

Fort Wainwright's New Ski Lodge

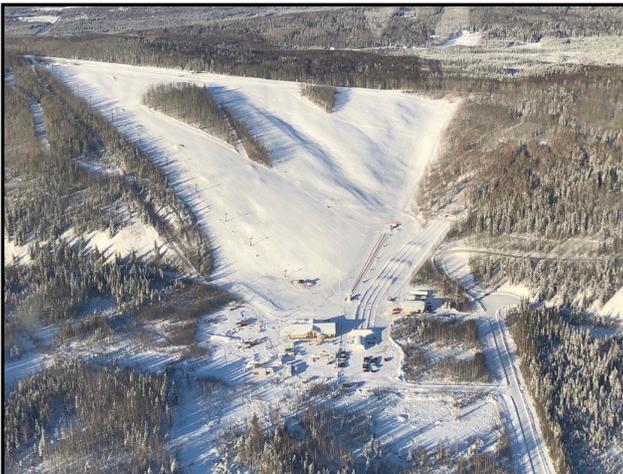
The Design Alaska team has worked hard over the past year and a half designing and providing construction support on the new Birch Hill Ski Lodge on Fort Wainwright. As the project is almost to completion, we have been excited to see the details come together and thought it would be nice to show some recent photos.

The Great Room design allows for a gathering place for skiers, snowboarders, and snow tubers to come in to warm up by the grand floor-to-ceiling fireplace on the south side of the room. They can also sit with a warm cup of hot cocoa and watch people come down the ski slope from the expansive north-facing windows.

The lodge will be used year around where the shoulder seasons of winter, it will be used as an event space and as a ski lodge in the winter months. We look forward to many enjoyable snow days for the community to utilize Birch Hill and its new lodge.



In addition to the beautiful new ski lodge, Birch Hill Recreation area also features a Terrain Park, Bunny Hill, and Tubing Hill. The Terrain Park is considered the best terrain park in the state. The Bunny Hill features a moving pad to carry snowboarders and skiers up the hill while standing. The Tubing Hill is a thrill for all ages. Construction on the ski lodge will be done by the beginning of summer.



President's Corner

Longevity

Our new co-worker Deanna asked me what has allowed Design Alaska to stay successful for 64 years. I thought this was a great question from someone who is new to our organization and it caused me to reflect and share for both new and seasoned employees.

The business started in 1957 with a civil engineer and land surveyor who saw a potential to provide services to the quickly growing community in the post-war era. Fairbanks was a small community of about 13,000 people in the city and 43,000 in the Borough. This was essentially a double in population from the 1950 census, so the community was growing quickly and there was demand for roads and facilities to support the growth. It is interesting that we have barely doubled again in the 60 years since as the city is now 30,000 and the FNSB is 95,000.

The business grew over the years by adding more services one person at a time to include architecture, structural, mechanical, electrical, fire, and environmental engineering. In 1974, we became part of a large architectural firm, Ellerbe, based out of Minnesota. During that pipeline period, the business continued to grow but operated the same to focus on Alaska's design needs. In the bust after the pipeline, Ellerbe sold the business to the Fairbanks employees who rebranded it as Design Alaska and continued the culture with new local ownership.

Design Alaska is considered a small business and according to the Small Business Administration, only 20% of new businesses survive 15 years. Factors I believe that have kept us successful and aid us to get to 100 years are:

- We provide a broad range of services and single stop solution for clients that have a project need. By having access to every professional service, we can simplify the complex construction process for our clients. We are constantly stretching our experience into emerging areas where our clients need help, which keeps us relevant.
- We strive to provide a quality, coordinated, and complete work product. We are continually improving our standards, templates, processes, and skills to refine our work products.
- We value individual education and learning. We support individuals getting higher education and technical education which also grows them individually, which we feel grows our business. We have helped many people through their degrees and certificates. We embrace everyone's changing interests over their careers.
- We have stayed focused on providing services in Alaska and the Arctic. We say that our firm name says it all....we Design Alaska.
- We are flexible to change our way of working and embracing technological changes. We were early adopters of CAD, email, GPS surveying, and Revit in the professional community. We adopt things that employees are excited to figure out. We have also embraced the changing client maps with our skill alignment for Government clients, and our adoption of Design/Build contracting systems. We continuously look for ways to adapt.
- We have grown organically. One hire at a time to get the projects done and we mostly hire and train entry level staff. We have not purchased or merged with other business. By growing our own staff, the Design Alaska culture is embedded in their individual development, and even if they leave to work for a client, they still retain the foundation they learned working for us, which makes them good advocates in future work.

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President's Corner Continued...

- We are engaged in the professional and business community as subject matter experts. We present to school classes, give webinars, lead technical societies, participate in community committees, and are active in the political process at the state and local levels.
- We contribute significantly to broad community interests with a focus on the arts. We believe that a strong business needs a strong and healthy community to thrive. Our contributions help make our communities a wonderful place to live and work, and therefore allows us to continue to work and provide jobs for the future.
- We share the business profits broadly across the entire team including a standout investment in employees individual retirement accounts. We feel it is very important that we all share broadly in the profits of the work we did, and we avoid tracking profits by project team, department, PM etc. It takes every single person to get the work done in all the different roles we have.
- We are employee owned. The individuals who work in the business everyday are the owners of the business. The owners are vested in financial success and develop co-workers who also keep the business's best interest at heart over their individual interests. We have a continual system of transferring ownership from those preparing for retirement to the next generation of leaders.

Design Alaska has been in business for 64 years through all the attributes above. I personally have a goal to attend the 100th anniversary party as a retired employee (I will be 87 years old) and celebrate the next 100 years of designing Alaska.

Chris Miller, PE

President, Design Alaska

Engineers Week 2021



Like many things this past year, the ASPE Banquet had a unique look to it. Emily Winfield, Jeff Putnam, Samuel Mitchell, and Pat Brandon did an amazing job organizing the event to meet safety guidelines and assuring attendees still had a nice time. Instead of meeting and rubbing elbows with fellow engineers, they held a lunch meeting over Microsoft Teams.

Each of the attendees received a swag bag put together by Dantasia Baum from the Admin Department. Each of the bags contained gift certificates to local businesses, chocolates, a water bottle, and other fun little trinkets.



We would like to take the time to congratulate the award winners, who are all from Design Alaska. Bob Gras won Engineer of the Year. Mitchell O'Bryant won Young Engineer of the Year. Ben Milden won Student Engineer of the Year. We are extremely proud of our talented team of individuals at Design Alaska.

Go Red Virtual Luncheon



On Friday, February 26 the American Heart Association hosted its 17th Annual Go Red for Women event. This year's event was hosted online by Debbi Miller and Terri Froese. Women at Design Alaska were invited to sit at TDL's virtual table, which also included a special lunch provided by Hot Shot Sisters.



This year's keynote speaker was Ms. Kathryn Childers, one of the first five women hired as a special agent in the US Secret Service. Kathryn's duties

included protecting Jacqueline Kennedy and her children, undercover operations, and attending dinners where she met world leaders. If you are interested in learning more about her time as a pioneer for women in the secret service, she wrote a book titled *Scared Fearless*, that chronicles her time navigating the challenges in an essentially male-only field.



Happenings Around the Office



Dantasia received a beautiful bouquet of flowers as a thank you from ASPE for all of her hard work preparing their swag bags and taking reservations.

Dantasia said she really enjoyed connecting with local businesses to put together these unique bags for local engineers.



Design Alaska celebrated employees with March birthdays by offering a 3 flavor hummus spread and vegetable tray, containing peppers, carrots, sausage, cucumbers, and pita bites as a healthy mid-day snack.

The Admin Staff would like to thank Jim Godfrey for picking up and preparing the veggies for everyone.

For a Birthday sweet treat, employees were provided with a white cake topped with delicious fresh fruit and white chocolate shavings.



What is your favorite and least favorite Easter Candy?	
Eliza Cink	Favorite: Lindt bunnies Least Favorite: Peeps. Yuck.
John Rowe	Favorite is anything dark chocolate. Least Favorite is almost any flavor Jelly Belly (they are just wrong being mutant jelly beans!!)
Chris Miller	My favorite is good old fashion high quality juicy Jelly Beans. Not all the funky flavors, but the basic group of colors, and yes, they all taste like sugar. The worst one is the 'cheap' chocolate easter bunnies. They can be so caulking tasting, and you must bite an ear off to know, and then throw the rest away. Good chocolate makes a good Bunny.
Marina Jones	Peeps are gross. That is all. Can't say they were my favorite candy, but the most memorable to eat as a kid were Whoppers Robin's Eggs because I loved to paint my lips with the blue colored eggs (and still do if I get my hands on some).
Jennifer Davis	Favorite: Jordan Almonds Least Favorite: PEEPS & Cadbury Crème Eggs – way too much sugar!
Deanna Woods	My favorite Easter candy are these chocolate peanut butter eggs my grandma makes. My least favorite is jellybeans.
Robin Rader	I love the chocolate bunnies.
Jack Wilbur	Most favorite: My Mom's chocolate covered peanut butter eggs, unfortunately she is no longer here to make them. Least favorite: Peeps

Fun Facts About Easter Candy

- Peeps are the most popular non-chocolate Easter candy—and they've sat at the top of that list for more than twenty years. Every spring, more than 1.5 billion marshmallow Peeps are eaten.
- Americans consume 16 billion jelly beans at Easter.
- The tallest chocolate Easter egg was just over 34 feet tall and weighed 15,873 pounds!
- According to the Just Born Candy Company, the maker of Peeps, enough are produced each year that if they were all lined up, the line would circle the earth twice.





Wellness



7 Reasons to Love Working Out in the Morning



According to multiple sources, there are several reasons to wake up early and get your workout in before heading into the office. While I am not completely convinced that becoming a morning person is worth it, they do make a compelling argument. Read the list below from totalwellness.com and see if you can benefit from any of the reasons they listed below.

Total Wellness' 7 Reasons to Love Working Out in the Morning

1. Sets the mood for a healthier day- If you start your day with a sweat session, you might feel inspired to continue healthy choices throughout the day.
2. Increases energy- Regular exercise has been proven to boost energy and minimize fatigue.
3. Reduces stress- Getting your heart rate up releases endorphins, you can expect to feel good. If you're feeling like a ball of nerves before a big presentation or just dealing with general work stress, consider a workout prior to heading into the office.
4. Ensures you actually work out- When you check off your workout first thing in the morning, you're making it a priority to get physical activity in.
5. Increased focus- If you need to get hyper-focused for a work meeting or make important decisions, a morning workout could help you do it. In 2019, the British Journal of Sports Medicine published a study showing morning exercise improves attention, visual learning, and decision-making skills.
6. Better shut-eye- One study found that adults who exercised at 7 a.m. got better sleep and more deep sleep.
7. Lowered blood pressure- For overweight individuals, a morning exercise routine may be the answer to get blood pressure numbers in the normal range.

[Why You Might Want to Consider Working Out in the Morning \(totalwellnesshealth.com\)](http://totalwellnesshealth.com)

Wellness Challenge Reminder

Don't forget our April 1 – May 28 wellness challenge to donate blood. Now is the time to make your April appointment to get your choice of appointment times. They even have weekend appointments available.

You can call 907-222-5630 or 907-456-5646 to schedule an appointment. A new donor appointment takes about 1-hour. Recurring donor appointments are about 30-45-minutes. Be sure to tell them at check-in that you're there for the Design Alaska blood drive.



In honor of Earth Day, the Recycling Committee is sponsoring a “hard-to-recycle” event.

During the month of April please bring in your:

- Electronics
- Household CFL, tube fluorescent, and dead LED lamps (unbroken)
- Household Batteries (not car batteries)
- Eyeglasses (goes to Aurora Borealis Lions Club)
- Scrap metal: aluminum scrap, brass, copper, stainless steel, radiators, lead, tin, cables

Not accepted, but do please recycle these during your spring cleaning:

- Paints, oils, chemicals, PCB ballasts, poisons. Please dispose of these properly at the FNSB solid waste division household hazardous waste collection facility.
- Large furniture, please call Fairbanks Resource Agency for pickup.
- Gently used and clean clothing & shoes, please donate to Salvation Army or Fairbanks Resource Agency
- Household items, please donate to Fairbanks Resource Agency

Special boxes will be in the garage to gather these items.

Remember you are welcome anytime to bring in:

- Mixed paper
- Cardboard
- Type #1 and #2 Plastics
- Aluminum Cans
- Steel Cans
- Plastic Grocery Bags (these go to the Food Bank)



What is Earth Day?

[The History of Earth Day | Earth Day](#)



Every year on April 22, Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. Today, Earth Day is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked by more than a billion people every year as a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national, and local policy changes. Now, the fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency, as the ravages of climate change become more and more apparent every day. As the awareness of our climate crisis grows, so does civil society mobilization, which is reaching a fever pitch across the globe today. Disillusioned by the low level of ambition following the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 and frustrated with international environmental lethargy, citizens of the world are rising up to demand for greater action for our planet and its people.

March 2021 ~ Upcoming Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Table Massages	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Birthday Celebration	16	17 St. Patrick's Day Table Massages	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Managers' Meeting	26	27
28	29 Seward's Day*	30	31	*State and Borough Offices Closed		

March Birthdays

April Upcoming Events

Jeff "Leo" Leonelli March 3
 Mary Sue Dates March 7
 Mike Schuetz March 15
 Samuel Mitchell March 21
 Susan Walker March 22
 Elmer Degerlund March 27
 Chris Miller March 27



Table Massages April 7
 Birthday Celebration April 12
 Communications Training April 12
 Table Massages April 21
 Managers' Meeting April 29

Design Alaska Anniversaries

Around Town

Ice Sculpture Exhibition February 1 - March 31
 World Ice Art Championships March 14 - March 31

Kym Pihlaja 20 years March 1, 2001
 Jeff "Leo" Leonelli 11 years March 22, 2010
 Brian Marmor 9 years March 5, 2012
 Ashley Hall 8 years March 4, 2013
 Ryan Morse 1 year March 2, 2020