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Mike Dalton, speaker

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Ron Inouye starts the meeting. He talked about how the project came together from the community. He said they will be going up the Haul Road on Sunday to install the [James W. Dalton] panel. They had a very generous donation from the Alaska Tour Company. A representative from the tour company spoke about the honor for the company to be involved. She explained the logistics of the trip and questions and answers about the upcoming trip and location of the dedication ceremony. Inouye said the Historical Society was pleased to help with the fund raising. They agreed to help with the funding and with ten years of maintenance. Inouye told a personal anecdote about learning about the Dalton Highway and Mike Dalton. He ran into recordings by Mike Dalton when he was working for the university archives. He learned about the Dalton Trail and its effect on mining activity. There was very little written history about the Daltons. He talked about the opportunity to work on this project. Inouye introduces Patty Peirsol.

Patty Peirsol said she wanted to tell them how they came about dealing with the project. Thirty-seven years ago the state legislature designated the road north as the James Dalton Highway. It wasn't until five years ago that Kathleen "Mike" Dalton started to go through the process of getting a sign on the road that said something about her husband. Failing that Mike and her daughter took fourteen 24 x 36 signs with the history of James Dalton and drove up the road and tacked them on trees. At the same time Clark and Karen Milne decided to celebrate their anniversary with a trip up the road. They met up with Mike and her daughter in Coldfoot and decided to travel together. Last year Ron Inouye came to the Fairbanks North Star Borough Historic Preservation Commission and asked them if they could help Mike deal with a sign. Peirsol decided to take over the project. Peirsol got in touch with Bob Darling for an introduction to Mike. Peirsol got in touch with Clark Milne. Mike wanted the sign to be made in Fairbanks and Peirsol got in touch with Bruce Campbell from the Folk School. She worked with the Department of Transportation and the Bureau of Land Management. She showed a photograph of the current Welcome to the Dalton Highway sign. Peirsol started doing research and went through the Dalton collection at the university and researched online. She found photographs and maps. She started designing a sign. Milne and Peirsol drove up the Dalton Highway to survey for possible locations for the new sign. Peirsol talked about using a graphic designer for the sign. The sign was installed recently by the Department of Transportation. Peirsol said Clark Milne worked on getting the approval for the sign. She said the sign is essentially Mike Dalton's text from the original fourteen signs along the highway.

Kathleen "Mike" Dalton thanked people for coming. She introduced her children. Dalton said she just turned 93. She said last year she fell and broke a hip. During her surgery she had a stroke and stayed in Denali Center. She said when she and her daughter drove to Prudhoe Bay in 2015 she took fifteen signs

to place along the highway. She had started asking for an interest in the state when Frank Murkowski was governor. She has gone through about four governors. She has been over the road about 25 times so she knows it pretty well. She talked about the rest stop signs at the Yukon River concerning the namesake of the Patton Bridge created by the BLM. She was inspired to make something similar for her husband. She said her husband was an engineer. She studied engineering in college. She recommended people go up to see the Patton Bridge. Dalton talked about running into Clark Milne and his wife at Coldfoot. They drove up to Prudhoe Bay together. She talked about putting up her original signs along the Dalton Highway. She appreciated the work that Clark Milne and Patty Peirsol put in on the sign. She thought her husband would be mortified to know that anyone wanted to name anything after him. He was a quiet man. Dalton talked about the naming of the Dalton Highway. The 1979-1980 Alaska Legislature put together a proposal to name the Haul Road the James W. Dalton Highway. Charlie Parr was instrumental in this. They presented it as a resolution and it passed the Alaska Legislature. The governor didn't sign it. Senator Parr introduced it the next year as a bill. Governor Hammond signed the bill in Bethel. Nothing happened until 1992. The bush coalition opposed opening the road to the public. There was a coalition of Native groups that opposed it, too. In 1992 the highway was opened to the public. There were federal funds involved in it too. The road was reluctantly opened. People had to get a permit to go on the road. She drove up the road and got to Prospect Creek and saw a sign requiring permission to go up the road. She was able to get that sign after it was removed from the highway. She talked about the error on the first sign on the highway. From Fairbanks to Prudhoe it is 505 miles. The beginning of the Dalton starts at Livengood. She said the Dalton Highway is only 44 years old. She talked about the first well drilled at Prudhoe and how the area was accessed.

She went to Barrow in 1950. Her husband went there in 1946 and stayed until the DEW line was opened. He also worked as a consultant for oil and gas companies. She talked about the state of Alaska putting together a cat train through Anaktuvuk Pass. She made a trip up to Anaktuvuk Pass and returned on a cat train. Tennessee Miller was the first one through the mountains to Sag 1 on a cat train. She explained what a cat train was. The first ice road from Barrow was about 160 miles to Umiak. There were no road signs. They marked the trail with wooden stakes with rebar attached on one end and a red flag on the other end. They dropped the stakes from an airplane. The rebar would land in the snow. A scout with a weasel would come out and mark the trail with more stakes. The lead tractor would create the road from stake to stake.

Dalton said the first operation in Arctic transportation was the U.S. Navy. In 1953 (?) the Navy organized the Seabees which was a construction arm of the Navy similar to the Corps of Engineers with the Army. In Fairbanks, Alaska some miners and construction people had heard that there was going to be drilling program up north. Jim Dalton was one of them. Jim had graduated from the University of Alaska in 1937. There were several people who sought out the Navy and joined the Seabees and one of them was Jim. His first assignment was Dutch Harbor where they rebuilt the harbor and the Navy buildings after the Japanese bombings. He was sent to Pearl Harbor for rebuilding. After Jim's three year assignment was up he came back to Alaska and went up north. He went to work as a construction engineer. He worked for Arctic Contractors which was made up of Green Construction, Lydell Construction and a geophysical outfit from California. Herbert Hoover, Jr., headed up the geophysical outfit and was very

active in the Navy's part in drilling. The Navy was successful with their drilling. She had samples of the oil. At Umiak the oil was used in generators. Arctic Contractors drilled a lot of wells up there. They drilled four gas wells south of Barrow. They piped gas over to the base camp. In 1965 her husband worked with Ed Rice to design and install a gas line for the whole village of Barrow. They are still using the same four gas wells.

The exploratory program in the National Petroleum Reserve No. 4 concluded in 1953. Everyone packed up and came south. In December of 1954 Jim Dalton was recruited by the United States Defense Department to go up north for the DEW Line construction. They had a camp with a lot of equipment left from the Navy. There were a lot of guys who had worked for Arctic Contractors and had a lot of experience. The DEW Line was built across Greenland, Canada and down to Pt. Lay. In Alaska it went along the 141st parallel. The Alaska sector came in 25 million under the estimate. Jim was able to put together a team quickly. There were a lot of cat trains in those days. Jim returned to Fairbanks. He worked for Colorado Gas, Phillips Petroleum, and other companies.