

ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION



Corporate Address: P.O. Box 107500, Anchorage, Alaska 99510
327 Ship Creek Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

May 3, 2004

2004-05

For Immediate Release

Contact: Public Involvement Officer
Stephenie Wheeler, 265-2671
Public Affairs Officer
Tim Thompson, 265-2695

Alaska Railroad to operate gravel train through Wasilla in summer 2004

The Alaska Railroad will operate one gravel train (round-trip) per day through Wasilla this summer to accommodate the opening of Quality Asphalt Paving's (QAP) new gravel pit located on the northwest outskirts of the city.

About 95% of the track work needed to bring the railroad to the Wasilla pit site was accomplished last fall. Crews are currently completing the track work, and building the conveyor system needed to load the trains with gravel. QAP expects to begin using the Cange Pit sometime between mid-May and the first of June.

With approximately 80 rail cars, gravel trains are similar in size to the coal trains that transport coal from Healy to Seward. The Alaska Railroad is working with QAP to minimize disruptions to commuter traffic.

The service life of the Palmer pit is not yet over, and will continue to be mined for lower grades of gravel material, according to QAP Vice President Jon Fuglestad. The Cange pit is expected to yield high-grade gravel, giving the company a wider range of products for various construction needs. "We look forward to this new opportunity to provide Alaskan projects with the gravel they need, and the ability to offer commercial sales in Wasilla," Fuglestad said.

QAP, Anchorage Sand & Gravel (AS&G) and Central Paving Products (CCP – A Wilder Construction company) each have gravel pits in Palmer, and typically these companies contract one to two trains per day to haul gravel from Palmer to their facilities in Anchorage. QAP will begin the spring gravel season next week at its current pit in Palmer, which is located off the highway a few miles past the Glenn-Parks Interchange. QAP's new Wasilla-based 300-acre pit, known as the Cange gravel pit, is located along the Parks Highway, just south of Pittman Road, across from Vine Street.

The Alaska Railroad moved over 4 million tons of gravel in support of construction projects last year. Each rail car carries about 100 tons, which is equivalent to the load carried by about four trucks (truck capacity is 50,000). Hauling gravel by rail helps to lower construction impacts to highway traffic.