

Truth About Alaska Pipeline Jobs

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. Outlines Situation

What is the trans-Alaska pipeline?

A proposed crude oil pipeline, from the Arctic Ocean to Valdez, in Southcentral Alaska. It will be 796 miles long and 48 inches in diameter. Construction of the line to its initial operating capacity will require three years. At ultimate capacity, it would move two million barrels of oil a day.

Who will build the pipeline?

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. is the company formed and owned by seven major oil companies, to design, build and operate the line. However, the actual construction will be done by dozens of major construction companies, and numerous small-

er firms, under contract directly or indirectly to Alyeska.

What jobs will be available?

Actually, very few jobs will open up for casual workers. There are many reasons for this, including an Alaska law requiring that Alaska residents be given first preference of pipeline construction and some other jobs in the state. In addition, many of the jobs will require specific skills which in most cases are available only among those experienced in pipeline construction.

What is the Alaska law which gives job preference to Alaskans?

The Alaska State Legislature in 1972 passed what was known

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as the Alaska Local Hire Bill, providing that certain jobs in the state—including those on the pipeline—be awarded on a first-priority basis to qualified Alaskans. This bill was signed into law that same year by Alaska's Governor, William A. Egan. Alaskans feel justified in assuring hiring preference to residents for many reasons, including the unusually high unemployment rate in the state, and the experience

of Alaskans during previous construction projects when out-of-state construction companies gave available jobs to their out-of-state crews, and unemployed Alaskans had no opportunity for work. To resident Alaskans, the situation was made even worse when the out-of-state workers, at the end of the construction seasons, took their wages and left the state. So the state now requires that qualified Alaskans get first opportunity for these jobs.

What constitutes an Alaskan resident for this law?

According to Alaska State law under Title 38, Public Lands Section 38.40.090, resident means a person who (1) except for brief intervals or military service has been physically present in the state for a period of one year immediately prior to the time he enters into a contract of employment; (2) maintains a place of residence within the state; (3) has established a residency for voting purposes within the state; (4) has not, within the period of required residency, claimed a residency in another state; and (5) shows by all attending circumstances that his intent is to make Alaska his permanent address.

What is a "qualified Alaskan" under the Alaska Local Hire Law?

Title 8, Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 35.090, Para. (10), defines "qualified" as, "those persons who by their education, training and experience or combination thereof can perform the duties and satisfy the terms and conditions which are usual in the offered employment, provided that the duties, terms and conditions meet the reasonable standards of the industry as required of other employees performing the same type of work in the industry."

What about union jobs?

Most of the major unions whose members will be involved in construction of the pipeline maintain local hiring halls in Alaska, with preference going to their Alaskan members. However, these locals will call upon their national headquarters for additional help, should it be required. We suggest that union members who have an interest in working on the pipeline should contact their own hometown locals.

How much can workmen expect to receive?

Paychecks for construction work in Alaska may run from 15 to 25 percent higher than for similar jobs in the Continental U.S. However, the cost of living is correspondingly higher.

Would my family like living in Alaska?

Very likely they might. But you and they must bear in mind the higher cost of living. Higher by anywhere from 15 to 50 percent than in the Pacific Northwest, depending upon location. Housing, in particular, is in short supply in many communities, with apartment rentals ranging to \$300 per month and more, and modern three-bedroom houses selling in the \$40-60,000 range. As another example, a ham and egg breakfast will range from \$3.00 in the Anchorage area to \$5.00 in Fairbanks; a New York steak dinner ranges in the same locations from \$8.00 to \$15.00. Telephone rates run from \$8.50 to \$14.00 per month; electricity for a 1,500 square foot home is about \$14.00 per month. Items of clothing will run approximately 25 percent higher. Also remember that although its residents proudly and with justification point to its many advantages, Alaska can seem a harsh land for those unprepared

for its Arctic and sub-Arctic winters. Winter temperatures range from near and below freezing in parts of Southeastern and Southcentral Alaska, to minus 80 degrees in some parts of the Interior. Winds sometimes drive the chill factor to the equivalent of minus 150 degrees. In addition, there is more darkness than light during winter months. Hardy Alaskans thrive on these conditions. However, before committing you and your family to the vagaries of job hunting in Alaska, be certain you are prepared for the climatic challenge. Wouldn't there be a place for a skilled worker like me?

Quite possibly, yes. But please don't come to Alaska to apply. Already Alaskan cities are deluged with jobless persons, and more are arriving every day.

I've read ads offering pipeline jobs in Alaska. What about them?

As in any boom, unscrupulous operators take advantage of the situation by offering to provide "job information" in exchange for fees ranging from five to 20 dollars, and sometimes much more. Quite likely the information provided is of little value, or is available free from the U.S. Department of Labor or the Alaska Department of Labor. Perhaps even employment offices in your home town have the same information. Therefore, be particularly careful of ads asking for money to be sent in exchange for information. And before you respond to any such offers, we urge you to clip the ad and send it to:

The Office of the Attorney General

Consumer Protection Section
Department of Law
360 K Street
Room 250
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

I still want to try for a job; where should I apply?

When pipeline construction begins, Alyeska will award contracts for the work to various construction companies. The selected firms will do all the hiring for pipeline work. Therefore, applications for these jobs should not be submitted to Alyeska or its owner companies. Announcements of the award of construction contracts will appear in the press and in trade or labor organization journals. At that time persons seeking pipeline construction jobs should apply directly, or through their unions, to selected contractors.

What about other jobs in the state?

Alaska has always had a high rate of unemployment. The average rate is near 10.4 percent, the highest by far in the nation.

I'm heading North anyway. Any suggestions?

Plenty. We recommend that you bring at least \$1,000 to cover your job-hunting expenses. It might take a long time. You'll need warm winter clothing, including heavy boots, jacket, and gloves—all insulated to withstand our extreme temperatures. And, in the event that you don't find work, you'll also need money enough to pay your transportation back home. Finally, we strongly urge you to leave your family behind until you are settled and sure you intend to stay. Alaskans are a hardy lot and tend to be self-sufficient. But we take our climate seriously. And so should you.

—ALYESKA PIPELINE
Service Company