

## **\* HONORING \***

### **\* ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM EMPLOYEES \***

The members of the Twenty-seventh Alaska State Legislature join with the traveling public and the citizens of Alaska in honoring the employees of the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). Every day these public servants are asked to deal with a unique set of circumstances in a dynamic environment and with ever changing variables. Whether aiding an ill passenger or responding to a mayday call, they are plying Alaska's waters and are always ready to serve.

As part of their job qualifications, members of the AMHS team are expected to respond and assist with customer needs, respond calmly to any emergency while maintaining the confidence of the traveling public, perform strenuous work for extended periods on steel decks, and successfully perform all their duties despite high winds, heavy seas, and severe weather.

Crew members are trained as Emergency Trauma Technicians and at the U.S.C.G.-designated Medical Person in Charge level, providing valuable skills for the safety of the traveling public and fellow crew members by treating and stabilizing anything from heart attacks, broken bones, sprains, cuts, and burns to diabetic shock. In the event that a crew member or passenger is in need of a doctor and there is not one on board, crew has the training required to respond with the help of a doctor by phone. AMHS makes every effort to procure and maintain state-of-the-art medical equipment and supplies in order to respond to any medical emergency they may encounter while at sea.

AMHS employees also deserve great accolades for their assistance in responding to emergencies of all kinds. Every year, alert crews assisted those in trouble on land and sea. In 2011, there were at least three notable rescues that, without the assistance of the AMHS crew, could have meant the loss of life. The following rescue efforts were performed by AMHS vessels and crews:

- The *M/V Malaspina* performed a beach rescue of a hiker who had fallen from a cliff near Skagway. Had the alert bow lookout not heard the calls for help, the hiker may not have survived his cold water immersion and rocky shore trauma.
- The *M/V Fairweather* responded to a distress call from the *F/V Whisker III* that had lost power near Hanus Reef. The AMHS crew launched a fast rescue boat to attach the towline from another Good Samaritan boat so the *Whisker III* could be towed safely to Auke Bay.
- The *M/V Fairweather* responded to a call in Barlow Cove where a small boat was seeking shelter from high winds and stormy weather. A young woman aboard the vessel was having a severe asthma attack and was approaching hypothermia. The *M/V Fairweather*, underway in the area on an engine maintenance test, retrieved the ailing woman and transported her to Auke Bay where an emergency medical team was waiting.

It is with great appreciation and gratitude that the Twenty-seventh Alaska State Legislature honors the Alaska Marine Highway System employees for their tireless efforts to serve Alaskans and travelers alike. They are an excellent example of the Alaskan spirit. Keep up the good work!