



PRESS RELEASE

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AIDEA Board and Staff Visit Kotzebue, Meet with Community Leaders, and Tour Red Dog Mine

KOTZEBUE, Alaska – Members of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) Board of Directors and staff traveled to Kotzebue last week for the Authority's regular board meeting, providing an opportunity to engage directly with local leaders, residents, and industry partners about economic development opportunities across Northwest Alaska.

During the visit, AIDEA representatives met with officials from the Northwest Arctic Borough and had the opportunity to discuss workforce development initiatives and future employment opportunities that could benefit residents throughout the region. Board members and staff also spent time engaging with community members and learning more about local priorities, economic needs, and long-term development opportunities.

One highlight of the visit was a tour of Teck Resource Limited's Alaska Red Dog Mine, one of the world's premier zinc mining operations. The tour included representatives from Acrow, whose modular bridge technology is being evaluated for potential use on the proposed Ambler Access Project. During the tour, AIDEA Board members and staff observed Acrow bridges currently in service at Red Dog and discussed how modular infrastructure proven in demanding, remote environments could offer practical advantages for future Alaska projects, including efficient installation, adaptable design and the potential to reduce construction time and costs.

The visit also provided an opportunity to reflect on AIDEA's longstanding role in developing critical infrastructure that made the Red Dog Mine possible. Through financing and development of the Delong Mountain Transportation System, including the road and port infrastructure serving the mine, AIDEA established the transportation corridor that supports one of Alaska's most significant economic engines.

For decades, Red Dog Mine has provided thousands of high-paying jobs and economic opportunities for residents of Northwest Alaska and beyond, creating employment, business opportunities, and regional investment that would not otherwise exist at the same scale. Figures shared during the Red Dog Mine tour showed the mine currently supports more than 900 shareholder jobs and \$65 million in wages tied to the NANA region. Teck reported \$108 million in annual wages and \$280 million spent in Alaska in 2024.

Since mining began, Red Dog has generated \$411 million for the Northwest Arctic Borough, \$1.7 billion for the State of Alaska through taxes and AIDEA, \$2.02 billion in total 7(i) payments, and \$3.4 billion in net proceeds paid to NANA through fiscal year 2024. The presentation also said Red Dog provides about 85 percent of the borough's primary revenue through payments in lieu of taxes and supports the Village Improvement Fund with \$4 million to \$8 million annually for direct community investment.

AIDEA leaders noted that firsthand visits to communities and infrastructure projects throughout Alaska provide valuable insight into both the opportunities and challenges facing the state's economy. The Kotzebue meeting and Red Dog Mine visit reinforced the importance of partnerships among local communities, industry, and government to support responsible economic development and create long-term benefits for Alaskans.

"The Red Dog Mine stands as one of the clearest examples of how strategic infrastructure investment can unlock economic opportunity for Alaskans for generations," **said Bill Kendig, Chairman of the AIDEA Board of Directors.**

"Red Dog demonstrates what is possible when infrastructure investment, workforce development and strong regional partnerships are aligned around a shared vision," **said Randy Ruaro, Executive Director of AIDEA.** "The jobs, skills and business opportunities created in Northwest Alaska offer important lessons for future projects: engage communities early, invest in local capacity and build infrastructure that delivers lasting benefits for the region and the state."

About AIDEA

[The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority](#) is an independently governed public corporation of the State of Alaska established by the Legislature in 1967 to promote, develop, and advance economic growth and diversification in Alaska by providing financing and investment tools that support economic development, job creation, infrastructure, and responsible resource development.

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A vivid sunrise brightens the horizon over Kotzebue, Alaska, on Sept. 20, 2026, casting warm early-morning light across the Arctic coastal community and highlighting the natural beauty of Northwest Alaska.



The Northwest Arctic Borough School District building in Kotzebue, Alaska, reflects the region's commitment to education and community support, serving students and families in Kotzebue and communities across Northwest Alaska. A portion of the revenues generated through the Red Dog Mine and its supporting road and port infrastructure contributes to the Northwest Arctic Borough, helping support essential public services, including education through the school district.



High fuel costs in Kotzebue, Alaska, underscore the real-world cost of living in rural Alaska and the importance of steady, local employment. For many families, jobs are not only essential to meeting daily needs, but also to heating homes through long Arctic winters and supporting subsistence activities by helping residents afford the equipment, supplies, and fuel needed to safely and successfully harvest traditional foods.



Members of AIDEA's Board and staff gather with Teck and Acrow representatives prior to departing the Red Dog Mine.

Pictured from left to right are: Randy Eledge (AIDEA Board Member), Bill Kendig (AIDEA Board Chairman), Lee Cruise (Alaska Department of Revenue's Deputy Commissioner and AIDEA Board Member), Randy Ruaro (AIDEA Executive Director), James Porreca (Acrow), Jaylene Voyles, Karen Manzano, and Andrew Leavitt (AIDEA staff), Julie Sande (Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development Commissioner and AIDEA Board Member), Benjamin Denner (Kuna Engineering), Rick Solie (AIDEA Board Member), and John Brain (Acrow).