

ANNUAL REPORT - BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADSFISCAL YEAR, 1957
FEDERAL AID TO ALASKA

Public Roads has been active in Alaska since 1919, but until enactment of the Federal-Aid Act of 1956 its responsibilities were limited to administration of the forest highway program within the Tongass and Chugach National Forests and to assistance with special programs of military import. From 1919 through 1956, some 400 miles of forest highways were constructed at a cost of approximately \$50 million.

Under the terms of the 1956 Act, Federal aid for highways for the first time was extended to Alaska. The Alaska Road Commission, which had administered the Territory's highway program outside the National forests since 1905, became a part of the Bureau of Public Roads. Created in 1905 as an agency of the War Department, the Commission had become a part of the Department of the Interior in 1932. Administration of the 4,485-mile highway system developed by the Commission at the cost of approximately \$230 million and all personnel, equipment, property and unexpended appropriations were transferred to the Department of Commerce on September 16, 1956. The organization was combined with the existing Public Roads Alaska office to form Bureau of Public Roads Region 10. The regional office was established in Juneau, the Territorial capital, with district offices at Anchorage, Valdez, Fairbanks, Nome and Juneau.

The 1956 act entitles Alaska to share in Federal-aid primary, secondary and urban funds, as have the Territories of Hawaii and Puerto Rico for some years past. It provides the use of Federal funds for either construction or maintenance of Alaskan highways. In recognition that a large part of Alaska is relatively uninhabited and to obtain an equitable apportionment of Federal funds relative to highway needs, Congress modified the formula for computation of the apportionment of Federal funds among the states and territories with respect to Alaska by using only one-third of the area of Alaska instead of its full area. The law also provides that the Territorial Government shall contribute to the highway fund an amount equal to 10% of the amount apportioned each year by the Federal Government. The net effect is that funds available for Alaskan roads under Federal aid will permit a road building program to be launched in Alaska with sufficient continuity to permit long-range planning.

Federal-aid highway systems, designated in accordance with provisions of Section 107 of the Federal-Aid Act of 1956 and totaling 5,152 miles, were established in Alaska during the year. The 1,959-mile primary system, composed principally of hard-surfaced highways, connects the Territory's principal interior cities and military establishments with one another with the all-weather, ice-free ports of Haines, Valdez and Seward and with the Continental United States via the Alaska Highway through Canada. The 3,193-mile secondary system is basically a feeder system and except for a few hard-surfaced sections in the vicinity of population centers, it consists of gravel roads. Approximately one-half of the secondary systems is connected to the primary network; the balance connects isolated communities with rail, water or air transportation facilities. The entire primary system, except for ferry connections and approximately 1,000 miles of the secondary system, are kept open on a year-round basis.

The 1957 fiscal year construction and maintenance program totaled approximately \$30 million, including \$23.8 million in Interior Department carry-over construction

and maintenance projects, \$2.6 million in reimbursable work for other agencies and \$4.6 million Federal-aid construction and maintenance. Contracts were let for the construction of the final section of the 160-mile Denali Highway to connect Mt. McKinley National Park, which contains the Continent's highest peak, with the Territory's connected highway network and for paving the final section of the 365-mile Richardson Highway which connects Valdez and Fairbanks. At the close of the year 115 Federal-aid projects totaling \$16 million were programmed and remaining Interior Department projects valued at \$5 million were active.

The Territory of Alaska has not as yet established a working highway organization of its own but, instead, has utilized the services formerly of the Alaska Road Commission and now of the Bureau of Public Roads to accomplish its highway program. In Alaska, consequently, Public Roads, in addition to discharging its usual administrative responsibilities, performs all of the functions of a state highway department, including local surveys, design, contract administration and highway maintenance, all utilizing Government forces and equipment. At the end of the fiscal year, 1,008 employees were on Region 10 rolls and the automotive and construction equipment fleet numbered in excess of 1,500 units.

DATES - EVENTS - INFORMATION

1725-1728	Vitus Bering explored the Diomedes and St. Lawrence Island.
1741	Bering landed on Kayak Island.
1792	Kodiak, first enduring community founded. 1804, Sitka founded.
1861	First discovery of gold in the North Country, Stikine River.
1867	Alaska purchased from Russia.
1878	First salmon cannery in Alaska.
1880	Gold discovered near Juneau.
1884	First Organic Act, permitting Governor, Federal Judges, Mining Laws and \$25,000 appropriated for education.
1891	Reindeer imported from Siberia, Dr. Sheldon Jackson, Sponsor.
1896	Mt. Densmore renamed Mt. McKinley. 1896, gold discovered in Nome.
1897	Beginning of the Klondike stampede.
1900	Reindeer established on St. Lawrence Island.
1900	Alaska Communications System established - ACS.
1902	Gold discovered near Fairbanks.
1905	Alaska Road Commission established. First automobile in Alaska --at Skagway.
1906	Gold discovered along Innoko and Iditarod Rivers. First Alaska delegate to Congress authorized.
1911	First train load of copper from Kennecott Mine reached Cordova.
1912	First Territorial Legislature. Granted women right to vote, authorized home for aged at Sitka (completed 1934).
1912	Mt. Katmai erupted, deposited 10" ash on Kodiak 100 miles away. Katmai area now known as the "Valley of 10,000 Smokes".
1913	First automobile from Fairbanks to Valdez, Richardson Trail.
1914-1923	Alaska Railroad built between Seward and Fairbanks. (The Government acquired 90 miles on the Seward end and 50 miles on the Fairbanks end of existing railroad built by private companies.)
1916	First Statehood Bill introduced in Congress.
1917	Forget-me-not designated as State flower. Mt. McKinley National Park created.