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KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

Three cities, three decades, three leaders **KPSBD graduate #inspirations**

Good things come in threes, and on the Kenai Peninsula, this week the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District celebrates and introduces you to three graduates who now manage three of the largest cities in the Borough spanning 25,600 square miles. Meet Katie Koester [Homer High School Class of 1998] Homer City Manager; Paul Ostrander [Soldotna High School Class of 1986] Kenai City Manager; and Stephanie (Arbelovsky) Queen [Kenai Central High School Class of 2000] Soldotna City Manager.

Katie, Paul, and Stephanie talk about a city celebration, favorite local spot, and vision, priority and project that matters. Individual profiles for each of these graduates will follow in this four-part series highlighting KPBSD graduates.

**THREE CITIES, THREE DECADES,
 THREE LEADERS**
 KPSBD graduate
 #inspirations

Katie Koester
 HOMER HIGH SCHOOL
 CLASS OF 1998
 Homer City Manager

Paul Ostrander
 SOLDOTNA HIGH SCHOOL
 CLASS OF 1986
 Kenai City Manager

Stephanie (Arbelovsky) Queen
 KENAI CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
 CLASS OF 2000
 Soldotna City Manager

KPBSD: ONE DISTRICT, FORTY-FOUR DIVERSE SCHOOLS

The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to empower all learners to positively shape their futures.
 ANCHOR POINT COOPER LANDING HOMER HOPE KACHEMAK SELO KENAI MOOSE PASS NANWALEK NIKISKI NIKOLAEVSK NINILCHIK PORT GRAHAM
 RAZDOLNA SELDOVIA SEWARD SOLDOTNA STERLING TUSTUMENA TYONEK VOZNESENKA

K-12 MEMORIES

- **Katie Koester, Homer High School Class of 1998**
“Hands down Bishop’s Beach is my favorite spot! In high school my best friend Krista and I played Spice Girls in the parking lot and danced to, “tell me what’chu want what’chu you really, really want.” Bishop’s Beach is a wonderful spot to meet up with friends, go for walks, and crank some tunes—Spice Girls or not.”
- **Paul Ostrander, Soldotna High School Class of 1986**
“I rode my bike all over town every summer growing up, hanging out at the mall, on the beach, or off-roading on the trails north of town, but my favorite spot was on the Kenai River. I spent hundreds, if not thousands of hours fishing the Kenai River, mostly in the slough directly above Eagle Rock boat launch. It was a short walk from the house I grew up in, giving me the freedom to get there as a kid without help from mom and dad.”
- **Stephanie (Arbelovsky) Queen, Kenai Central High School Class of 2000**
“A couple of my early Soldotna memories are birthday parties at the roller rink (with the giant fuzzy dice and the limbo stick), and going to the Soldotna Airport for dog sled races and to watch the model airplane club fly their planes!”

CITY CELEBRATIONS

- **Homer problem solvers and determination**
“I celebrate the people of Homer—the families who have made it here for generations along with the new families who come to the *end of the road*, fall in love with this place, and figure out how to make it in this town. This community’s underlying determination to live and persist in Homer means people here are interesting, creative, and diverse. I celebrate the people of Homer because they are problem solvers, because they make Homer the place for their life’s work.” –Katie Koester, City Manager, Homer, Alaska
- **What separates Kenai is its heart.**
“Kenai has a diverse history and residents are ardent in their support of their hometown. When people talk about living in Kenai, whether talking about fishing the river or family time on the beach, you can sense the pride they have in our natural resources and community. The statement that, *it’s the best place to live in the world*, is heard often, and meant wholeheartedly.” – Paul Ostrander, City Manager, Kenai, Alaska
- **Entrepreneurial spirit and partnerships in Soldotna**
“One of the things I really appreciate about Soldotna is how engaged our residents are. We’ve figured out how to work together across public, private, and non-profit lines, to move big projects forward. This has allowed us to accomplish several of the community’s long-standing goals; something we would not have been able to do without strong partnerships.

I value our community’s entrepreneurial spirit. It is true in the traditional sense, of people investing in and starting new businesses. But, it’s also true in the many events, races, festivals, markets, and concerts that people are creating, which provide more opportunities and new things to do in our area. It is great to be part of a community that rewards creativity, and

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supports people who are willing to invest their time and talents to build something new.” – Stephanie (Arbelovsky) Queen, City Manager, City of Soldotna

VISION, PROJECTS, GOALS

- **Open For Business**

“I was appointed city manager under Mayor Wythe who had an *open for business* theme for Homer. I work really hard to continue this vision because I want Homer to be a town with *family-sustaining jobs*—jobs where someone can raise their family while also being professionally satisfied. Families thrive when our local businesses thrive.” –Katie Koester, City Manager, Homer, Alaska

- **Project Top Priority**

The City of Kenai has been pursuing the Bluff Stabilization Project for the better part of 40 years, and for the first time in our history, the project is ready to become a reality. It will stabilize approximately one mile of river bluff fronting Old Town Kenai. A stable bluff will protect the original part of Kenai—the heart of our City. I am excited to see this project begin and stimulate other projects that explore Kenai’s tremendous potential. –Paul Ostrander, City Manager, Kenai, Alaska

- **Downtown Connections**

“Part of the City of Soldotna’s economic development strategy over the past several years has been incremental investment in our downtown, and this is a priority I would like to continue to pursue into the future. We started with low-hanging fruit such as new highway banners, park signs, and landscaping improvements. And, we supported and encouraged events that bring people to Soldotna Creek Park and the commercial core.

We now have an opportunity to explore more significant—although complex—redevelopment concepts, particularly along the portions of our downtown that border the Kenai River. My goal is to work closely with private landowners to plan for future infrastructure and developments, which not only add value to their property and benefit surrounding businesses, but also provide a more attractive downtown that is well connected to the rest of the community.” –Stephanie (Arbelovsky) Queen, City Manager, City of Soldotna

Watch for individual profiles in this series.

Links

Katie Koester, Homer High School Class of 1998

City Manager, Homer, Alaska www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Paul Ostrander, Soldotna High School Class of 1986

City Manager, Kenai, Alaska <http://www.ci.kenai.ak.us/>

Stephanie (Arbelovsky) Queen, Kenai Central High School Class of 2000

City Manager, City of Soldotna <https://soldotna.org/>

Do you have a story tip about a KPBSD graduate to profile in our Wednesday Inspiration? Kindly email Pegge Erkeneff, KPBSD communications liaison, Pegge@KPBSD.org.

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