

Kodiak Harbors Join Ocean Monitoring Network

Monday, 27 February 2012

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/120227.ocean_monitoring.mp3{/audio}

Jennifer Canfield/KMXT

Monitoring equipment that was installed in Kodiak's harbors last fall will play an integral role in the Pier 3 project study. The equipment will not only provide valuable information about water temperature and pressure to the Pier 3 wave study, it will also establish a baseline for Kodiak's harbors. Baseline data is very important to scientists and has numerous applications.

In his over thirty years as a scientist Howard Ferrin- with the Alaska Harbor Observing Network- says that a lack of foresight in data gathering is the biggest hurdle researchers have when trying to understand why things happen.

-- (Monitoring 1 :37 "One of the continuing, ongoing problems that society has -from policy makers to resource managers to communities- is that often after something happens we go 'Well, why? What do we know about the history of this area to understand why this happened or what the impacts are?' So, scientists and managers will scramble and they'll look for historic information and so often the case is we don't have any.")

Ferrin points to ice melt and increasing water levels as global problems that are worth monitoring over the long term.

-- (Monitoring 2 :12 "We should be mindful that tracking long-term trends is very important, particularly in coastal communities where small changes in sea level rise can

have significant impacts.")

The monitoring system also includes webcams located at the Near Island Channel, Pier Two and the south entrance of St. Herman Harbor's. Kodiak is the second location for the network, which is a partnership between the Alaska Ocean Observing Program, The Alaska Sea Life Center and the University of Alaska Anchorage's School of Engineering. Ferrin says the data will be valuable to a number of people other than scientists.

-- (Monitoring
3 :34 "That could be mariners, recreational or commercial. It could have information important for disaster response for example. We had in Seward the harbor breakwater being expanded this last year and the system was actually used by the construction company's head office in Washington, viewing daily the operations using the web camera association with the system.")

With only two stations-one in Kodiak and the other in Seward- Ferrin says the network looks forward to expanding to other ports across the state.

LINK: Alaska Harbor
Observation Network Kodiak data and webcam