

ISC Kodiak boasts USCG Engineer of the Year

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

A civilian working for Integrated Support Command in Kodiak has been named United States Coast Guard Engineer of the Year. Laura Kelly, who moved here with her husband Tom in 1999, has been a staff civil engineer for ISC since 2000.

In announcing her award, Rear Admiral Thomas Ostebo praised Kelly's initiatives, which have led to improvements to the engineering infrastructure at the Kodiak base, the largest in the nation.

Kelly says when she arrived at the base, there was no single point of contact for the nine utility systems, some dating back to World War II:

-- (Engineer 1 38 sec "So subsequently ... specialist at the right time.")

She says
it's challenging to be an engineer in Alaska,
and especially at a Coast Guard base, because the officers she works with
rotate in and out about every three years:

-- (Engineer 2 51 sec "The
civilian work force ... great place to be an engineer.")

Kelly says
a important aspect of her job is to understand and reduce the seismic
vulnerability at the base.

-- (Engineer 3 37 sec "So
what we've done ... after a major earthquake.")

Kelly also
serves as vice chair on the State of Alaska's
Seismic Hazards Safety Commission. She says she helped behind the scenes with
the Kodiak Island Borough's seismic vulnerability project for schools,
particularly Peterson Elementary, where the children of Coast Guardsmen go to
school. She praises the job the borough has done trying to mitigate the potential
damage from earthquakes.

-- (Engineer 4 25 sec "I
just really have to commend ... is a great relief.")

Kelly says

the best part of receiving the award is the opportunity to speak to young people about engineering as a profession, saying the country is starving for home-grown engineers. As Coast Guard Engineer of the Year, Kelly is in competition for the Federal Engineer of the Year Award, which will be presented in Washington D.C. in February.

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