



## FALL / WINTER 2014

**LOCAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS STILL MOVING AT FULL SPEED**, with the main projects related to road improvements including installation of a new Mendenhall river bridge, installation of overhead lighting on Egan Expressway, and installation of a roundabout in Auke Bay. Downtown, the Panamax docks will be installed in spring of 2015, with completion late in the year—at a cost of over \$65 million.

**HOUSING SHORTAGES STILL LOOM** in spite of the fact that housing projects of scale are under construction now. A second twenty unit apartment building is underway in West Juneau, along with a 40 unit rental building in the same area. In Auke Bay, an upper scale condominium is being built overlooking Statter harbor. Several factors continue to drive the demand including workforce needs for the tourism and mining industries, the need for starter homes, and the special housing needs of Seniors.

**THE ASSEMBLY HAS CONVENED A TAX EXEMPTION REVIEW COMMITTEE** that will look at potential adjustments in some of the tax exemptions that are in force today including exemptions for seniors, sales tax exemptions and property tax exemptions. This is in large part as a result of the current CBJ deficit which exceeds \$7 million.

**NATIONAL FRANCHISES ARE LOOKING AGAIN AT COMING TO JUNEAU.** The strong mining and fisheries sectors, and the recovery of tourism have resulted in low unemployment—below 5% and slow but steady population growth. Total population of Juneau now tops 32,000 residents. Retail, convenience, distribution and fast food are the categories are again considering locating here.

**ASSISTED LIVING STUDY IS COMPLETED TO PROJECT** the demand and specific type of assisted living facilities that will be needed in view of the fact that presently no assisted living facility presently serves Juneau Seniors. The study, commissioned by third party consultants in the industry, was funded in part by the CBJ assembly. Completion of the study should lead to proposals that will address the feasibility of a facility located here. High demand exists for this type of housing as Juneau 's seniors create a "gray tsunami" within a very short period of time.

**DOWNTOWN COFFEE WARS** are underway. Just as a Starbucks has opened a new location within the Baranof Hotel, two downtown Heritage Coffee locations will close by the end of the year and consolidate into one large location, at the former downtown location for Mc Donalds. To be named "Heritage Square," the mega store will feature two separate beverage lines, and a "hot food" line in addition. Areas for wi fi and group seating will be featured. The space will have high ceilings and an open view of the new Soboleff Center at the corner of Front and Seward Streets.

**A NEW VOLUNTEER GROUP HAS BEEN FORMED** to address concerns about Juneau's downtown. Deteriorating buildings, increased litter, the increased presence of downtown inebriates and negative reactions from tourists have been the concern. "DIG" as its known is a diverse group of concerned citizens seeking a resolution to these growing problems. With the City in the mix, this group continues to have meetings to raise public awareness of these issues.

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