



ARENDALSUKA 2016

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When asked to speak to the session topic, **“how can Alaska and Norway cooperate to define successful models for the north?”** I put a lot of thought into this question. At first I thought there was a simple answer, yet as I pondered the question it became clear to me that the answer was about as complex and unconventional as the state of American politics today.

Historically, we have left the bridge building across borders to our governments. As the globe shrinks and as the world looks north, it will take unconventional means of cooperation to build successful models for growth. Successful cooperation between Norway and Alaska rest on four underlying principles.

First is, trust. Trust in Alaska is built by sharing several meals together. This goes beyond meeting up at conferences and roundtables. It is through that process we begin to understand what works and doesn't work in our societies. Establishing trust is the keystone to success, and once we pass that threshold- real conversations begin. As the chair of the Arctic Economic



Council, I can say that the AEC provides the appropriate fora to build this trust.

The second underlying principal is commitment. Two types of commitments are needed. The first is a commitment within industry to building relationships, understanding the business culture and climate of their industry counterpart, and strategy development and execution. The second is a commitment by our governments to publically acknowledge, assist and embrace the relationships between Norway and Alaska. We have become over reliant on our government representatives to do all of the heavy lifting. The time has come for Norwegian and Alaskan businesses and business leaders to roll up our sleeves and become part of the solution, serving as a partner to our government representatives in this endeavor.

The third principle is an unconventional approach called, “the piggy back”. Norway and Alaska have been hit hard by global oil prices, and in this time of transition, gone are the days of lavish spending and exclusivity. We have to do more with less, which makes heightened cooperation ripe for our arctic states. It is important that we maximize our time and opportunities, and this can be done by combining several events in succession, whereby we “piggy



back” with one another. For example, when the Arctic Economic Council holds its annual meeting in Fairbanks in 2017, we are deliberating whether there is value in collaborating with other like-minded organizations, like the Arctic Business Council. This could bring together two Arctic organizations which could engage in dialogue and problem solving.

Finally, the fourth principle is silo; moreover, breaking down those silos within and amongst our borders. Gone are the days of pride in ownership; it is essential that for our two arctic states to become successful we must rise above territorialism and break down those silos. Let us identify a handful of sectors common to Norway and Alaska and put together clusters of thought leaders from the private, academic, scientific and government sectors to come up with successful models we can both embrace.

While it may seem unconventional on its face, it really is quite simple. We must have the will to succeed. In September 2015, I had the honor of standing with Foreign Minister Børge Brende to raise the AEC flag in Tromsø. It was at that event he said, “If we are going to make the high north our most innovative region, we are dependent upon cooperation with others.” Those words ring true still today.



At that same event, I reminded the audience that the AEC way stands on the principles of collaboration, partnership, innovation and peace. At the Arctic Economic Council, we have the will to succeed. This is demonstrated by our rapid rise on the international scale and our commitment to building a solid organization to address regional economic growth in the arctic. I encourage Norwegian businesses to explore the opportunities provided by the Arctic Economic Council and I offer up the AEC as a conduit to execute these initiatives.

I stand before you with a call to action. On behalf of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation and as Chair of the Arctic Economic Council, I extend to you the hands of commitment to success for Norway and Alaska. I ask you join ASRC and the AEC in partnership to break the mold and create a new model for success. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today.