

# ALASBO

## News Link...



*A newsletter publication of Alaska Association of School Business Officials*

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

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[www.alasbo.org](http://www.alasbo.org)

For publishing information, contact:  
Amy Lujan, Executive Director  
3145 Pioneer Avenue  
Juneau, AK 99801  
907-500-9086  
[alasbo@gci.net](mailto:alasbo@gci.net)

Editing and layout by  
Susan Edwards, Lake and Peninsula  
Schools  
[sedwards@lpsd.com](mailto:sedwards@lpsd.com)

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at the above address.*

## ***President's Message***

*Laura Hylton, Lake and Peninsula*

2010 is off and running! I hope your holidays were relaxing, enjoyable and allowed you time with family and friends.

I want to thank Amy Lujan, our ALASBO Executive Director, for her tireless effort organizing the 2009 ALASBO conference! Along with the generous contributions from the vendors, the many hours given by the volunteers, the committees and board members, Amy's amazing ability to manage the hundreds of details made for an outstanding conference. The annual ALASBO conference and School Business Academy would not be possible without the support and willingness of ALASBO members and vendors. Thank you to everyone who gave their time to plan, present, prepare, recruit and complete the numerous tasks that make our conference a success.

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### **ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

- 2010 Board of Directors
- Freeman & Easton Application Materials

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Looking ahead now, in 2010 the ALASBO board is working to facilitate information exchange between the board, committees and the membership. Committees are invited to provide reports, either written or verbal, of committee activities, at the monthly board meetings and encouraged to share committee focus and activities with all ALASBO members via this newsletter.

In Alaska, we are fortunate to have an association of members who are committed to supporting each other and the profession of school business. Please don't hesitate to reach out to other members if you have question, need help or simply need a sounding board. This willingness to share and help is what makes ALASBO strong.



Thanks to one and all for a fantastic Annual Conference! Most of the feedback we received was extremely positive. We will also continue to review your suggestions as we prepare throughout the coming year for December 2010. Continuing to improve on what we do makes ALASBO successful and relevant to our members!

If you did not get a chance to complete your Annual Conference evaluation or would like to provide additional feedback, please email me at any time, [alasbo@gci.net](mailto:alasbo@gci.net). We do read your comments!!

In the new year, the legislative session has already started off at a brisk pace, with important bills being considered at the committee level. Be sure to keep informed of the discussions in Juneau by reading your local paper and the Anchorage Daily News (online at [adn.com](http://adn.com)), listening to radio reports, staying in touch with your local Legislative Information Office (LIO), reviewing update emails from me and others, and tuning in to Gavel-to-Gavel TV coverage.

Some of the bills we are currently watching are:

- **HB206** – This bill targets dropout prevention. An 80-day count period is proposed, with the idea that districts need to be encouraged financially to retain students beyond the current 20-day count period!. Additional career testing and post-secondary coursework opportunities are also addressed. The next hearing in House Finance is scheduled for Friday, 2/19 at 8 AM.
- **HB317** – This bill would add \$125/year to the foundation formula base student allocation in FY12 and FY13 and also increase the special needs factor to 1.215 and 1.23 in those years. The bill has been referred from House Education to House Finance and will hopefully be scheduled for a hearing again soon.

You can find these bills on the Legislature's BASIS system: [www.legis.state.ak.us/basis](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis). Be sure to click on "documents" to make sure you're seeing the latest versions and supporting items. **Please consider testifying on these bills!**

Due to scheduling conflicts, **we have changed the Juneau Legislative Fly-In dates to March 31-April 2**. ALASBO's Fly-In is a great opportunity to learn more about how the legislative process works and to make sure your voice is heard in Juneau. Please consider attending this year!



### **NOTE: Rescheduled Fly-In dates March 31 – April 2**

As we prepare for the Fly-In, I will also be asking you for information about the issues your district faces. **Real-life anecdotes we can share with legislators about how their actions affect us are very powerful!**

Another of my tasks in the new year is to support **ALASBO's committee structure**. If you are not already involved with one of ALASBO's committees, please consider joining a committee by contacting me, or one of the committee chairs listed below!

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Audit Committee – Reviews and recommends approval of financial statements prepared by a CPA firm for ALASBO. Chair: Chad Stiteler

Bylaws Committee – Reviews and modifies the ALASBO Bylaws as appropriate, in accordance with Bylaws Article IX. Chair: Tammy White

Services Committee – Oversees publication of the quarterly newsletter, the ALASBO website, slideshow and works with the historian. Chair: Yodean Armour

Professional Development Committee – Develops training opportunities for our membership. Chair: Karen Goodwin

Sponsorship Committee – Establishes fundraising criteria and implementation plan. Chair: Amy Lujan

Legislative Committee – Coordinates ALASBO's legislative activities. Chair: Dave Jones

Nominations Committee – Made up of ALASBO past-presidents. Recommends a slate of officers to the membership for a vote at the annual meeting. Chair: Karen Goodwin



## ***“Your Paperwork is Not My Priority...”***

*Kim Johnson, Delta/Greely School District*

A couple of years ago I was talking with one of the veteran secretaries in our district regarding some paperwork she had done for the business office that wasn't quite right. She said to me “I'm sorry, but your paperwork is not my priority.” At first I was a little surprised by her attitude, but the more I thought about it, the more I respected her position.

Those of us who are removed from the schools sometimes lose sight of everything that goes on in a site office and how chaotic it can be. The focus in the schools has to be first and foremost on the students. If it weren't for them, none of us would be employed. In addition to the students, the secretaries also have to deal with parents and staff, both in person and on the phone. Add student activities or any kind of catastrophe into the mix, and things can get pretty crazy. When we stop and think about what goes on in the site offices, it's easy to understand how our paperwork can get assigned a lower priority.

I believe that we, as school business professionals, need to have high standards for the work we do and we need to hold others in our districts to the same standards. However, I also believe that our role is one of support and we need to help others as they strive to meet those standards. We need to be understanding of the fact that while school business is our work life, it's but a small part of the site secretary's work life.

It's easy to get frustrated when things come to the business office and they're incomplete, miscoded, missing signatures, etc. Sometimes we have to explain things multiple times and try to find other ways to say things so someone will finally understand. Sometimes it seems like people who have been doing something the same way for years suddenly forget how to do it. Next time that happens to you, stop and think about what may have been happening in the office when that person was working on that paperwork. We need to be patient and kind in helping them to meet our needs, since we're not walking in their shoes. The bottom line is that we're all here to support the students and that means supporting every link in the chain between us and the students as well.

To help alleviate the frustration, there are things that we can do to make our requirements easier for the site offices. Training, of course, is paramount and we can never do enough of it. In our district we send out periodic emails to all of our clerical staff reminding them of proper procedures. Customized coding charts would also be helpful – much easier for a non-business person to understand (and less overwhelming) than the whole Chart of Accounts. A written business procedures manual is also very helpful. These things and others that you may be doing in your district can help us all work together to help provide the best possible education for our students.

## **Janet Stokesbary Named SBO of the Year**

Congratulation to the Anchorage School District's Chief Financial Officer Janet Stokesbary who was named the Alaska School Business Official of the Year on December 9, 2009 at ALASBO's annual conference in Anchorage, Alaska. Candidates for this prestigious award are nominated by their colleagues within the Alaska School Business profession. Annually, a panel of previous recipients selects a deserving individual from the nominees submitted based upon their recognized outstanding service, innovative plan design and implementation, and the use of exemplary business practices within school business management.

The award has been sponsored for more than a decade by Penair. The recipient receives roundtrip travel certificates, a check for \$500 and an engraved plaque.

This year's selection of Janet Stokesbary as the recipient recognizes her 34 years of dedicated service to the Anchorage School District, commitment and contributions to public education in Alaska, insight and expertise in financial management and leadership of the Anchorage School District. Janet has been a member of ALASBO since 1975 and has served as a board member and volunteer. Janet generously shares her time and expertise with many through her involvement with the Council of Great City Schools and the American Society of Military Comptrollers.

Janet expressed "It is a great honor to receive the Alaska School Business Official of the year award. I would like to thank ALASBO for the award and for their continued support throughout the years. The association has many knowledgeable and talented members who are always willing to share their expertise".

Congratulations, Janet on this well deserved honor!



## **ASBO International Certification Program**

*Jenny Martens, Nome Public Schools*

As you have probably heard, ASBO International is in the long process of developing a certification program for school business officials. This certification program is intended to support the credibility of our profession and strengthen the job skills and knowledge of school business professionals everywhere. ASBO International expects to implement the certification program in the fall of 2010.

**Congratulations to Jenny Martens of Nome and Dave Jones of Kenai for being selected to participate in the ASBO International certification development process!**

One of the steps in creating the certification program was to identify the areas of testing by performing an extensive job task analysis, a process for analyzing the tasks performed by individuals in an occupation. A panel of practitioners was brought together last October for a three-day face-to-face meeting to participate in this job task analysis and create an outline of duty areas required to perform successfully as a school business professional. I was honored to be one of the 12 members on that Job Task Analysis Panel.

I served on this panel beside a fantastic group of professionals from across the United States and Canada. We worked diligently to identify and outline the duty areas, tasks, and skills and knowledge one must possess to perform successfully as a school business official. We went through various exercises to help us identify the duty areas of a school business official and the tasks to complete those duties. We also identified the skills and knowledge needed to actually perform those duties. Wow.....school business officials truly are leaders and our contributions to ensure student success is incredible. Ok, ok so I am a bit bias when talking about school business officials. But, that is the truth and I am sticking to it.

As we went through the process we were all amazed at the broad spectrum of knowledge needed to work in our profession. It is incredible the different tasks required depending on the type of school, size of school, location, environment and government. I was able to share what school business officials in Alaska

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face every day and the duties we perform to help the schools run efficiently. My fellow panelists were in awe when I identified some of the tasks we take on up here which ultimately affect the lives of all the children in Alaska.

I was asked to continue serving ASBO International by participating as a team member on the Certification Exam Committee. I didn't think there could be anything better than that, but then I learned I would be serving alongside Dave Jones, Assistant Superintendent of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and valued member of ALASBO!! We will be meeting as a team this month in Reston, Virginia for a 3-day exam item-writing workshop. Our goal will be to begin writing the certification exam questions based on the work accomplished by the Job Task Analysis Panel. I am looking forward to the process and what we will contribute towards the ASBO International certification program.

## Seven Ways to Motivate Yourself: Stuff That Works

You have three tools to deal with your reality each day. They are your talent, your motivation and your self-talk. This article is about your motivation. Please read these strategies and adapt them into your current motivational repertoire. Here is the stuff that works:

1. Shakespeare said, "Action is eloquence." The word motivation comes from the Latin and it literally means "to move." When you need motivation, get yourself "kick-started" with one of these statements:
  - *I'll get my body moving and my head will follow.*
  - *I can't think myself into a new way of acting. I'll act myself into a new way of thinking.*
  - *If I can't get out of it, I'll get into it.*
2. Play some music. Nothing changes your psychological state quicker than music. This is why rock stars get paid so much money. Whether it's a theme from a Rocky Movie, a Celine Dion classic or Mozart doesn't really matter. Find what "floats your boat" and get moving and motivated with those magnificent melodies.
3. Keep a list of motivational quotes in your wallet or purse. When you need them, pull

them out and use them. Here are some of my favorites:

- *What you do when you don't have to, determines what you will be when you cannot help it.* -- Thomas Jefferson
  - *To face with all our courage, what is now to be.* -- W.H. Auden
  - *My purpose shall stand and I will fulfill my intention.* -- Isaiah 46:10
4. Change the scenery. Norman Vincent Peale always advocated taking a half-mile walk when you feel stuck. I concur. Changing your physical circumstances for a bit is a wonderful thing to do before you plunge into the challenges at hand. So do it.
  5. Wallow in your negativity for a while. Give yourself ten minutes to gripe, moan and complain about getting started on what lies before you. Get into a horrible funk about how bad the world is and how rotten you feel. Then let all of your garbage go. When ten minutes are up, launch yourself into the tasks at hand!
  6. Enlist a friend. A good friend is a clarifier, a comforter and a confronter. When you need the help of a friend, call him or her. Ask this all-important person to deliver a pep talk to get you going. Indeed, isn't this why people hire personal trainers?



7. Look at the doughnut and not the hole. Pause for a moment. Examine your entire life and what you have accomplished to this point. Realize that you are merely in a bit of a downturn . . . you're focused on the hole and not the doughnut. Then look at all the good stuff that your life is about. Grow for it, get moving and be a difference maker . . . move now!

You take a bath or shower daily. It's the same with motivation. You need a dose of it just as often. It's my invitation and request that you adapt these daily strategies into your current motivational repertoire. All the best to you!

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# ALASBO



## Member Spotlight

For this quarter's edition of the "Member Spotlight" feature, Luke Fulp has picked David Arp for the spotlight!

### ***Tell us about your school district***

Sitka School District stat sheet:

- 1300 Students (PK-12), 200 FTE's
- Schools: Baranof Elementary School (PK-1), Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School (2-5), Blatchley Middle School (6-8), Sitka High School (9-12), Pacific High School (9-12 alternative), SouthEast Alaska Career Center (vocational training), and Sitka Community Schools (after school programming).
- \$23MM budget (If my auditor or the State asks, that includes on-behalf)
- Located in the beautiful City and
- Borough of Sitka (population around 8,000), in the heart of the Tongass rain forest on the Gulf of Alaska.

### ***How long have you been in school business?***

2 years.

### ***How did you get into this business?***

My wife and I relocated from Duluth, MN to Sitka, AK in August of 2007 for her to take a job as a high school guidance counselor. The business manager position opened up and I applied mistakenly thinking that working for a school automatically meant you'd get summers

off. Before I knew what had happened I was figuring out the foundation formula and 403b's!

### ***What do you like best about your job?***

I love the people. Between SSD and ALASBO, I have met some of the most amazing people.

### ***What advice do you have for those new to school business?***

Run... Run fast and far away!!! Seriously I would say, "Be patient, thoughtful, respectful, and honest. The rest will work itself out."

### ***How have you benefited from membership in ALASBO?***

I don't think you want this Q&A to be that long! When I started in this position I had a very strong financial background but knew nothing about school business. The ALASBO community has truly held my hand and helped me be a success at this job. Thank you all so much!

### ***What do you like to do for fun?***

Mostly reading, but I also really enjoy fishing and traveling.

### ***If you could visit anyplace in the world, where would you go and why?***

Where: Fiji. Why: Sun, heat, white sand beaches, spectacular diving, and those huts that sit on stilts over turquoise water.

### ***Tell us something about yourself that most people don't know?***

I've never really liked math. I have had success with it but people just assume that when you're in finance you love numbers. I got into finance because I like to be around money!

### ***What is your proudest accomplishment?***

As a lot of our members know, moving to Alaska is a huge ordeal. It was about two weeks before our move and everything had gone wrong. Then we got the worst of the news, the movers cancelled on us! We were starting to feel hopeless. Then one by one we started receiving phone calls from family and friends who let us know they were coming. The next weekend about 30 people from all over the country showed up at our house and in about 8 hours everything was boxed and perfectly packed into a Uhaul. The fact that I have lived a life worthy of such friends is definitely my proudest accomplishment.



## ALASBO 2010 Liaison Assignments

*ALASBO Board Liaisons are in addition to the mentor assignments through the School Business Academy. ALASBO members are one of your best resources. Haven't heard from your liaison lately? Give him/her a call or email!*

**Past-President – Karen Goodwin** --- NW Arctic  
442-3472 x232 kgoodwin@nwarctic.org

**Robbie MacManus**  
Alaska Gateway Schools  
883-5151x109 rmacmanus@agsd.us

**Chelsea Sternicki**  
Aleutian Region Schools  
277-2648 csternicki@aleutregion.org

**Carl Warner**  
Aleutians East Borough Schools  
383-5222 cwarner@aebsd.org

**Janet Stokesbary**  
Anchorage School District  
742-4369  
stokesbary\_janet@asdk12.org

**Charlene Jimenez**  
Annette Island Schools  
886-6011 cjimenez@aisd.k12.ak.us

**Mark Vink**  
Bering Strait Schools  
624-4256 mvink@bssd.org

**Secretary -- Jenny Martens** --- Nome  
443-6190 jmartens@nomeschools.com

**Sherry Kern**  
Bristol Bay Borough Schools  
246-4225 skern@nnk.gcisa.net

**Teri Dierick**  
Chatham Schools  
586-6806 terid@serrc.org

**Adrienne Fleming**  
Chugach Schools  
522-7400  
afleming@chugachschoools.com

**Loreen Kramer**  
Copper River Schools  
822-3234 x225  
lkramer@crsd.k12.ak.us

**Verna Reedy**  
Cordova City Schools  
424-3265 vreedy@cordovasd.org

**Karen Head**  
Craig City Schools  
826-3274 khead@craigschools.com

**Director Seat A -- Kim Johnson** --- Delta/Greely  
895-4657 kjohnson@dgsd.k12.ak.us

**Kim Johnson**  
Delta/Greely Schools  
895-4657 kjohnson@dgsd.k12.ak.us

**Nancy Hollis**  
Denali Borough Schools  
683-2278 nhollis@dbsd.org

**Judi Nelson**  
Dillingham City Schools  
842-3318 judi@dlgsd.org

**Mike Fisher**  
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools  
452-2000 x301 mfisher@northstar.k12.ak.us

**Christine Johnson**  
Galena City Schools  
656-1205 chrisj@galenanet.com

**Judy Erikson**  
Haines Borough Schools  
766-6725 jerekson@hbsd.net

**Judy Hankla**  
Hoonah City Schools  
945-3611 hanklaj@hoonahschools.org

**Director Seat B -- Mark Vink** ---Bering Strait  
624-4256 mvink@bssd.org

**Tammy Stromberg**  
Hydaburg City Schools  
285-3591 auroracorp@hotmail.com

**Isabelle Harrington**  
Iditarod Area Schools  
524-3599 x224 iharrington@iditarodsd.org

**David Means**  
Juneau Borough Schools  
523-1770 david\_means@jsd.k12.ak.us

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**Teri Dierick**

Kake City Schools  
586-6806 terid@serrc.org

**Antonia Moses**

Kashunamiut Schools  
858-7713 amoses@chevakschool.org

**Dave Jones**

Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools  
714-8838 djones2@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

**Matthew Groves**

Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools  
247-2116 matthew.groves@kgbsd.org

**Director Seat C -- Pamela Roope --- Wrangell**  
874-2347 proope@wrangellschools.org

**Yodean Armour**

Klawock City Schools  
755-2220 yodean.armour@klawockschool.com

**Luke Fulp**

Kodiak Island Borough Schools  
481-6105 lfulp01@kodiakschools.org

**Martha Morgan**

Kuspuk Schools  
675-4250 mmorgan@kuspuk.org

**Laura Hylton**

Lake and Peninsula Borough Schools  
246-4280 lhylton@lpsd.com

**Blair Alden**

Lower Kuskokwim Schools  
543-4820 Blair\_Alden@lksd.org

**Davey Shields**

Lower Yukon Schools  
591-2411 x220 dshields@loweryukon.org

**Nancy Munoz**

Mat-Su Borough Schools  
746-9235 Nancy.munoz@matsuk12.us

**Director Seat D -- James Farrington --- AK Dept. of Education** 465-2748 james.farrington@alaska.gov

**Carl Horn**

Nenana City Schools  
832-5400 x230  
chorn@nenana.schoolaccess.net

**Jenny Martens**

Nome Public Schools  
443-6190 jmartens@nomeschools.com

**Tammy White**

North Slope Borough Schools  
852-9524 tammy.white@nsbsd.org

**Karen Goodwin**

Northwest Arctic Borough Schools  
442-3472 x232 kgoodwin@nwarctic.org

**Caroline Odell**

Pelican City Schools  
735-2236 bodell@pelicanschool.org

**Wendy Einerson**

Petersburg City School District  
772-4271 business@psgsd.k12.ak.us

**Earle Trumble**

Pribilof Island Schools  
546-3324 earle\_trumble@psd-k12.ak.us

**Director Seat E --- Chad Stiteler --- Anchorage**  
742-4341 stiteler\_chad@asdk12.org

**Davey Shields**

Saint Mary's Schools  
438-2411 davey@acsalaska.net

**David Arp**

Sitka Borough Schools  
966-1254 arpd@mail.ssd.k12.ak.us

**Kathy Pierce**

Skagway City Schools  
983-2960 busmgr@skagwayschool.org

**Lucienne Smith**

Southeast Island Schools  
828-8254 smith@sisd.org

**Lee Ann Andrew**

Southwest Region Schools  
842-8207 landrew@swrsd.org

**Stefani Dalrymple**

Tanana Schools  
479-9863 stefani@yukonac.com

**Holly Holman**

Unalaska City Schools  
581-3151 hholman@ucsd.net

**Director Seat F -- Yodean Armour --- Klawock**  
755-2220 yodean.armour@klawockschool.com

**Amber Cockerham**

Valdez City Schools  
835-4357 amber\_cockerham@valdez.cc

**Pam Roope**

Wrangell City Schools  
874-2347 proope@wrangellschools.org

**Joy Klushkan**

Yakutat City Schools  
784-3317 x225 joys@yakutatschools.org

**Leslie O'Connor**

Yukon Flats Schools  
662-2515 leslie.oconnor@yukonflats.net

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**Cindy Reilly**

Yukon-Koyukuk Schools  
374-9410 creilly@yksd.com

**Michele George**

Yupiiit Schools  
825-3603 mgeorge@yupiiit.org

## Awards Committee Update

**Can we interest you in a trip to Orlando, Florida next September?** Those of us who've just returned from the ASBO International conference in Orlando can report that the location of this ASBO International's 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference is right in the heart of Disney, and that the experience will be filled with *Disney Magic!*

The ASBO International conference is an incredible opportunity for you to connect with school business officials from around the nation and the world. You'll be amazed at how our challenges are similar, and you're sure to bring back ideas you can implement right away. The fall conference in Orlando is scheduled for **September 24-27, 2010.**



The **Lowell Thomas Freeman Professional Development Grant**, sponsored by CORE, Inc., honors one of ALASBO's founding fathers and provides a chance to you to receive \$1,250 toward the cost of this fantastic professional development opportunity. So, take a chance and get the attached application in ASAP, and **no later than March 31!**

Another spring project of the Awards Committee is the **McClain J. "Mack" Easton Memorial Scholarship** for graduating high school students. This year's program is sponsored by: Alaska Education and Recreational Products, GCI School/Access and Mikunda, Cottrell. Two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded.

**Applications for the Easton scholarships are due March 15.** Please distribute the attached documents to your high school counselors and let them know that you'd like to sponsor one or more

applicants this year! Scholarship materials are also being distributed through the HS principals and superintendents associations, through Alaska Career Info System (AKCIS) and our website.

## Your Moment of EXCEL Zen

If you've been using Excel for awhile, you know how to name cells and ranges. Using named cells and ranges can make complex formulas more readable, and less prone to errors. But, did you know that Excel lets you provide names for other types of items? Here are some useful naming techniques that you find useful.

### Naming a constant

If you have formulas in your worksheet that use a constant value (such as an interest rate), the common procedure is to insert the value for the constant into a cell. Then, if you give a name to the cell (such as *InterestRate*), you can use the name in your formulas. Here's how create a named constant that doesn't appear in a cell:

1. On the Formula Tab in Excel 2007, select the Insert Name Define command to display the Define Name dialog box.
2. Enter the name (such as InterestRate) in the field labeled Names in workbook.
3. Enter the value for the name in the Refers to field (this field normally holds a formula). For example, you can enter =.075.
4. Click OK

Try it out by entering the name into a cell (preceded by an equal sign).

For example, if you defined a name called InterestRate, enter the following into a cell:  
=InterestRate

This formula will return the constant value that you defined for the InterestRate name. And this value does not appear in any cell.

### Names are actually named formulas

Whenever you create a name, Excel actually creates a name for a formula. For example, if you give a name (such as Amount) to cell D4, Excel creates a name for this formula: =\$D\$4

Use the Define Name dialog box and edit the formula for a name. And you can use all of the standard operators and worksheet functions. Try this:

1. Create a name for cell D4. Call it Amount.

2. Enter =Amount into any cell. The cell will display the value in cell D4.
3. Use the Insert Name Define command and edit the *refers to field* so it appears as =D\$4\*2

You'll find that entering =Amount now displays the value in cell D4 multiplied by 2.

### Using relative references

Creating a name for a cell or range, Excel always uses absolute cell references for the range. For example, if you give the name *Months* to range A1:A12, Excel associates \$A\$1:\$A\$12 (an absolute reference) with the name *Months*. You can override the absolute references for a name and enter relative references. Follow the steps below to create a relative name called *CellBelow* to see how this works

1. Select cell A1.
2. Select the Insert Name Define command to display the Define Name dialog box.
3. Enter the name *CellBelow* in the field labeled Names in workbook.
4. Replace the value in the Refers to field with =A2 (this is a relative reference)
5. Click OK

Try it out by entering the following formula into any cell: =CellBelow

You'll find that this formula always returns the contents of the cell directly below.

It's important to understand that the formula you enter in Step 4 above depends on the active cell. Since cell A1 was the active cell, =A2 is the formula that returns the cell below. If, for example, cell C6 was the active cell when you created the name, you would enter =C7 in step 4.

### Using mixed references

You can also used "mixed" references for you names. Here's a practical example of how to create a name that uses mixed references. This name, *SumAbove*, is a formula that returns the sum of all values above the cell.

1. Activate cell A3.
2. Select the Insert Name Define command to display the Define Name dialog box.
3. In the Names in workbook field, enter *SumAbove*.
4. In the Refers to field, enter =SUM(A\$1:A2)

Notice that the formula in Step 3 is a mixed reference (the row part is absolute, but the column part is relative). Try it out by entering

=SumAbove into any cell. You'll find that this formula returns the sum of all cells in the column from Row 1 to the row directly above the cell.

## 2010 ALASBO Power Lunch Teleconference Schedule

11 AM to noon, the 3rd Tuesday each month

call 218-844-3377, code 252726 (spells ALASBO!)

February 16	GASB Discussion
March 16	Division of Retirement and Benefits Update
April 20	Unemployment System
May 18	Audit Prep
June 15	ARRA Reporting
July 20	Time & Effort Reporting
August 17	Child Nutrition Services
September 21	Retirement Eligibility
October 19	W-2's & 1099's
November 16	Indirect Cost Form
December	ALASBO CONFERENCE

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## Mark Your 2010 Calendars!

- **March 31-April 2 – ALASBO Legislative Fly-In, Juneau**
- **July 30-August 1 – ALASBO Leadership Conferencer, Wrangell**
- **September 24-27 – ASBO International Conference, Orlando**
- **December 5-8 – ALASBO Annual Conference, Anchorage**