

Stevens, 19 Others, Honored by UFA at ComFish Gala

Friday, 24 April 2009

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/090423.stevens_gala_dinner.mp3{/audio}

Erik Wander/KMXT

Some familiar political faces were seen at ComFish Alaska's gala dinner held at the Golden Anchor on the U.S. Coast Guard Base in Kodiak Thursday evening. Former Senator Ted Stevens made an appearance as a special guest at the sold-out event, "Look How Far We've Come," celebrating the 50th anniversary of statehood and the Alaska seafood industry's place in it. Stevens received a lifetime achievement award from United Fisherman of Alaska and was inducted as a charter member of the organization's Seafood Hall of Fame.

After a keynote speech on the history of Alaska's Seafood Industry by historian Bob King and the induction of 20 charter members of the Seafood Hall of Fame, Stevens, who was among the inductees, was presented with the honorary award. He talked about enactment of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which established a 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaskan shores. He also highlighted the threat the Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported or IUU fishery now poses to the industry, operating in some cases just beyond the 200 mile limit.

-- (Stevens 1 61 sec. "We led the world ... that's why I came here tonight.")

Stevens took the opportunity to address the recent dismissal of his case after being convicted of seven felony corruption charges, saying only that he would not comment further on the matter because of an ongoing Justice Department investigation of the original prosecutors.

-- (Stevens 2 46 sec. "I just want to make ... help me honor that commitment.")

Mark Vinsel, executive director of United Fishermen of Alaska and Joe Childers, the organization's president, presented Stevens with the award along with honorary lifetime membership, both saying he has done much to benefit Alaska's fishing and seafood industries.

Governor Palin said Kodiak was the perfect place for an event like ComFish. She discussed the importance of the commercial fishing and seafood industries to Alaska and highlighted its successful management and sustainability. She said all Alaskans, especially those in places like Kodiak, are proud of Alaska's fishing heritage.

-- (Palin 1 33 sec. "Sustainability to some ... and for the rest of the world.")

Fisheries
journalist Laine Welch served as master of ceremonies at the gala dinner.

I'm
Erik Wander.

###