

Kodiak Officials Woo Legislators with Seafood

Thursday, 14 March 2013

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/130314.kodiak_juneau_reception.mp3{/audio}

Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

In a crowded room in the Westmark Baranof Hotel in downtown Juneau, a noisy crowd weaves around a buffet table piled with fishy delicacies — salmon garnished with lemon, lox, halibut Olympia and monstrous legs of king crab.

“Thank you all for coming, we’re really glad to have you here tonight, enjoy the seafood and we’ll see you down the road. Thank you.”

Those words from Borough Mayor Jerome Selby welcoming a crowd of more than 100 senators, representatives and legislative staff to the Kodiak Seafood Reception Wednesday night. The event, which takes place annually, is an informal opportunity for members of the Kodiak City Council and Borough Assembly to meet with legislators and showcase various projects on Kodiak’s capitol wish list. Selby said the reception is typically the talk of the Legislature, mainly thanks to the bountiful donation of seafood by Kodiak’s processing plants. While the dinner provides a tasty platform for discussion, Selby said much of the real talking takes place in the days leading up to the event.

City council and borough assembly members spent much of Monday and Tuesday meeting with various committees and legislators to make sure the interests and needs of Kodiak are being met during this legislative session. On the borough side of things, Selby said the capitol budget hasn’t really come together yet, but he and assembly members had some very good discussions with legislators about the borough’s projects

-- (Reception 2 :30 “So I think we have a good understanding among a number of the legislators about what it is Kodiak is requesting. I had some excellent meetings with a couple folks in the governor’s office. Same thing, where we made sure they understood our projects. What we’re trying to do is make sure that if we get them funded by the legislature, when they get to the governor’s office, the governor’s staff is familiar with those projects and they don’t make the veto list just because folks don’t know what they are.”)

City Mayor Pat Branson said similar meetings took place between the city council and legislators.

-- (Reception 3 :33 “Who we met with were the Senate Finance and House Finance Committee members. Who are most important, because they’re the ones who decide what goes forward. I met with Rep. Austerman and Rep. Stoltze, the co-chairs of the House Finance Committee this morning. So that’s who our lobbyist has targeted us to meet with and I think that was a good strategy. And then we met with the DEC department and Karen Rayfield from the office of management and budget as well.”)

Both Branson and Selby said Kodiak was well received in Juneau, and recognized that there is less money to go around this year. Despite that, both said they are confident in Kodiak's projects and anxiously await the announcement of the capitol budget toward the end of session in April.

###