WELCOME

The Capitol Building in Alaska has served as the symbol and seat of government for more than 85 years, and continues to be a working Capitol today.

The building was completed in 1931 to serve as a Territorial and Federal Building. Cost of the land and building was approximately $1 million. When Alaska became a state in 1959, the building was given to the state to serve as our Capitol.

In January 2017, a four-year, $36 million renovation to the Capitol was completed. The renovations were necessary in order to retrofit the structure to resist seismic forces, improve energy efficiency, replace the original heating system, and restore the art deco exterior to its 1931 grandeur.

THE LOBBY

The marble used in the lobby and throughout the building is Tokeen and Gravina marble. The marble came from Prince of Wales Island, located south of Juneau near Ketchikan.

The bust is of Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratrovich, an Alaska Native from Petersburg whose testimony before the 17th Territorial Legislature split the opposition and allowed the Alaska Civil Rights Act of 1945 to pass.

The artwork depicting life in the 1930’s are stone fired clay murals by Joan Bugbee Jackson, an artist from Cordova. Harvest of the Sea shows fishermen on the Alaska coastal waters and Harvest of the Land depicts Alaska Natives hunting in Interior Alaska.

FIRST FLOOR

This area is primarily for Legislative offices and is not part of the tour.

SECOND FLOOR

Black and white photographs from the Winter and Pond collection are visible throughout this floor. The two busts are of the first U.S. Senators from Alaska, Ernest Gruening and Bob Bartlett. Turn right from the elevators and proceed to the Fahrenkamp Committee Room. The portrait is of former State Senator Bettye Fahrenkamp. The earrings under the portrait were worn by her during Senate floor sessions and mean “in one ear and out the other.” On the wall to the left is the Seal of the State of Alaska, which is made of gold nuggets.

The Butrovich Committee Room is down the hall, and information about the room is available on a plaque outside the entrance. The audio teleconference equipment allows citizen participation from across the state.

At the end of the hall are the Senate Chambers. The handles on the doors leading into the Chambers are hand-cast brass in a totemic design representing an eagle, a whale and a bear. Enter the public gallery to view the Chambers.

The State Legislature has 20 Senators who serve four-year terms. 90-day legislative sessions are held annually beginning in January and ending in April. This room served as the Territorial Senate Chambers.
Eight stars of gold on a field of blue,
Alaska's flag, May it mean to you,
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,
The mountain lakes, and the flowers nearby,
The gold of the early sourdough's dreams,
The precious gold of the hills and streams,
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,
The "Bear," the "Dipper," and, shining high,
The great North Star with its steady light,
O'er land and sea a beacon bright,
Alaska's flag to Alaskans dear,
The simple flag of a last frontier.

The words to the song Alaska's Flag were written by Marie Drake, a long-time employee of the Alaska Department of Education, and set to music composed by Elinor Dusenbury. The Territorial Legislature adopted Alaska's Flag as Alaska's official song in 1955.

In 1926, Alaska students, grades 7-12, participated in a contest to design the territorial flag. The winning design submitted by a 13 year-old Alaska Native, Benny Benson, consisted of eight gold stars on a blue background. The stars represent the Big Dipper, or Great Bear, and symbolize strength. The North Star depicted future statehood. In 1927, the design was adopted as the official flag for the Territory of Alaska. In 1959, the drafters of the Alaska Constitution stipulated that the territorial flag would become the official state flag.