

Senator Gary Stevens Ready for New Session

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Erik Wander/KMXT

When the 26th Alaska Legislature begins in January, Kodiak Republican Senator Gary Stevens, who has served in the Senate since 2003 and has been in leadership positions since 2005, will take the gavel as Senate President for the first time. Stevens discussed his outlook for the upcoming legislative session on KMXT's Talk of the Rock with Mike Murray.

Erik Wander has more.

Stevens, who will become the first legislator from Kodiak to serve as Senate president, said, that despite the added duties and responsibilities, he sees numerous advantages in serving in the role, particularly for his constituents.

-- (Stevens
1 24
sec "As
president of the Senate ... get its fair share.")

Part of the 13-member Senate Bipartisan Working Group, Stevens said he looks forward to embracing the challenges posed by a 10-10 Democratic-Republican split in the Senate. He also said he believes the necessity of working in a greater spirit of bipartisanship will move the dialogue toward the political center and ultimately benefit Alaskans.

-- (Stevens 2 38 sec
"It's quite a different world
... in the center.")

Stevens
said that despite the more liberal political direction the country and even Alaska are moving in, he
still believes that Alaskans maintain largely conservative values.

-- (Stevens 3 27 sec "We
have a lot ... to be a little more
conservative.")

Stevens, who
chaired the Senate's education committee last year, said that in addition to
education and addressing the state's unprecedentedly high dropout rate,
establishing a gas tax rate and addressing the state's budget are his top
legislative priorities in the next session in Juneau.

-- (Stevens 4 50 sec
"The big thing that we have to do ... as many as we can.")

The first session of the 26th
Alaska Legislature begins Tuesday, January 20, 2009. I'm Erik Wander.

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