



**Denali Commission**  
510 L Street, Suite 410  
Anchorage, AK 99501

907.271.1414 *tel*  
907.271.1415 *fax*  
888.480.4321 *toll free*  
[www.denali.gov](http://www.denali.gov)

Contact: Sharon Guenther Lind  
Tel. 907-271-5217  
Cell 907-229-7077  
Email [SLind@denali.gov](mailto:SLind@denali.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## COMMISSIONERS APPROVE THE DENALI COMMISSION FY07 WORK PLAN

Plan will provide over \$130 million to rural Alaska

Anchorage, AK - - June 6, 2007

The Commissioners of the Denali Commission approved the Fiscal Year 2007 Work Plan after carefully considering public comment and input provided at the May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007 Commission Meeting held in Dillingham, Alaska. The work plan specifies the Commission's funding strategy for the coming year.

The Denali Commission is an innovative, independent federal agency which provides critical utilities, infrastructure and support for economic development in rural Alaska in the most cost-effective manner possible. By creating the Commission in 1998, Congress mandated that this unique agency partner with State, local, tribal and private organizations to find new and innovative solutions to the development challenges of America's most remote communities.

"Approval of the work plan is one of many steps involved in determining funding of projects at the Denali Commission," reported George Cannelos, the Federal Co-Chair of the Denali Commission. "With each program funded the Commission looks at several essential project characteristics, including: funding need, sustainability, designs, overall planning and the match funding requirements."

"This work plan defines funding targets for essential community facilities, such as tank farms, power plant upgrades, health clinics, teacher housing, and basic transportation projects throughout rural Alaska. The plan also dedicates up to \$5 million towards renewable energy projects, a pivotal decision as we seek to find real alternatives to expensive diesel power generation," reported Cannelos.

The FY07 Work Plan provides funding in the following program areas:

| <b><i>Program:</i></b>  | <b><i>Funding Amount:</i></b> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Energy Program (Bulk Fuel, Rural Power System Upgrades, etc.)   | \$45,440,895                  |
| Energy Program (Alternative and Renewable Energy Projects)  | \$5,000,000                   |
| Health Facilities Program (Planning, Design and Construction)   | \$45,319,040                  |
| Transportation Program (Roads, Docks and Harbors)   | \$24,000,000                  |
| Training Program (Construction, Operations and Maintenance, Youth Initiatives, and Commission Project Training) | \$6,530,832                   |
| Teacher Housing Program (Design and Construction)   | \$5,000,000                   |
| Economic Development  | \$2,000,000                   |
| Solid Waste Program (Planning, Design and Construction)   | \$705,375                     |
| <b>Total Program Funding (pending appropriations):</b>  | <b>\$133,996,142</b>          |

“Commissioners considered very carefully the public comments and weighed the needs of the various programs,” Canelos stated. “Commissioner’s recognized the immense needs of rural Alaska and want to address those needs.”

Commissioners also visited three outlying communities: New Stuyahok, Manokotak and Aleknagik. Site visits provide Commissioners insights on the challenges faced by rural Alaskans. “It struck me as I was walking though the new Denali Commission funded power plant in Manokotak, these projects are absolutely essential. The Denali Commission gives residents across rural Alaska some of the vital tools needed to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By providing basic facilities taken for granted in the lower 48 states, for example, we provide a platform for remote communities to be viable now and in the future,” stated Canelos.

Commissioners are appointed by statute defined in the Denali Commission Act of 1998. George Canelos was appointed as the Denali Commission’s Federal Co-Chair by U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez in September 2005. The Commission has four new appointments in the past six months, Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director of the Alaska Municipal League, Vince Beltrami, Executive President of Alaska AFL-CIO, Karen Perdue, Associate Vice President for Health at the University of Alaska and Karen Rehfeld, Director of the Office of Management and Budget for the State of Alaska and serves as the State Co-Chair to the Denali Commission representing Governor Sarah Palin.

Senior Commissioners are Richard Cattanach, Executive Director of the Associated General Contractors of Alaska and Julie Kitka, President of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

“New Commissioners bring fresh ideas while the senior members provide a much needed historical perspective,” stated Canelos. Commissioners plan to hold a strategic planning session this summer to determine the future direction of the Commission. “The Commissioners bring a wealth of knowledge to this effort, as was Senator Ted Stevens’ vision. We plan to use that knowledge to look at the diverse opportunities and challenges facing rural Alaska,” stated Canelos. Canelos plans to look at new and innovative solutions for rural Alaska; “solutions that can only be addressed with the participation of all Alaskan’s.” Senator Ted Stevens and Senator Lisa Murkowski introduced legislation on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007 reauthorizing the Denali Commission Act through 2014.

In October 2008, the Commission will celebrate 10 years of rural development. “This is a dynamic, energized team and I look forward to working with each of the Commissioners this coming year. We have accomplished a lot, but we all recognize there is still much to do,” stated Canelos.

###

---

If you would like information about this topic or would like to schedule an interview with George Canelos, please contact Sharon Lind or Brandi Taylor-Kelly at the Denali Commission.

Sharon Guenther Lind  
Public Information Officer  
Government Coordination Program Manager  
907-271-5217 Direct Line  
[SLind@denali.gov](mailto:SLind@denali.gov)