

# ALASBO

## News Link...



February 2006

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ALASBO News Link  
is published for the members of the Alaska  
Association of School Business Officials  
and its affiliate members.

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## **President's Message**

*Elizabeth Frances, Dillingham School District*

Only a month into the new calendar year and we already have Impact Aid Applications, W-2's and 1099's behind us as well as FY07 budgets well underway and e-rate moving right along. Yet we have so much more to look forward to before we wind up the fiscal year. It amazes me how our jobs as School Business Officials are never ending. Whenever one project is complete, there are always others waiting to be tackled.

One thing certain within the never-ending cycle of our jobs is change. The basic desired outcome remains consistent from year-to-year: ensuring optimal utilization of school district assets to provide outstanding educational opportunities that lead to high levels of achievement for our students. However, the

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### President's Message (Continued)

environment in which we accomplish this is constantly changing. Financial resources change, legislative requirements change, teaching techniques change, employees change and the list keeps going. The question is how to keep on top of the constant change. The answer is ALASBO.

Last year ALASBO worked hard to change the committee structures to emphasize professional development and services for our membership. This year's theme is "Team ALASBO – Educating Alaska". In keeping with this theme our highest priority this year will be to assist School Business Officials with staying informed, educated and updated.



### Team ALASBO Educating Alaska Annual Conference December 4-6, 2006

The Professional Development Committee has come up with some outstanding ideas to help make cost-effective training available to our membership. One of these ideas, Power Lunches, was kicked off last month. A Power Lunch is a one-hour teleconference training session that allows school business officials to participate in training for the cost of a long distance phone call while munching their lunches (martinis are optional).

January's topic was "Final Reminders for E-Rate Preparation" with Della Mathis. Della did a smashing job and it was an hour well spent with time for questions and answers at the end of the session. On February 15<sup>th</sup> at noon, we will be hosting our next Power Lunch. The facilitator will be Tammy White and the topic will be "How to Ensure a Smooth Calendar Year-End", with a special focus on 1099 processing. The best way is to prepare for year-end all year long and Tammy will be sharing ideas, tips and techniques on what to do and what to avoid to ensure smooth sailing for you next year.

I hope that everyone will take time to participate in the Power Lunch, and please encourage staff responsible for all those fun calendar year end tasks to lunch-in as well. Join us and share an hour with your colleagues from around the state. Be sure to watch for future Power Lunch announcements and feel free to send in any recommendations you may have for future topics.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge people who have been very helpful as I have taken over as the President of ALASBO. My thanks to the dedicated Board Members and Committee Members that keep ALASBO moving forward. Their enthusiasm, ideas and hard work are going to be the key to a successful year that has started off very well. Also, thank you to the Past Presidents who lend me their guidance and expertise. Finally, I give my thanks to Tammy White for her commitment as the Executive Director. Her continuing efforts keep us a cohesive group. I am honored to be working with all of these fine professionals as we start this new and exciting year.

### Executive Director's Message

**Tammy White, ALASBO Executive Director**

This year is going to fly by as quickly as last year did. I will be traveling to Pittsburg soon with other ALASBO's members to start planning for the October ASBO International Conference. Start planning now to join us for that conference.

Enclosed is a new Board Liaison list. This shows the Board Member you should call if you have questions. If your information is incorrect please e-mail me with the correct information. We will redistribute it with all corrections.

I hope to hear you all at the Power Lunch!

### February POWER Lunch!

**February 15, noon**

*1099's – So, you though you got 'er done! Thinking about which vendors and/or invoices are included is a year-long process.*

**GOOD NEWS!** *Unless you sent in the 1096, you can still correct a 1099 without too much fuss or muss. When are those 1096's due anyway? Then there are the 1099C's along with 1096C's. (Have you checked out those penalties?)*

*Is there a time when an employee would receive a W-2 and a 1099 for the same wages? What pitfalls did you have this year? What procedures are you putting in place for next year?*

*To join, call 218.862.6100. Conference code # is 25275225. Don't miss the POWER Lunch!*

## ASBO International News

*Melody Douglas, ASBO President  
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District*

The ASBO Leadership Conference is scheduled in Pittsburgh February 10-11, 2006. This is a great opportunity for those interested in developing their leadership skills. You should consider planning to attend this conference next year in Toronto.

The ASBO Board will meet on February 7-9 for strategic planning and to address association business. The Future's Task Force Report and a preliminary Membership Committee Report will be reviewed for use in updating ASBO's Strategic Framework. The Board will also:

- Approve updated Annual Meeting, Committee, and Personnel Manuals
- Appoint general council and an independent auditor
- Approve an updated Operations Manual
- Approve the FY07 budget (ASBO's fiscal year is April 1 through March 31)
- Review Policy Manual Updates
- Address a MOU with the National College for School Leadership
- Address the possibility of a Bylaws change

Major Policy Manual work is underway. The Policy Manual used to fill a 5-inch binder. It was significantly revised in 2004, to about a third of its original size. It was still somewhat a cumbersome, hodge-podge manual. ASBO's Policy Committee and staff have worked through the document with the goal of it being efficient and effective. The concept is to put operational elements into various manuals that will be reviewed annually as opposed to having such information in the Policy Manual. This work is expected to be completed by the time the ASBO Board meets in June 2006.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 92nd Annual Meeting & Exhibits: Shaping the Future, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 13-16, 2006! Check out [www.asbointl.org](http://www.asbointl.org) for more information. This is the big one folks; Alaska will be front and center at this conference. Plan to come and share in the festivities while learning the latest information and tools to help you be more effective in your role as a school business official.

Please let me know of any concerns, suggestions and ideas you would like addressed concerning ASBO International. I may be reached at 907-714-8847 or [mdouglas@kpbsd.k12.ak.us](mailto:mdouglas@kpbsd.k12.ak.us).

## Why Attend ASBO? A First-Time Attendee Reports

*Leslie O'Connor, Yukon Flats School District*

ASBO was a wonderful experience and an honor to attend. Sometimes I leave a conference feeling guilty that I was actually paid to attend. I wondered if ASBO was going to be "One of those experiences." ASBO was phenomenal. It was hands down the best conference I have ever attended. It was well organized; the classes were relevant and vendors actually sold useful and innovative products.



When I say relevant, I do not mean in a vague way, like "Here are some plastic apples to give your teachers. See they are really neat, they squeak!" Topics really applied to the needs of my District, such as preventive maintenance software, accounting tools, school supplies and CIP vendors. I could go on and on. I felt as if this conference was designed with me in mind, like a well-tailored suit. It just fit! I am sure that was what the conference organizers intended.

I am a relatively new Business Manager and have been following in the footsteps of my predecessors. I will be stepping out of the shadows and implementing some new changes and I owe it to classes like "Communicating Budgets to Non-Financial People" and "Creating an Award Winning Budget". I want to try some new formats and I now have a treasure chest of ideas. I am very excited that this coming year I will get to showcase the things I have learned.

I would recommend ASBO to all Business Officials. There is definitely something for everyone. Next year our own Melody Douglas will be officiating as President of ASBO International. I guarantee you will learn something and we need as many people as possible to attend and show support. Thank you ALASBO for honoring me with the Lowell Thomas Freeman Scholarship, which made my attendance possible.

## Escalating Energy Costs

*Laura Hylton, Lake and Peninsula Borough  
School District*

In the aftermath of hurricane Katrina heating fuel costs jumped 30-50% in many parts of Alaska. School districts budgeted for increases in fuel costs; however, most did not anticipate such a large price increase. As a result some districts face a choice between heating buildings and staffing them.

The cost of electricity is also hitting districts hard. Electric utilities across the state are forced to increase either the rate per kilowatt-hour for electricity or fuel surcharge fees, or both. These larger than expected electricity costs are also creating increased expenditures for districts with one district experiencing an increase of \$40,000 for one school building versus prior year.

The Governor has included \$30 million in his Education Funding Package for FY07 to help offset rising energy cost for school districts. While this increase provides relief for district budgets for next year, it leaves many struggling to fill the gap for FY06.

Currently Senate Bill 232, Energy related supplement does not include dollars to assist school districts with FY06 energy costs. Adding school districts was discussed at the bill's first hearing and the Department of Education provided projected increase estimates for FY06 heating fuel costs of 23.7% over FY05 expenditures.

It is important that our legislator hear from school districts on this issue. Please provide information to your legislators and request that school districts be included in SB 232.

**Juneau or Bust!**



***The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual ALASBO Legislative  
Fly has been scheduled for  
March 29-31, 2006.***

*Watch for more information soon by fax  
from the ALASBO Legislative Committee.  
This is your chance to represent your  
district and have an impact on the  
legislative process in Juneau!*

**Thank you RBMS for Scholarships to  
Attend ASBO in Pittsburgh!**

*Both winners were from the Fairbanks North  
Star Borough School District*

*Wendy Tisland  
Colleen Fitzgerald*

## Loreen Kramer Receives Alaska School Business Official of the Year Award

*Eddy Jeans, Department of Education*

Congratulations to Loreen Kramer, who received this year's School Business Official of the Year Award at the December 2005 ALASBO annual conference! Each year's award-winner is selected from nominees solicited from school business officials around the state, by an ALASBO committee that includes past SBO of the Year recipients and retired ALASBO members. The award is sponsored by PenAir.



Loreen has been a school business official in Alaska for 20 years. She has been an active member of ALASBO for 18 years. She has been on numerous committees, on the board of directors, past president and treasurer. She has been a vital member of the team in the efforts to get an Alaskan elected to the board of directors and now president elect of ASBO international.

It is easy to understand why Loreen is such a deserving person based on comments included on the nomination form. Principal Michael Johnson wrote: "It is with complete confidence and great ease that I recommend Loreen Kramer for recognition of her outstanding skills and generous commitment to the school and community of Glennallen. Students, parents, teachers, administrators and friends often find it difficult to express our gratitude and respect for someone as worthy. This recognition would allow us the opportunity to say 'thank you' in a meaningful way. Mrs. Kramer's contribution to our community is priceless."

So, please join me again in congratulating Loreen Kramer, ALASBO's 2005 School Business Official of the Year!!!



## Member Spotlight: Loreen Kramer

Tammy White and Melody Douglas proposed a new "member spotlight" feature in for this newsletter. They picked up the idea from another ASBO state affiliate. ALASBO School Business Official of the Year Loreen Kramer was asked to respond to a list of questions. Loreen will pick the next ALASBO member for the spotlight!

**Tell us about your school district -** *Copper River School District is a REAA with seven schools and 614 students. The District boundaries encompass 23,000 square miles.*

**How long have you been in school business?** *20 years.*

**How did you get into this business?** *My initial interest began in high school when I was the student assistant to the business manager. After graduating from college my husband Pete was employed as a teacher with the Bering Straits School District. I was lucky enough to begin my career in the payroll department after moving to Unalakleet. We then moved to the Glennallen area where I began working with CRSD as the Accountant and later their Business Manager.*

**What do you like best about your job?** *My interaction with my colleagues and the diversification of my position. And of course, working with Rene' all these years has been great.*

**What advice do you have for those new to school business?** *When I first began as a business manager there were so many things that I had limited knowledge of. I tried to figure out things on my own and decided that the best thing that I could do was to ask questions of those Business Officials with experience. It doesn't make sense to 're-invent the wheel' with so many experts just a phone call away.*

**How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?** *First of all, I would never have had the courage to sing 'These Boots are Made for Walkin'. Seriously, I have had the pleasure to meet some of the most wonderful, intelligent, fun-loving people – which I can now call my friends. What a great support group.*

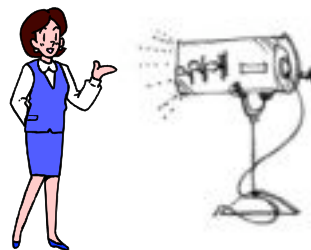
**What do you like to do for fun?** *Wow, that's a loaded question. I love doing anything with my family. They are most important to me. We are*

*very active with rafting, skiing, snow machining, traveling, camping, biking and playing games during the very cold months. I love my friends and my job.*

**If you could visit anyplace in the world, where would you go and why?** *I have a special place in my heart for the Bahama Islands. Pete and I visited there last year for our second honeymoon and I think of it as 'the other paradise'. Now it's time to take our kids there (Ben & Sammie).*

**Tell us something about yourself that most people don't know?** *I am proud to be who I am and where I am in my life. I love my family and friends! Of course everyone knows that.*

**What is your proudest accomplishment?** *Wow, another tough one. I have more than one. First, I am proud to be the mother of 2 wonderful children and wife of 23 years to my husband. But, I am so very honored to have received the School Business Official of the Year award. It means so much to me.*



## Simple But Effective Ways to Market Your District

Jane Milner

*Editor's Note: Ms. Milner is the Director of Communications for the Elizabeth Forward School District in Pennsylvania and is a member of the Pennsylvania ASBO Communications Committee. This article was submitted by Melody Douglas.*

"Marketing" is a relatively new concept in school district circles. It sounds technical and like something, if done at all, should be left up to the communications professional. Why should a school district need to treat the members of our communities as the clients or customers we are eager to entice to buy our services?

It's a good idea for every one of us who shares the responsibility for running our schools to be aware of the subtle successes and improved perceptions of our districts that can be made

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### Market Your District (Continued)

with more attention to “marketing”. The administrative team can leave the big jobs like newsletters, brochures, press releases, special events planning and speaking for the district up to the PR professional. But the subtle marketing of our districts that makes all the difference is all of our responsibility.

Why “market” a service that families are legally bound to use? Consider the following: (1) Districts with good marketing attract new taxpayers to move into the community. (2) It's good for the morale of the community to be assured that its schools have a good image with proven programs and competent administrators and teachers. (3) We're competing for shrinking tax dollars with many public and private entities. (4) Viewing the taxpayers as our clients and customers sharpens our skills and improves the service we offer them. (5) Voter referendum may be right around the corner.

Consider the following simple but easily overlooked marketing strategies that are sure to improve relations with our customers:

**Provide Extra Service:** Ask questions to make sure you understand thoroughly the inquiry or problem. Or better yet, before ending the interaction, ask your clients if there is anything else you can do to help them. How could a riled-up parent/taxpayer walk out of your office dissatisfied if you offer that simple extra service? It may only take a few more minutes of your time to be empathetic and hospitable, but it is well worth it if you are helping to market your district.

**Be a Better Listener:** Often when people have a concern or express a complaint, they just want to be reassured that their concern is valued. Look directly at your client. Take a few extra seconds to really listen before formulating your reply. You may hear more than just the question you are being asked.

**Speak Your Customer's Language:** This one is difficult at times because business manager lingo can be complex. When using technical terms, keep in mind you need to make your explanations as “low-tech” as possible. If using technical terms is the only way to provide an answer, then you will need to educate your customers as you proceed. It's always a good idea to ask a few questions to test their understanding of your explanation. And how many times have you asked a client if he or she is satisfied with your interaction? Now that's good marketing!

**Manage Your Telephone/People Skills and Those of Your Employees:** The person who answers the phone or greets the clients is responsible for the perception clients have of the entire organization. Make sure that he or she is personable and businesslike.

Also, you may receive a lot of calls and requests for information every day. Don't misuse the intent of the voice mail phone system by screening callers. Satisfied customers expect a fast response. **ANSWER YOUR PHONE AND RETURN CALLS PROMPTLY.**



**Don't Share Internal Problems:** Nobody is in favor of increased taxes, budget cuts for programs, less money for supplies and other tough decisions that districts have to make. However, what you say as a district “insider” both around the office and in the outside world greatly affects the perception of the community about your district. In short, avoid negativism or complaining about anything, including school board members and district personnel. Our moms were right when they advised us “If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.”

**Get Right On a Problem:** Problems don't “just go away”. Good marketing/PR strategy only leaves a bad situation on the front burner for a matter of hours. No matter how much you are tempted to wait out a problem, hoping it will go away or blow over, deal with it immediately. The longer it spins without a resolution, the worse it will get.

**Try to See the Media as Colleagues:** Be available and pleasant. Reporters are just like the rest of us – trying to get our jobs done the best we can. They aren't the enemy, although reading misinformation in articles or noticing that only “bad news” is newsworthy might make you think otherwise. A reporter friend of mine once gave me great advice: “Never argue with anyone who buys ink by the barrel.”

**Get Involved in Professional Organizations:** When you put your district on the map through your association with professional organizations, you are certainly doing your part to market your district.

## ***What is Love? Kids Know!***

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined.

### ***Happy Hearts and Flowers Month!***

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca-age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy - age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other." Karl - age 5

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs." Chrissy - age 6

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." Terri - age 4

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK." Danny - age 7

"Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss" Emily - age 8

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen." Bobby - age 7

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate." Nikka - age 6

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday." Noelle - age 7

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well." Tommy - age 6

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore." Cindy - age 8

"My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night." Clare - age 6

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Brad Pitt." Chris - age 7

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." Mary Ann - age 4

"I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones." Lauren - age 4

"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you." Karen-age 7

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget." Jessica - age 8

And finally – the neighbor of a four-year-old child was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."



Alaska Association of  
School Business Officials

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## ***Mark Your 2006 Calendars!***

- ***March 29 – 31 – ALASBO Legislative Fly-In, Juneau***
- ***October 13 – 16 – ASBO International Conference, Pittsburgh***
- ***December 4 – 6 – ALASBO Annual Conference, Anchorage***