



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

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News Release

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University Studies Will Target Vital Elements of Alaska's Economy

University of Alaska President Mark R. Hamilton said today the university will conduct several in-depth studies related to vital elements of Alaska's economy, utilizing funds made possible by contributions to the University of Alaska Foundation by BP and Phillips Petroleum.

Hamilton said he would ask the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage to update previous economic surveys if necessary, and also to initiate new studies designed to help Alaska decision-makers as they look at ways to develop and diversify Alaska's economy.

"The University of Alaska is the logical choice to help illuminate public policy discussions with the best data possible," he said. "The funds given annually to the university foundation by BP and Phillips as part of their charter agreement with the state will enable the university to provide this service to Alaskans on a scale not previously possible."

The president said the studies would be done mainly by ISER, but would rely on other university resources and expertise as appropriate, as well as data developed by the Alaska Departments of Labor and Workforce Development and Commerce and Economic Development. Hamilton has proposed that six case studies be done to help determine how the state can foster positive economic growth.

Hamilton said the first six studies should be done in the following areas:

- The Air Cargo Industry
- The Future of the Native Corporations in Economic Development
- Preparing Alaskans for Alaska Jobs
- Understanding the Alaska Permanent Fund
- Analysis of Economic Value of Cook Inlet Commercial Fishery
- The Satellite Data Retrieval and Analysis Industry

"Every one of these items is important to Alaska's economy, and in investigating them it would neither be the university's intent nor its proper role to advocate any outcome or position, but rather to gather the objective information necessary for sound public policy decisions," Hamilton said.

Trustees of the UA Foundation, which receives the annual installment of funds from BP and Phillips authorized by the charter provisions, has allocated \$500,000 per year for three years to probe various aspects of Alaska's economy.

At this point, Hamilton said, he has begun to think about what the university should do in the second year, and preliminary indications are that probing what Alaska might be able to learn from economic development in other places could be helpful to the state. He said those studies might include the following areas:

- Development Efforts in Other Remote/Resource Rich Places
- Alaska Development Efforts in Historical Context
- Attracting Footloose Industry to Alaska
- Rural Alaska Economies
- Urban-Rural Economic Links in Alaska

In the third year, Hamilton said, he would like to probe the question of how a changing world would impact Alaska. He suggested that perhaps three case studies would be helpful:

- Tourism
- Alaska Institutions and Economic Development
- Public-Private Partnerships for Development.

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