



T E D S T E V E N S
F O U N D A T I O N

Fifty years ago, Ted Stevens was first sworn in as the third U. S. Senator from Alaska. He had been appointed by then Governor Walter J. Hickel to succeed one of the state's first Senators, E.L. (Bob) Bartlett, who had passed away earlier that month on December 11, 1968.

Alaska was a much different place at that time. It had been a state for less than ten years. There was no Alyeska Pipeline and no production of oil from the North Slope. There was no Permanent Fund (and no dividends). Because of disputes over ownership and the use of federal land, the federal government had imposed a land freeze and refused to issue land use permits. Foreign fishing fleets were ravaging the fish stocks just three miles from Alaska's shore. If Alaskans wanted to make phone calls to the Lower 48, they had to use the military's telephone system. There was no live television-shows – they were all video-taped in Seattle and flown in to be broadcast two weeks later, even Christmas specials were broadcast in January. The Alaska Railroad was owned by the federal government. If you became sick in rural Alaska there were no village health aides and injured people had to wait to for treatment until they could be flown to a large city. Rather than going to school at home, high schoolers from rural Alaska had to go to school in Sitka or "Indian" schools as far away as Pennsylvania. Most rural Alaskans lived in abject poverty and had no sanitation systems except 'honey buckets.' Mail service in the state was sporadic and undependable at best.

Fast forward fifty years to today, and the disputes over ownership of federal lands are mostly resolved and Alaska Native corporations have become cornerstones of Alaska's economy. The Alaska Pipeline has been in operation for over 40 years, and production of the vast resources on the North Slope has funded the \$63.9 billion Alaska Permanent Fund and its annual dividends. Alaskans now enjoy a modern communications system. Rural health aides can provide local treatment for many conditions and a network of hospitals exist in Nome, Bethel, Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow), and Dillingham; and up-to-date modern hospitals serve all Alaskans. The 200-mile exclusive economic zone limit and numerous other measures help protect Alaska's fisheries. Modern sewer and water systems serve most people within the state. A network of modern, well-lit airports and up-to-date piers and docks tie Alaskans together. And bypass mail helps keep postage rates down.

These changes are the results of thousands of Alaskans from all over the state who worked to build the state we know and enjoy today. But one man, Ted Stevens, was a remarkable leader who addressed all these issues and many more. He worked for 40 years in the Senate to make Alaska a better place and without his leadership, Alaska would be a much different, and a much poorer place. His dedication and commitment to this state were remarkable. You may not have agreed with all he did (and when he disagreed with you he let you know), but no one can disagree that his contribution to this state made a huge difference for everyone who lives in Alaska today. It is often said that we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us, and Alaskans today stand much higher because of Ted Stevens and his work for Alaska.

This year as we celebrate the holidays please remember Ted's legacy of service to Alaskans. The Ted Stevens Foundation is working every day to keep that legacy alive and working for Alaska. You can learn more about the Foundation and its work by visiting our web site at tedstevensfoundation.org. Help us preserve both Ted's and Alaska's history by contributing to the Foundation today.

Also, remember to visit our new exhibit commemorating this anniversary at the Dimond Center this holiday season!