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CONTACT: Patty Sullivan, 907.355.0103
or Stephenie Wheeler, 907.265.2671

Port MacKenzie Rail construction one step closer

Surface Transportation Board issues decision

MAT-SU — The federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) issued its decision to allow construction and operation of the Port MacKenzie Railroad Extension. The decision is an important step in clearing the way for construction to begin on a 32-mile link from the mainline of the Alaska Railroad near Houston to Port MacKenzie.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Alaska Railroad have jointly worked on the project since 2007. The Borough has received funding from the State of Alaska in support of the project.

“Thank you Governor Parnell and Alaska Legislature for your support of this project on behalf of Borough and Alaska residents. Port Mac Rail is another outstanding opportunity for job creation,” said Borough Manager John Moosey. Hundreds of direct construction jobs will be created by the first two construction contracts for the rail embankment.

The first construction bid is scheduled to open in December, and will construct five miles of rail embankment north of Port MacKenzie. A second construction bid package for six miles of rail embankment is planned to go out in February. The existing state funding will be used for these two segments. The Borough is requesting \$60 million in state appropriations for FY2013. This new funding and funding to date would complete two-thirds of the entire rail embankment.

“This project will provide hundreds of sorely-needed jobs to Alaskans, and I am pleased to see it moving forward,” said U.S. Senator Mark Begich. “I am delighted to see that the STB approved this project. Investing in infrastructure is important as we continue to look for ways to stabilize our economy and put Alaskans to work.”

Residents can learn more about the project at the Alaska Railroad Project Open House, scheduled for January 18, 2012, 4:00 pm - 6:30 p.m., at Evangelo's Restaurant in Wasilla.

For more information call Borough Public Affairs Director Patty Sullivan at 907.355-0103 or ARRC Corporate Communications Officer Stephenie Wheeler with the Alaska Railroad at 907.265-2671, wheelers@akrr.com.

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