



Key accomplishments for Alaska

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region has been working hard to build partnerships to address challenges faced by Alaska and bring the voice of the state and Pacific Northwest region to Washington, D.C. and Ottawa.

In 2024, PNWER continued working to enhance economic development for member jurisdictions, open pathways for communication and coordination across borders, and develop a better understanding of the interdependent economy across the region. Some of the recent successes for Alaska include:

Legislative Energy Horizon

Since 2009, more than 440 legislators from across the U.S. and Canada have graduated from PNWER's Legislative Energy Horizon Institute, which focuses on the North American energy infrastructure and delivery systems, covering energy generation, transmission, and distribution. Since the program's inception, 31 Alaska legislators have graduated from LEHI. PNWER provides full scholarships for PNWER legislators covering the cost of tuition, accommodations, and travel expenses totaling over \$300,000 for Alaska.



2024 LEHI Graduating Cohort at the Embassy of Canada to the U.S. in D.C.

Arctic Caucus

The Arctic Caucus of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a partnership between Alaska, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. The partnership aims to provide a forum to share information, discuss issues of mutual concern, identify areas for collaboration between the three jurisdictions and the rest of North America, and provide Arctic-relevant input to PNWER working groups and the region at-large.



Arctic Caucus at the 2024 PNWER Annual Summit

Alaska's leadership on the Arctic Caucus include Senate President Gary Stevens and Representative Kevin McCabe. Arctic Caucus members and experts met at the 2024 PNWER Annual Summit to discuss the future of Arctic policy.

2024 Economic Leadership Forum

The 2024 Economic Leadership Forum convened policymakers and business leaders from across the PNWER region in Anchorage, Alaska, and online to continue conversations from the Annual Summit and identify new opportunities for the region moving forward.

This year's event was co-located with the Alaska Resource Development Council's Annual Conference, which enabled over 600 attendees from both events to learn about common issues, share information and build new connections. Some key themes from the summit include critical mineral collaboration, economic corridor development, innovative energy pathways, transportation corridor advancement, and fostering cultural tourism. View the recorded sessions at www.pnwer.org/2024-forum-recordings.



(L-R): Mark Myers, Frank Paskvan, Stewart Muir and AK Rep. George Rauscher discuss innovative energy pathways.



(L-R): AB MLA Shane Getson, WA Rep. Cindy Ryu and AK Rep. DeLena Johnson speak on the RDC's "Regional Leadership" panel.

Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

In 2024, PNWER launched its expanded Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) program with an additional \$2 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau. The PNWER RIA partners with Alaska Municipal League (AML) to provide technical assistance to project sponsors to get more critical infrastructure projects funded across Alaska.

Alaska Highway Earns RAISE Grant

In July 2024, PNWER commended the U.S. Department of Transportation for awarding the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities a \$25 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant to restore a section of the Alaska Highway in Fairbanks, Alaska, and Yukon, Canada. PNWER has stressed the importance of this cross-border land connection for years, and is excited to see progress towards improving the Shakwak Corridor.

Critical Minerals

PNWER continues to work with partners like Teck, Hecla, and others to showcase the essential role mining plays in the region. The 2024 Summit provided legislators with an opportunity to learn more about partnership development and support for Indigenous communities. PNWER also partnered with the Alaska Resource Development Council at this year's Economic Leadership Forum in Anchorage. The RDC hosted Ernest Scheyder, author of *The War Below: Lithium, Copper, and the Global Battle to Power Our Lives*, who spoke on the race for global critical mineral dominance during the keynote lunch. PNWER also hosted a session on critical minerals featuring experts from Alaska and B.C., highlighting the vital role of U.S.-Canada collaboration in the critical minerals supply chain. Essential for enhancing North American security and economic stability, the panelists shared unique perspectives on their experiences in the critical minerals sector. Watch this session by visiting www.pnwer.org/2024-forum-recordings.

Tourism

PNWER established a Regional Tourism Council (RTC) with the goal of convening regional tourism leaders to provide expertise and stability which will be invaluable to the success of our region as a leader of responsible, sustainable, and resilient tourism. The Regional Tourism Council is composed of an elected official and a tourism industry representative from each of our ten PNWER jurisdictions. Alaska's representatives on the Regional Tourism Council include Senator Jesse Kiehl and Tanya Carlson with Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA).

One goal of the RTC is to highlight and promote Indigenous and Tribal tourism opportunities, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the region. To this end, during PNWER's 2024 Economic Leadership Forum, Emily Edenshaw from the Alaska Native Heritage Center spoke on the importance of responsible and sustainable cultural tourism. The regional tourism portal will help to foster this form of tourism. Watch this tourism session at www.pnwer.org/2024-forum-recordings.



Above: Ernest Scheyder, author of the *War Below*, speaks during the RDC Annual Conference.



Emily Edenshaw, President & CEO, Alaska Native Heritage Center, speaks on Fostering Sustainable Cultural Tourism session at PNWER Economic Leadership Forum in Anchorage, Alaska.



2025 PNWER Annual Summit Info

Supply Chain Resilience

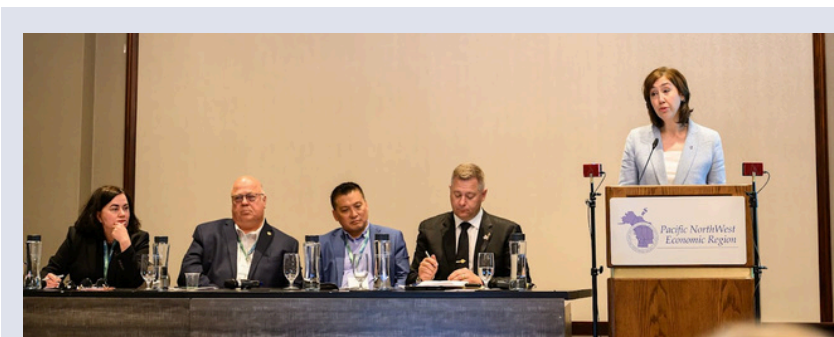
PNWER is exploring how to help identify funding solutions for TOTE, the Alaska Railroad, the City of Seward, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, and the U.S. Department of Transportation to develop the Alaska Railroad cargo dock expansion. This expansion would enable TOTE to deliver 100 containers per week, supporting central Alaska's population centers. Additionally, PNWER is advocating for expanded rail connections and economic corridors linking Canada and the U.S. Given the limitations of air cargo, ensuring alternative freight routes is critical to maintaining supply chain resilience, particularly in the event of disruptions to the Don Young Port of Alaska, such as an earthquake.

Border and Trade

In 2023, Alaska exported \$596 million to Canada, making Canada Alaska's fifth largest trading partner. PNWER works closely with CBP, CBSA, DHS and Public Safety Canada on advancing smart U.S.-Canada border management, and implementing innovative, clear and consistent policies that facilitate travel and trade.

Annual Summit

The 2025 PNWER Annual Summit will be in Bellevue, WA from July 20 - 24. The Annual Summit provides the opportunity to collaborate and establish partnerships with Canadian & U.S. public & private sector leaders, learn about key economic issues facing the region, strengthen regional networks and cooperation, and advocate for regional policies and cross-jurisdictional initiatives. This year's summit theme is 'Building a Resilient Future: Sustainable Growth through Innovation'. Diana Birkett Rakow from Alaska Airlines will co-chair the event. Learn more and register at www.pnwer.org/2025-summit.



Rep. Kevin McCabe joins Lisa Baiton, Mayor Simon Yu, MLA Shane Getson and Allison Camden on the Economic Development session at the 2024 Annual Summit

For more information on PNWER programs and opportunities to get involved, contact Matt Morrison at matt.morrison@pnwer.org or (206) 443-7723