

Long Time Dillingham Fisherman Named to Board of Fish

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Governor Sean Parnell yesterday appointed Fritz Johnson of Dillingham to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

Johnson has fished for salmon and herring in Bristol Bay since 1979, and for the past five years, he has served as the regional fisheries coordinator for the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation.

He founded the Bristol BayTimes newspaper in 1980, and published it weekly until 1992, when he sold it to Alaska Newspapers Inc. He has also served in media and public relations positions for the Bristol Bay Native Association and Bristol Bay Housing Authority.

His appointment to the seven-member Board of Fisheries takes effect immediately and he will serve until June 2016 if he is confirmed by the Alaska Legislature during next year's session.

Johnson is taking the seat that was held by commercial fisherman Vince Webster of King Salmon. Webster was reappointed by Parnell earlier this year, but in April the Legislature failed to confirm him by just two votes. Webster was the target of a large attack campaign by the Kenai River Sportfishing Association which alleged there was a bias in favor of the commercial fisheries in Upper Cook Inlet over the guided sportfishing industry.

Johnson acknowledges that many of the issues that resulted in the rejection of Webster for another term still exist.

(KDLG's Mike Mason contributed to this report)