

## Senator Stevens' Legislative Successes

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The first session of the 28th Alaska Legislature wrapped up on Sunday and Kodiak's Senator Gary Stevens said in a newsletter that he is looking forward to returning to Kodiak for the interim.

During the 90-day session Stevens passed three bills through the legislature. One bill adds a member to the Marine Transportation Advisory Board. The seat is intended for a representative from Southcentral Alaska and seeks to serve the communities Old Harbor, Kodiak, Ouzinkie, Port Lions, Homer and Seldovia. The hope is to give these ferry-served communities a greater voice on Alaska Marine Highway System issues.

Also passed this session was the renaming of two Kodiak area airports. The community of Akhiok requested the village's airport runway to be renamed the Jim Andie and Robin Starrett Memorial Runway in honor of two pilots that were killed in plane crashes in recent years. The Kodiak airport will also be renamed. The soon-to-be Benny Benson Kodiak State Airport will serve as a tribute Alaska's flag designer, who had a long history in aviation in Kodiak.

That last bill passed by Stevens, who chaired the Senate Education Committee, involves early literacy interventions for children in kindergarten through third grade. The hope is to improve literacy and increase resources to help Alaskans learn to read at an early age. Another part of the bill changes when a school district needs to notify a teacher of layoffs. The delay will help districts get a better picture of funding situations after the legislature ends, and make layoff or nonretention decisions accordingly. The March 16 notification date is now set as May 15.

The bills now head to the governor for a signature.