

ISER Web Site Addresses

www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu

Main Home Page

Understanding Alaska

www.alaskanconomy.uaa.alaska.edu

Kids Count Alaska

www.kidscount.alaska.edu

Alaskool: www.alaskool.org

For information about publications or events:

Call 907-786-7710

Send a fax to 907-786-7739

Send a message to ayiser@uaa.alaska.edu

To be added to Research Matters (electronic newsletter)

Send your e-mail address to:

ResearchMatters@uaa.alaska.edu

ISER's Physical address: Diplomacy Building,

5th Floor, 4500 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage

ISER's Mailing Address

ISER/University of Alaska Anchorage

3211 Providence Drive

Anchorage, AK 99508

 Research

 Community Outreach

 Teaching



ISER

Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska Anchorage
June 2007

About Alaska and ISER

The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) has studied the rapid social and economic changes in Alaska for nearly 50 years. The Alaska Legislature established ISER in 1961, soon after Alaska became a state. It has, in a sense, grown up with Alaska.

When ISER began its research, Alaska had a very small economy that relied mostly on military activities and commercial salmon fisheries, a state population smaller than that of many American cities, and a government that at times was close to insolvency. But within a decade, in 1968, the biggest oil field in North America was discovered at Prudhoe Bay, on Alaska's North Slope. Oil development—and the billions of dollars in oil revenues the state government collected—led to huge social and economic changes in Alaska.

The state now has three times more people and nearly six times more wage and salary jobs than it had before statehood. ISER has analyzed and reported on all the major social and economic trends and events along the way—and we will continue to study and analyze whatever comes our way in the years ahead.

ISER's Director

Steve Colt became ISER's director in May 2007. Dr. Colt is also an associate professor of economics who holds a Ph.D. in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a B.A. in economics from Williams College. He has worked for ISER since 1984, first as a research associate and then as a faculty member. His research interests include energy economics, tourism, and the economic value of ecosystem services. He helped create UAA's environmental studies program, and he currently teaches natural resource economics and economic development.

Funding Sources

In a typical year, ISER generates contracts and grants that pay for about three-quarters of its average annual budget of \$4 million. The remaining one-quarter are University of Alaska Anchorage funds, which support some ISER research but also teaching and public service. ISER does grant and contract work for many federal, state, and local agencies as well as foundations, non-profits, and businesses.

ISER Advisory Board and Affiliates

ISER Advisory Board

Charles Boddy, Usibelli Coal Mine
Carol Comeau, Anchorage School District
Perry Eaton, consultant
Cheryl Frasca, C. Frasca Company
Richard Glenn, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
Jewel Jones, Siebert Brandford Shank & Company
William Leighty, Leighty Foundation
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Rosamund Naylor, Stanford University
Gloria O'Neill, Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Al Parrish, Providence Health System in Alaska
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Richard Strutz, Wells Fargo Bank
Arliss Sturgulewski, former state senator
Angus Walker, BP Exploration Alaska

ISER Affiliates

Terry Chapin, professor of ecology, UAF
Terrence Cole, professor of history, UAF
Letitia Fickel, associate professor of education, UAA

Brad Griffith, U.S. Geological Survey
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Terry Johnson, UA Sea Grant Advisory Program
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Claudia Lampman, professor of psychology, UAA
Stephen Langdon, professor of anthropology, UAA
Amy Lovecraft, assistant professor of political science, UAF
Gerald McBeath, professor of political science, UAF
Paul Ongtooguk, assistant professor of education, UAA
Brian Saylor, former director, Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, UAA

Administrative Staff

ISER's administrative staff manages millions of dollars in grants and contracts annually, keeps ISER in compliance with university, state, and federal regulations, and makes sure researchers have supplies, equipment, and everything else they need to do their work. The administrative staff includes *Marcia Trudgen*, business manager; *Linda Grant*, fiscal manager; *Darla Siver*, research technician; *Nancy Hill*, administrative assistant; *Donna Prator*, research aide; and *Judi Merry*, fiscal technician and proposal coordinator.

Technical Staff

ISER's technical staff designs and maintains systems that operate and link ISER's diverse network of computers, peripherals, and software. They also administer and establish security systems for ISER's several large Web sites and the Web sites of individual faculty members. *Jim Kerr* is the systems analyst and *Gordon Nelson* is the computer technician. *Ben Saylor* is a programmer and also does research; see *Community Studies*.

ISER Interns

At any given time, but especially in the summer, ISER has interns—both graduate and undergraduate students who spend time at ISER learning research methods and getting experience in social science fields. Other organizations—including First Alaskans Institute and the Denali Commission—sponsor some of these interns. Others learn about ISER through classes or ISER's various other outreach efforts.

ISER at UAA

ISER is part of the College of Business and Public Policy at the University of Alaska Anchorage. It has a staff of about 35, including the director, faculty, research associates, and support staff. Through our affiliates (see *ISER Advisory Board and Affiliates*), we reach out to other schools and colleges at UAA and other UA campuses. Several emeritus faculty also work with ISER on specific projects, and at any given time there are a number of temporary researchers and student interns. ISER also does joint projects with other university researchers, Alaska Native organizations and communities, school districts, and other public and private organizations. Besides research, ISER's mission includes teaching and public service.

ISER's Mission

ISER enhances the well-being of Alaskans and others, through non-partisan research that helps people understand social and economic systems and supports informed public and private decision-making. We pursue our mission by:

- ↪ Focusing attention on critical economic and social issues in Alaska, the Arctic, and similar regions
- ↪ Engaging in basic and applied research leading to better understanding of those issues
- ↪ Disseminating knowledge through publications, community involvement, public service, and teaching

Research Areas

Alaska Economy Studies

Alaska's economy has been a focus of ISER research since the 1960s. Examples of questions we study include:

- ☞ What drives Alaska's economy, how has it changed over time, and how is it likely to change in the future?
- ☞ What are the economic effects of projects, events, and industries?
- ☞ What are the contributions of various industries to Alaska's economy and finances?

Principal Researchers

Scott Goldsmith, professor of economics, has been on the ISER faculty since 1975 and was the director from 2001 to 2005. He has studied Alaska's state and regional economies for 30 years and is responsible for updating and operating computer models that help him assess change and forecast growth. See more about his work under Fiscal Policy.

Mary Killorin, research associate, holds a law degree and has been with ISER since 1994. She collects data and does policy analyses for ISER economic studies and assesses the feasibility of proposed projects. Her special interest is building better relationships between communities and researchers.

Alexandra Hill, research associate, has 15 years' experience analyzing the economic and fiscal effects of policies and programs. In the most recent years, she has focused her research on education issues; see Education.

Publications, Web Sites, and Electronic Newsletter

Publications

ISER has published more than 1,200 publications since the 1960s. A comprehensive, searchable list is on ISER's main Web site (www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu). Those publications include hundreds of reports done under contract for federal, state, and local government agencies and for private businesses and foundations. Other publications come out in ISER's several publication series, which include *Research Summaries*, *Fiscal Policy Papers*, and *Understanding Alaska* policy briefs and papers.

Web Sites

ISER has a central Web site (www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu) and individual Web sites for special large projects. On the main Web site you'll find information about new research, notices about upcoming events, staff profiles, a publication list, links to individual faculty Web sites, and much more. For a list of special project sites, see the back cover.

Distribution of Publications

ISER's electronic newsletter, *Research Matters*, quickly lets Alaskans know about new research. ISER also distributes hard copies of its publications to libraries, legislators, government agencies, schools, Alaska Native corporations, businesses, and individual Alaskans. To be put on our electronic mailing list, send us a message at ResearchMatters@uaa.alaska.edu. For information about publications, call 907-786-7710.

Publication and Web Site Staff

Linda Leask, editor

Clemencia Merrill, graphic artist

Molly Ridout, Web site designer

Community Outreach

ISER uses many methods to make sure Alaskans know about and can use its research findings. Besides publications and an electronic newsletter, ISER uses presentations, workshops, and public forums to distribute research findings. ISER faculty and staff are frequent guests on radio and television programs and are often interviewed by the press. To help us find out what issues are important to Alaskans, we also have an advisory board (see ISER Advisory Board and Affiliates).

Presentations/Forums/Workshops

- ↪ **Presentations:** Every year ISER faculty and staff are asked to make dozens of presentations to public and private groups, inside and outside Alaska. ISER also holds monthly lunchtime talks, open to the public, with speakers from ISER and from other universities and organizations. Presentations are posted on our Web site (www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu).
- ↪ **Forums:** ISER periodically holds public forums on issues important to Alaskans. Recent examples include the annual Lee Gorsuch Public Policy Forums, hosted by ISER and other public and private sponsors. The 2005 forum examined issues surrounding the proposed Alaska natural gas pipeline, and the 2006 forum assessed possible ways of strengthening Alaska's public education system.
- ↪ **Workshops:** ISER also holds workshops, where participants analyze issues or discuss research findings. A recent example is a 2007 workshop ISER and UAA hosted as part of the International Polar Year. Researchers presented findings from the international Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic, a survey of indigenous people in Canada, Russia, Greenland, and northern Alaska. Workshop participants asked questions about how to interpret and apply those findings.

Fiscal Policy Research

Since the 1980s ISER has been a leader in studying the fiscal problems Alaska faces because its economy and government rely so much on the volatile petroleum industry. Examples of fiscal questions include:

- ↪ Where does the state government get its money, how does it spend that money, and how has spending changed over time?
- ↪ How has Alaska's dependence on oil production affected the state budget, and what fiscal choices does the state have?
- ↪ How has growth of the Alaska Permanent Fund changed the state's fiscal picture?

Principal Researchers

Scott Goldsmith, professor of economics, analyzes the state government's spending patterns and assesses the fiscal problems the state faces as its principal source of income—oil production—declines. He has a special interest in how earnings of the Alaska Permanent Fund can be used to promote fiscal stability for Alaska. See also *Alaska Economy*.

Sharman Haley, professor of public policy, has used experimental social science methods to assess how having information from sources they trust affects Alaskans' attitudes about taxes. See also *Alaska Native and Community Studies*.

Education Studies

Education policy has been an ISER research interest since the 1970s. Education questions ISER has studied recently include:

- ↪ How can public education in Alaska be strengthened?
- ↪ Where do urban and rural districts get the teachers they need, and how many more will they need in the future?
- ↪ What have been the long-term effects of the state's former boarding school system on Alaska Native adults and communities?
- ↪ What do students and parents think about an exchange program that brings rural students to urban areas and vice versa?

Principal Researchers

Diane Hirshberg, assistant professor of education policy, holds a joint appointment with UAA's College of Education. Her research includes analyzing education policy and assessing school improvement initiatives.

Alexandra Hill, research associate, evaluates education programs and studies education policy. She also does economic analysis; see Alaska Economy Studies.

Rosylind Frazier, research associate, evaluates education programs and is especially interested in ethnic and cross-cultural studies. She also has broad experience in public health and is one of the researchers in ISER's new initiative to study health care issues.

James Edwin, research assistant professor of evaluation and public policy, joined ISER in 2007. He will evaluate programs in education and other areas.

Emeritus Faculty

Several former faculty members and directors continue to work with ISER on selected projects.

Jack Kruse, professor emeritus of public policy and former ISER director

Bradford Tuck, professor emeritus of economics, UAA

G. Williamson McDiarmid, former ISER director and current Boeing Chair of Teacher Education, University of Washington

Lee Gorsuch, former ISER director, chancellor emeritus, UAA; and current president of City University in Bellevue, Washington

Fran Ulmer, former director and current chancellor, UAA

Arlon Tussing, economic and policy analyst and former ISER faculty member

Teaching

ISER faculty and research associates teach graduate and under-graduate courses, at UAA and elsewhere. A sample of those courses is listed below. Not all courses are offered every semester.

- ↪ Business forecasting
- ↪ Alaska's economy
- ↪ Industrial organization and public policy
- ↪ Research methods
- ↪ Economic development
- ↪ Science, technology, and culture
- ↪ Politics of education
- ↪ Principles of microeconomics
- ↪ Public policy
- ↪ Environmental policymaking

Special Programs At ISER

Understanding Alaska

Understanding Alaska is a special series of studies ISER started in 2001, examining economic development issues in the state. It is funded by the University of Alaska Foundation. The program's main purposes are (1) to help Alaskans understand how their economy works—and to shed light on ways it might grow in the future; and (2) to help ISER expand the scope of its work by involving more researchers from other parts of the University of Alaska. See the program Web site at www.alaskanconomy.uaa.alaska.edu.

Kids Count Alaska

Kids Count Alaska is an annual project that collects and publicizes data on the well-being of Alaska's children. It is part of a national series funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and its major product every year is the Kids Count Alaska Data Book. *Virgene Hanna* directs the program. She is also ISER's director of survey research. See www.kidscount.alaska.edu

Center for Economic Development

The Center for Economic Development was established in 1992, to promote economic development—especially in rural Alaska—using the expertise and research capacity of the University of Alaska. It is affiliated with ISER but is primarily funded by the federal Economic Development Administration. The center's executive director is *Christi Bell* and the administrative assistant is *Kim Matier*.

Alaska Fisheries Research

ISER's research on commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries in Alaska goes back to the early years of statehood. Most recent studies have looked at the commercial fisheries, assessing questions like:

- ⇒ How can Alaska's wild salmon better compete against growing year-round supplies of farmed salmon and other market changes?
- ⇒ How are aquaculture and globalization changing Alaska's seafood industry?
- ⇒ What have been the economic and social effects of management changes in several of Alaska's commercial fisheries?

Principal Researchers

Gunnar Knapp, professor of economics, is a fisheries economist who has spent much of the past 15 years studying the Alaska seafood industry, including seafood markets, fisheries management, and the role of the seafood industry in the Alaska economy.

Marie Lowe, assistant professor of anthropology, is one of ISER's newest faculty members. She is studying the social effects of fisheries restructuring on Alaska's coastal communities.

Patricia DeRoche, research associate, has many years' experience in conducting fisheries surveys and collecting fisheries data. She also does surveys and research for economic and other studies and supervises interviewers during large ISER surveys.

Community Studies

ISER reports have examined many changes affecting Alaska's communities, especially the state's hundreds of small Alaska Native communities. Many such studies are done in partnership with Alaska Native people and organizations. Recent research questions include:

- ↪ How do living conditions among rural Alaska Natives compare with those among indigenous people elsewhere in the Arctic?
- ↪ How have rising energy prices affected rural and urban households around Alaska?
- ↪ How have the people and the economy of Anchorage changed in the past 15 years?

Principal Researchers

Stephanie Martin, assistant professor of economics and public policy, has a special research interest in how family ties, social support, and other factors influence migration decisions of Alaska Natives living in remote communities.

Suzanne Sharp, research associate, has broad experience in fostering and enhancing working relationships with Alaska Native communities.

Sharman Haley, professor of public policy, has studied how Alaska Native communities can more effectively deal with oil and gas development and other issues important to rural areas. See also Fiscal Policy.

Lance Howe, assistant professor of economics, has special interests in the patterns of Alaska migration and management of common property resources, including Alaska Native corporation lands. He also does detailed analysis of U.S. census data for Alaska.

Ben Saylor, research associate, collects data and writes programs to analyze data for a variety of community studies. He is also a programmer for ISER's technical staff.

Vic Fischer, emeritus professor of public affairs, currently studies state policy, local government, and Alaska-Russia issues.

Andrew Crow, program manager for the Alaska Cooperative Development Program, works on community economic development strategies.

Energy/Resources/Environment

ISER has examined the many economic effects of oil development on Alaska for 35 years, and it is now also studying issues surrounding potential development of North Slope natural gas. Tourism is another major industry ISER studies; current work is examining nature-based tourism. ISER has also estimated the economic value of the state's fish, wildlife, and vast undeveloped areas. Other areas of research include energy demand and the problems small Alaska utilities face. Most recently ISER has begun studying the economic and social implications of climate change and the effects on Alaska of policy responses.

Principal Researchers

Matt Berman, professor of economics, has been with ISER for 25 years and studies the economics of the petroleum industry and other resource industries. He is also interested in issues affecting rural communities and in particular the effects of alcohol control in villages.

Peter Larsen, research associate, is an economist studying the potential economic effects of climate change. He and several colleagues recently released the first estimates of how much climate change could add to the future costs for public infrastructure around Alaska.

Mary Ellen Gordian, associate professor of environmental health, is a new member of ISER's faculty but has a long history of studying how the environment we live in affects health. She is currently studying the relationship between asthma and indoor air quality.

Meghan Wilson, research associate, works on natural resource and other studies and has a special interest in improving collaboration between communities and government decision-makers.