

STATE OF ALASKA

SEISMIC HAZARDS SAFETY COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL & GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

3354 COLLEGE ROAD
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99709-3707
PHONE: (907) 451-5002
FAX: (907) 451-5223

Western States Seismic Policy Council
Attention: Amy Lewis
801 K Street, Suite 1436
Sacramento, CA 95814

October 28, 2008

Dear Ms. Lewis:

The Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission proudly nominates the Kodiak Island Borough for a 2009 WSSPC Award in Excellence. Our nomination recognizes the success of the Kodiak Island Borough's school seismic hazard mitigation program. The locally generated effort to reduce earthquake and tsunami hazards at schools in Kodiak Island Borough communities evolved out of public concern and was formally initiated with passage of a local bond issue in 2004. Since then, the Borough has provided leadership and commitment to the community through communication, dedication, careful planning and hard-work. These efforts have resulted in significant reductions of seismic risk to Kodiak's schools. The Kodiak school seismic hazard mitigation program is a model for other communities in addressing at-risk schools across the state.

A lead consultant partnering in the grant application process, best summarized the Borough's school mitigation efforts when recently stating:

"Kodiak has done a truly exceptional job for a small community, from funding the bond to doing the risk assessment to developing a robust hazard mitigation plan, identifying the schools as a priority and then going forth and fixing the major problems - all in an exceptionally short time. I don't know of any community, of any size, that has done a better job and certainly none that has done more or even anywhere near as much on a per capita basis."

-Ken Goettel, Goettel & Associates, Inc., Oct. 10, 2008

The Kodiak Island Borough operates similarly to a county government system, and is responsible for fourteen school facilities. The schools serve the island's roughly 14,000 residents living in six remote rural villages, the city of Kodiak, and the US Coast Guard base. In addition to serving as schools, many are also community centers and most are designated evacuation sites and emergency shelters.

Located in south central Alaska, Kodiak lies adjacent to the Aleutian subduction zone; one of the earth's most seismically active regions. In 1964, Kodiak was devastated by the great magnitude 9.2 earthquake and an accompanying 30 foot tsunami. In December 1999, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake shook Kodiak and caused localized damage. At some locations the 1999 event produced larger peak ground accelerations than the 1964 quake. With release of the 2000 IBC, clearer information on expected peak ground motions became available to local professionals, including geologists and engineers who raised concerns about some of the island's schools. The school board, PTA members, teachers, students and other proactive citizens grew to recognize the level of risk Kodiak schools might pose during a large, damaging earthquake. In response, the Borough agreed to work with the community in assessing the hazards and mitigating schools identified as unsafe.

The Borough was quick to unite the school district and borough facilities committees. They sponsored a \$500,000 bond to assess school structures and provide seed money for staffing and mitigation programs. The Borough's efforts, public outreach, broadcast of meetings, and utilization of professional guidance produced results. The bond passed by public vote early in 2004, allowing the Borough to issue a high-quality request for services. The request addressed Kodiak's unique needs, including lack of local fault mapping and the remoteness of village schools. A high caliber team of consultants was selected to assess Kodiak's schools. These professionals brought nationally recognized experience in seismic hazard identification, structural vulnerability analysis, and grant administration to

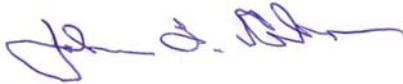
Kodiak. Their findings concluded that four schools needed structural retrofit, and others needed non-structural mitigation.

Despite subsequent public unease and disconcerting budgetary implications, the Kodiak Island Borough remained confident that the identified problems could be addressed. The Borough met with community members, prioritized projects, applied for and received FEMA and State Grants, lobbied state legislators, issued bonds, and tapped local funds. The efforts resulted in nearly all of the structural concerns at the four schools having been mitigated to date, and plans in place to complete everything in the next few years.

Their accomplishments are due cause for recognition. Furthermore, their actions can be showcased on a statewide level, hopefully inspiring others to assess and mitigate at-risk schools in regions of high seismicity. The Alaska Seismic Hazard Safety Commission thereby nominates the Kodiak Island Borough as a model of excellence in community outreach and seismic mitigation.

Note: The seismic vulnerability assessments (geologic/geotechnical and structural) and risk summaries can be downloaded by linking to: <http://ak-kodiak.civicplus.com/index.asp?NID=108> and selecting "Seismic Vulnerability Assessment" or accessing the Kodiak Island Borough website (www.kodiakak.us) and searching for "WLA Final Report" and "Eidinger Final Report".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John L. Aho".

John L. Aho, Ph.D., Sc.D.
Chair
Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission