Commission, and various federal agencies concerning broadband infrastructure development and infrastructure locations; and

WHEREAS, discussions relating to funding sources, communities with the greatest need, partners, and the economic impacts of broadband improvements are ongoing; and

WHEREAS, KPEDD met with the Alaska Regional Development Organizations from around the state, the Denali Commission, the State of Alaska, and the EDA to share opportunities for economic development, support for mariculture programs, curriculum development through online platforms, and funding sources for infrastructure improvements; and

WHEREAS, KPEDD made presentations to the Borough, cities, and chambers to share available resources, programs, and KPEDD projects; and

WHEREAS, these presentations have allowed direct communication with residents seeking information and sharing concerns; and

WHEREAS, a YouTube Channel has been created and will feature speakers sharing industry changes, regional resources and projects, information on emerging technologies, and changes in their sector; and

WHEREAS, the presentations will be structured similar to TED Talk and a new video will be posted each month; and

WHEREAS, after the approval of the EDA Resiliency Plan and RLF Expansion Grant, KPEDD began structuring each of the plan's sections listed below:

- SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis that clearly defines the economic challenges, deficiencies and vulnerabilities to anticipate risks and economic effects prior to the next natural disaster.
- Pre-disaster recovery plan that defines key stakeholders, roles, actions, and responsibilities.
- Create a collection of resources (especially financial resources) of private, local, state and federal tools for economic recovery for residents, businesses, and communities.
- Promote business continuity and preparedness to ensure businesses understand their vulnerabilities to economic disruptions and prepare to take action to resume operations after an event.
- Outline KPEDD's role to respond to external inquiries and act as a grant administrator in some cases for federally funded recovery initiatives and information dissemination in partnership with the Kenai Peninsula Borough, State of Alaska, and Federal Agencies.
- Identify targeted development initiatives of emerging clusters and industries that build on the region's unique assets to provide stability in downturns and sudden disasters.
- Encourage, promote, and expand current processes for regular communication, monitoring and updating business community needs and issues to be used post-event.
- Determine measurements for economic resiliency through regional income equality, regional economic diversification and other applicable regional data; and

WHEREAS, an Administrative Plan for the new Revolving Loan Fund has been written and submitted to the EDA, application documents are currently being added to an online platform to allow for online submission through the KPEDD website, staff have completed the EDA's required fraud awareness training, and bond coverage has been requested; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with the Economic Development Administration, Denali Commission, and Kenai Peninsula Borough; KPEDD built a workforce development website, address www.KenaiPeninsulaWorkforce.org which features a list of the following:

- top forty jobs on the Peninsula,
- apprenticeship and training programs;
- GED prep and testing sites;
- scholarships for each leading industry;
- list of leading industries in the region and their respective training requirements and wages;
- resume builder support;
- disability, veteran, and employer services;
- a career finder test; and
- an embedded link to search jobs in the region; and

WHEREAS, the site was developed with broad regional participation and will be utilized by the school district to guide students to resources and training programs, by the Department of Labor to identify regional programs and retraining needs, by Kenai Peninsula businesses to train and grow their workforce, and by public and educational organizations to reduce redundant programs; and

WHEREAS, Complete Count Committee meetings were held by KPEDD throughout 2019 and 2020 where census updates, dissemination and marketing methods, as well as individual member responsibilities were discussed at meetings to prepare incorporated and unincorporated communities for the 2020 Census; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, each participant equated to approximately \$2,959 in federal funding opportunities for the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, KPEDD leveraged the \$100,000 provided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough in the FY2021 budget into \$1 million;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. That the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly commends the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District for contribution to the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

SECTION 2. That a copy of this resolution shall be given to Tim Dillon Executive Director of the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District.

SECTION 4. That this resolution takes effect immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 15TH DAY OF JUNE, 2021.



Brent Hibbert, Assembly President

ATTEST:



Jonni Blankenship, MMC, Borough Clerk

Yes: Bjorkman, Carpenter, Chesley, Cox, Derkevorkian, Dunne, Elam, Johnson, Hibbert
No: None
Absent: None