

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: Matanuska-Susitna Borough****Federal Tax ID: 92-0030816****Project Title:****Project Type: New Construction and Land Acquisition**

Matanuska-Susitna Borough - Convention and Visitors Bureau Gateway Center Project

State Funding Requested: \$1,000,000**House District: Mat-Su Areawide (7-11)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

Brief Project Description:

Land acquisition (site control), design and construction of 12,791 sf Visitor Information Center. Phase 1 design & construct only.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$7,222,201
Funding Already Secured:	(\$2,250,000)
FY2014 State Funding Request:	(\$1,000,000)
Project Deficit:	\$3,972,201

Funding Details:

See Matanuska Susitna Borough/Mat Su Convention and Visitors Bureau NONE.

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION: In June, 2010 the Mat-Su Visitors and Convention Bureau completed a preliminary feasibility study performed by Agnew Beck Consulting, LLC, Wolf Architecture and RECON, LLC for a Mat-Su Valley Gateway Visitors Center (Center) to be located along the Glenn Highway (mile 36).

The goal of the Center is to create a lively, attractive, well-design space where residents and visitors alike will learn about and directly experience the wealth of cultural, natural, recreational and business amenities in the Mat-Su Valley. The Center will welcome visitors to the Mat-Su Valley, provide interpretive information for travels, and showcase the natural beauty of the area. The Center will also be a destination in it's own right, offering interesting activities and learning experiences. Part of the purpose of the Center is to promote tourism-related and recreational-related economic development, to share information about the region's cultural history and natural attractions in an innovative and interesting way, and to foster stewardship of the Mat-Su Valley's natural identity.

The Mat-Su Valley is a conduit as well as a magnet for travelers arriving from and traveling to points throughout Alaska. Situated between Alaska's most populated city (Anchorage) and most popular destination (Denali Park), the Valley can't help but be a critical factor in advancing tourism in the state of Alaska. The Alaska Railroad, in its run from Seward to Fairbanks, passes through 200 miles of Mat-Su countryside. Alaska's two most traveled thoroughfares, the Parks Highway and the Glenn Highway, converge in the Valley offering a prime location at which to site this facility.

Facility Concept: The Center will blend traditional and emerging visitor's information and interpretive services with the addition of indoor and outdoor venues for community events. A highly visible location, convenient access, flexible activity and gathering spaces, varied seasonal outdoor program areas, and efficient site circulation invite year around use.

780,000 annual visitors enter the Mat-Su Valley and obviously, the objective is for them to stay longer in the Valley. A "must see" Center will point newcomers to recreational, retail, and service-based activities, while providing restrooms and a chance to take in the mountain view. The "gateway" visitors Center will welcome 100,000 visitors a year and serve as a jumping-off point for information and amenities. This inspiring, beautiful facility will be emblematic of the Mat-Su. A destination in its own right, the Center will offer interesting activities and learning experiences.

Among the eight goals of the Center: to showcase the natural and cultural assets of the Mat-Su Valley is to create an "information bridge" between visitors and local organizations and businesses. It has been identified that the success of the center will benefit from diverse partnerships. The Gateway facility will be a place to support the mission of a range of partners and to facilitate use of other related facilities and programs. The facility will also foster stewardship and encourage visitors and residents to be responsible and help care for the areas they use and enjoy.

Location, Location, Location. Although the current location of the Visitor's Center is located within the highway corridor and has excellent views, recent upgrades to the Parks/Glenn Highway interchange have made it very difficult for visitors to locate and access. As a consequence, visitation to the center has noticeably declined, therefore, reducing the contact. A visitors information center will properly encourage visitors to be exposed to the Mat-Valley history, natural amenities, places of interest and those public and private accommodations that facilitate visitor experiences. The aforementioned represents the core components of the Center's programs.

In considering how best to serve the facility's diverse users, and in recognition of the capital and operational costs associated, a Design Team was engaged and chose to explore three scenarios-small, medium and large. Each scenario contains some consistent, core spaces whose sizes grow larger. Additionally, in the medium and large scenarios, other program elements are added.

Core Program Spaces: Lobby and Restrooms-first impressions are critical to creating a welcoming and enthusiastic atmosphere.

Exhibit and Program: Areas to house both permanent and rotating displays interpreting the natural features, cultural history, events and communities that personify the Mat-Su Valley. Program space is the largest and most prominent volume and function in the facility.

Tour Information: A place for traveler's queries and directing them toward activities, accommodations and adventures within the Mat-Su Valley and beyond.

Virtual Tour Interface: Utilize technological means for connecting travelers with itinerary options, information/interpretive downloads, and Mat-Su CVB member discounts.

Auditorium/Theatre-most similar facilities with an interpretive element are served by having an assembly space for presenters and productions.

Site Amenities: Provide appropriate site circulation and parking for a minimum of 50 vehicles, 15 recreational vehicles and 3 motor coaches; a coach and disabled load/unload staging area; site and building lighting; pathways from screened parking to building; interpretive trail connection to site appropriate water or topographic features; linkages to existing or future public land trails is a priority.

Mat Su Convention and Visitors Bureau Office Space: Growth of the Mat-Su CVB membership and marketing opportunities are projected with the opening and during the life of the Center. Staff and board space needs will increase and need integration with the layout of the proposed facility commensurate with program and operations development.

Outdoor Interpretive/Activity Component-facility in its preliminary design takes advantage of natural site attributes and proximities in locating trails, board walks, interpretive signage, a viewing deck and other chances for visitors to learn about the natural and cultural resources, landscapes, fish and wildlife in the region.

PROJECT TIMELINES:

Land acquisition (site control)-September, 2013 (maturity of Earnest Money/Agreement to Purchase), Design-March, 2014 and construction September, 2015.

The attached Mat Su Borough Resolution Serial No. 13-012 adopted February 5, 2013 reaffirms the Borough Assembly's support for the subject project as approved by previous MSB Resolutions Nos. 10-077 and 12-006 (Copies of Resolutions attached). Further Resolution Serial No. 13-012 permits the Mat Su Convention and Visitors Bureau to commence raising funds independent of the borough. The February 5 Resolution also reaffirms that when the current property is sold the proceeds of the sale will be applied to the cost of construction of a new visitors information center, thus the \$2,250,000.00 funds already secured.

Mat Su Convention and Visitors Bureau is applying for state funding because the borough is in title to the existing site (7744 E. Visitors View Court, Palmer, Alaska) of the Visitors Information Center and Mat Su Convention and Visitors Bureau is an IRS Section 501 (c)(6) non-profit organization and as such doesn't receive grant funding.

This is definitely an economic development project for the Mat Su Valley. The annual value of the tourism industry to the Mat-Su Borough is \$282 million and provides 4,000 local jobs.

Project Timeline:

Design timeline is 4-6 months. Funding will be required early in calendar year 2014.

Construction is estimated to take 16-18 months. Funding will be based on monthly contractor draws beginning approximately 30 days after commencement construction commences. Project is estimated to begin Spring of 2014.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Matanuska Susitna Borough as approved under MSB Resolution no. 10-077.

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Bonnie Quill/John Moosey
 Title: Executive Director/Borough Manager
 Address: 7744 E. Visitors View Court
 Palmer, Alaska 99645
 Phone Number: (907)746-5001
 Email: bonnie@alaskavisit.com

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

February 19, 2013

Mr. Joe Griffith
General Manager
Matanuska Electric Association
P.O. Box 2929
Palmer, Alaska

Re: **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) and Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau (MSCVB).**

Dear Joe:

The purpose of this letter is to request favorable consideration of MEA to amend the referenced MOU to restate the **TERMS and CONDITIONS** namely **PARAGRAPH 3. PURCHASE PRICE**: MSCVB respectively request the language be amended to read "MEA agrees to sell the Premises to MSCVB and MSCVB agrees to buy the Premises, free and clear of all liens and encumbrances, from MEA for "Fair Market Value" as determined by a MAI Appraiser selected by MEA". The expense of the appraisal will be borne by MSCVB, however, the appraisal will not be requested until approximate amount of funds have been secured for the purchase price of the property by MSCVB.

Further, MSCVB requests that Lot One (1) and Tract A of Homestead RV Park be subdivided to reflect a new legal description identifying the "bluff" area of the parcel as distinguished from the lower elevations of the current property described in subject AGREEMENT. The subdividing, surveying and other associated costs related to subdivision of the property would be done at MSCVB's expense.

In our effort to obtain grants, the size of the parcel and the purchase price of the property relative to total project costs is deemed to be excessive, thus, the need to reduce the size and the purchase price of the land.

MSCVB remains interested in the lower property and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the possibilities of leasing the remainder land which is estimated to be approximately 40 acres.

A reply at your earliest convenience would be appreciated. We are currently in dialogue with legislators to receive favor for our Grant request.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Quill
Executive Director

Rep. Bill Stoltze

From: Bonnie Quill <bonnie@alaskavisit.com>
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 10:09 AM
To: Rep. Bill Stoltze
Subject: Mat-Su CVB Sportfishing Panel on KTUU

Dear Representative Stoltze,

Below is a link to a KTUU Channel 2 News segment that aired on March 8th featuring a Mat-Su Valley sportfishing panel at the Mat-Su CVB Member Luncheon. The four-member panel discussed the economic impact of healthy salmon runs for the Valley visitor industry. The Mat-Su CVB recognizes the importance of the sportfishing industry and has plans to feature interpretive salmon habitat information at the new Gateway Visitor Center facility. The Gateway will showcase and foster stewardship, and encourage visitors and residents to be responsible and help care for the areas they use and enjoy.

<http://www.ktuu.com/videogallery/74734318/News/Valley-Salmon-Run-Meeting#gl-0>

Thank you for your support of this project and the many opportunities it provides for economic development in the Mat-Su Valley and growing our visitor industry.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Quill

Executive Director, Mat-Su CVB



Billie Bob Allen

From: Bonnie Quill <bonnie@alaskavisit.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2013 7:07 AM
To: Bill Allen; Craig Saunders
Subject: FW: KTUU News 2 link

Bill and Craig,

Good news! Joe from Bill Stoltz office asked for my permission to add the email I sent to the Gateway project. Of course I responded yes.

Leaving Palm Springs today. Wonderful stay in the desert.

Bon

From: Joe Michel [<mailto:Joe.Michel@akleg.gov>]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2013 9:51 AM
To: bonnie@alaskavisit.com
Subject: KTUU News 2 link

Bonnie

My name is Joe Michel, I work for Rep. Bill Stoltze down here in Juneau. With your permission I would like to post the below email into the backup of the Gateway Visitor Center project. I think it would enhance the material associated with the project.

If you would respond your permission it would be greatly appreciated.

Dear Representative Stoltze,

Below is a link to a KTUU Channel 2 News segment that aired on March 8th featuring a Mat-Su Valley sportfishing panel at the Mat-Su CVB Member Luncheon. The four-member panel discussed the economic impact of healthy salmon runs for the Valley visitor industry. The Mat-Su CVB recognizes the importance of the sportfishing industry and has plans to feature interpretive salmon habitat information at the new Gateway Visitor Center facility. The Gateway will showcase and foster stewardship, and encourage visitors and residents to be responsible and help care for the areas they use and enjoy.

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Thank you for your support of this project and the many opportunities it provides for economic development in the Mat-Su Valley and growing our visitor industry.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Quill

Executive Director, Mat-Su CVB

Introduced by: Deputy Mayor Hanson and
Council Member DeVries
Date: March 26, 2013
Action: Adopted
Vote: Unanimous

Yes:	No:
Best	
Erbey	
Vanover	
Combs	
DeVries	
Hanson	
Johnson	

CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA

Resolution No. 13-006

A Resolution of the Palmer City Council Supporting the Matanuska-Susitna Convention and Visitors Bureau in its Efforts to Obtain Funding to Purchase Land for Development of the New Site for the Mat-Su Valley South Gateway Visitor Center

WHEREAS, The Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau (MSCVB) completed a Mat-Su Valley South Gateway Visitors Center Preliminary Feasibility Study in June 2010, in anticipation of relocating the Mat-Su Visitor Center; and

WHEREAS, a Gateway Strategic Partnership Committee has formed to include many of the potential partners and stakeholders identified in the study; and

WHEREAS, the site identified in the study as B1, the bluff site, also known as Homestead RV Park, and recently purchased by Matanuska Electric Association (MEA), was selected as the future site of the visitor center facility; and

WHEREAS, MEA has provided MSCVB with an Option to Purchase Agreement until September 30, 2013; and

WHEREAS, MSCVB and the Mat-Su Borough are actively seeking funding to purchase the land and begin design and development of the site; and

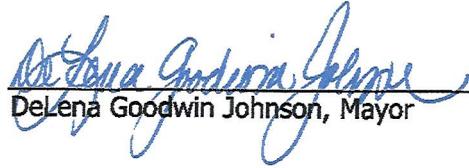
WHEREAS, while the City supports MSCVB's preferred site, the City encourages the MSCVB to consider Palmer, which is situated as the northern access to the Valley, has access to numerous trails and recreational opportunities and is in close proximity to Hatcher Pass, as an alternative location for a new Convention and Visitor's Center; and

WHEREAS, project success is based on multiple partner relationships and commitments.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Palmer acknowledges and supports the project as a future contributor to adding value to the visitor experience and although not yet defined, the City of Palmer supports the development of the project and seeks to partner with MSCVB and the Mat-Su Borough through educational programming and economic

development opportunities.

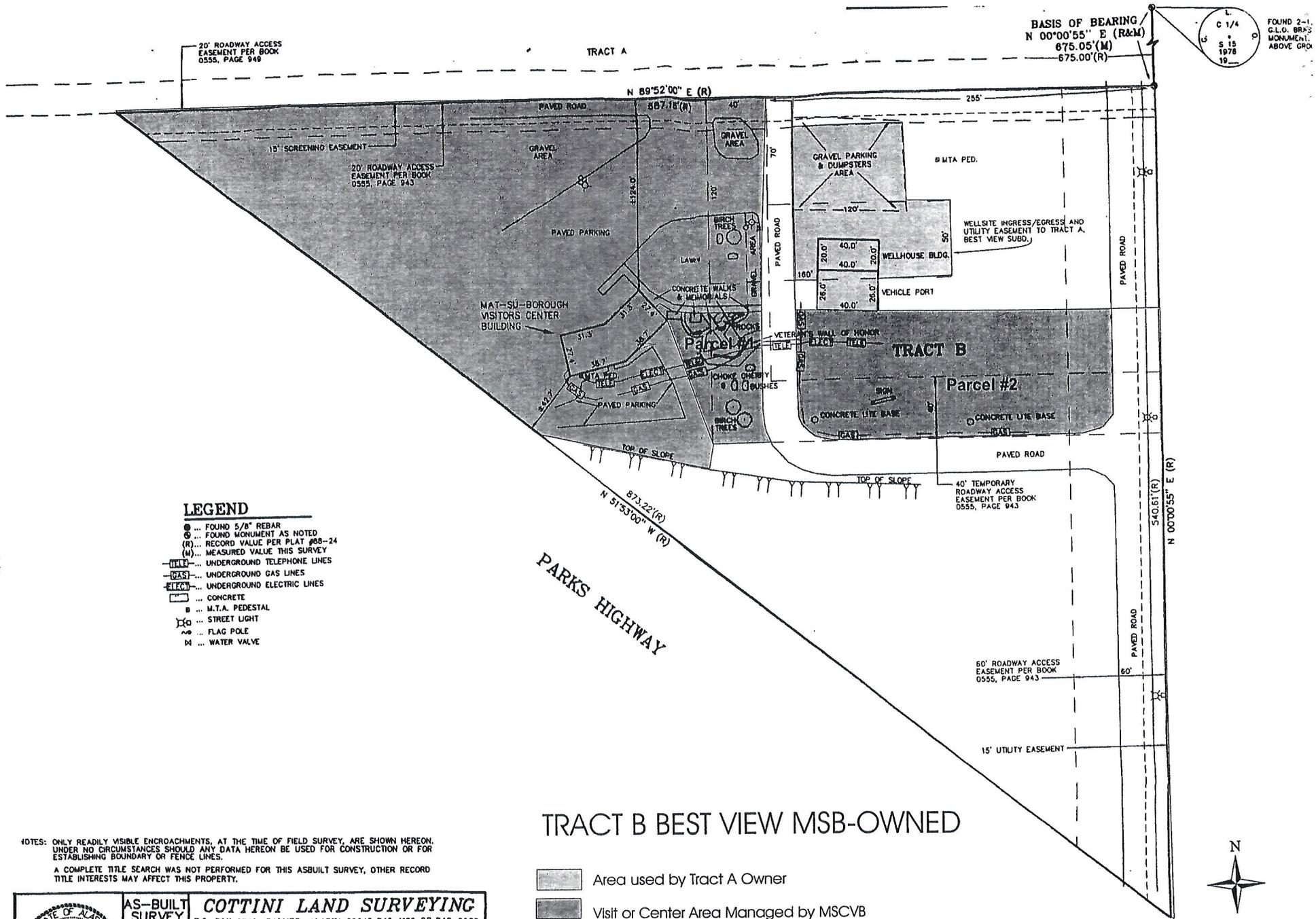
Passed and approved by the City Council of the City of Palmer, Alaska, this twenty- sixth day of March 2013.


DeLena Goodwin Johnson, Mayor


Janette M. Bower, MMC, City Clerk

EXHIBIT-39-B

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LEGEND

- ... FOUND 5/8" REBAR
- ⊙ ... FOUND MONUMENT AS NOTED
- (R) ... RECORD VALUE PER PLAT #88-24
- (M) ... MEASURED VALUE THIS SURVEY
- TEL ... UNDERGROUND TELEPHONE LINES
- GAS ... UNDERGROUND GAS LINES
- ELEC ... UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC LINES
- CONC ... CONCRETE
- M.T.A. PEDESTAL
- STREET LIGHT
- FLAG POLE
- WATER VALVE

NOTES: ONLY READILY VISIBLE ENCROACHMENTS, AT THE TIME OF FIELD SURVEY, ARE SHOWN HEREON. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANY DATA HEREON BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION OR FOR ESTABLISHING BOUNDARY OR FENCE LINES.

A COMPLETE TITLE SEARCH WAS NOT PERFORMED FOR THIS ASBUILT SURVEY, OTHER RECORD TITLE INTERESTS MAY AFFECT THIS PROPERTY.

TRACT B BEST VIEW MSB-OWNED

- Area used by Tract A Owner
- Visit or Center Area Managed by MSCVB
- MSB-Owned - No 3rd Party Manager
- Veterans' Area Managed by ACSC (Parcel 1 & Parcel 2)



AS-BUILT SURVEY **COTTINI LAND SURVEYING**
 P.O. BOX 2748, PALMER, ALASKA 99645 745-1188 OR 745-3658

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE PERFORMED A MORTGAGEE'S INSPECTION ON THE FOLLOWING PROPERTY: TRACT B, BEST VIEW SUBDIVISION (PLAT #88-24) PALMER RECORDING DISTRICT, ALASKA, EASEMENTS OF RECORD OTHER THAN THOSE SHOWN ON THE RECORDED PLAT, ARE NOT SHOWN HEREON. DATED AT PALMER, ALASKA, THIS 3rd. DAY OF AUGUST, 2000.

W.D. 00-139 F.B. 00-06 DATE: 8/3/00 SCALE: 1"=40'

MSB Land Management Office
 6-1-2001 IR