



## Geoscience, Ideology, and the Politics of Energy

**Mark Myers**

**State of Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Coordinator**

*Note: AGS meetings will be at the BP Energy Center for 2009-2010.*

*Please check the website ([www.alaskageology.org](http://www.alaskageology.org)) and issues of the AGS newsletter for updates.*

*This promotes the February luncheon talk of the Alaska Geological Society,  
to be held Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, at the BP Energy Center.*

**W**hat is the role of geoscience in the development and implementation a rational and sustainable energy strategy?

As our nation and state move forward into this new decade there is heightened awareness of the crucial need for a long term, secure economically and environmentally sustainable supply of energy. There is growing recognition that energy policy is an important and maybe even the most critical consideration in maintaining and improving our society, preserving healthy ecosystems, maintaining and building our economy, and providing for national security. The interest in mitigating the amount of anthropogenic green house gases we introduce into our atmosphere has added another major driver for focusing attention on a comprehensive reevaluation of our energy policy.

While it is encouraging that energy policy has become a major issue in national and statewide discussion, it is discouraging that this has led to the polarization of views rather than a fact based consensus building exercise. Many groups have strongly held views of how to “solve” our energy supply issues. Very few of these groups are providing solutions that are scientifically valid, use proven technology, are scalable in reasonable timeframes, and are either economically, or environmentally responsible. These “solutions” are often grounded in a desire to focus on energy solutions that attempt to solve a particular problem or subset of problems while ignoring or discounting others. Many of these solutions appear to be promoted to advantage a particular commercial interest or ideological cause. Finally, many of these

### AGS Luncheon

**Date & Time:** Thursday, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

**Program:** Geoscience, Ideology, and the Politics of Energy

**Speaker:** Mark Myers, State of Alaska

**Place:** BP Energy Center

**Reservations:** Please make your reservation before noon Tuesday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

<b>Cost:</b>	<b>Seminar only, no meal:</b>	<b>Free</b>
	<b>Reserve a box lunch:</b>	<b>\$13</b>
	<b>Nonmember:</b>	<b>\$15</b>

<b>Reserve a hot lunch:</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>Nonmember:</b>	<b>\$22</b>

**No reservation: add \$5 to the above  
(on an “as-available” basis only)**

**E-mail reservations:** [vp@alaskageology.org](mailto:vp@alaskageology.org)  
Or phone (907) 269-8673  
(Ken Helmold, AGS VP)

**For more information: visit the AGS website:**

**[www.alaskageology.org](http://www.alaskageology.org)**

policy strategies appear to focus on short term political cycles rather than the long term timeframe necessary to effectively implement a viable strategy.

Realistic and holistic assessments of conventional and nonconventional resources should be the starting point of any policy. Full cycle costs and benefits of the various energy options should be baseline data. Finally, uncertainty and gaps in our data must be fully acknowledged and appropriately modeled.

Geoscientists can and should play a key role in helping to develop and implement a successful sustainable energy policy by bringing this objective scientific data and methodology into the discussion. As geoscientists we have been trained to be

interdisciplinary in our approach and routinely deal effectively with the inherent uncertainty of an incomplete geologic record. We are educated on the complexity of the interplay of natural and anthropogenic forces on our environment in the past, present and future. Finally, we are trained to separate out what the science objectively demonstrates from our personal beliefs or ideology.

**Geosciences can provide a rational bridge to successful energy policy, provided we as scientists are willing to bring the needed objective data and analysis into the discussion.**

## **About the Author:**



Mark Myers serves as the State of Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Coordinator. This is a new position established under the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act in order to coordinate state agency resources associated with the development of a major natural gas pipeline from the North Slope to markets outside of Alaska.

Prior to serving in this capacity, Dr. Myers has held various senior executive, scientific research and petroleum industry positions including that of the 14<sup>th</sup> Director of the United States Geologic Survey where he managed the Nation's largest water, earth and biological science and civilian mapping agency. Prior to that position he was employed as the State Geologist and Director of the Division of Oil and Gas for the State of Alaska. He has also worked in various exploration and development positions with Chevron, ARCO, and Phillips Petroleum. In 2003 Dr. Myers retired as a Lt.Col. from the Air Force Reserve.

As a geologist he is a clastic sedimentologist and expert on North Slope petroleum geology. He holds BS and MS degrees in Geology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Ph.D. in Geology from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks.

### **The Alaska Geological Society**

#### **LUNCHEON SCHEDULE 2009 - 2010**

**Updates on the web at:  
<http://www.alaskageology.org>**

September 2009	Thurs., Sept. 17 <sup>th</sup> , Paul O'Sullivan, Apatite to Zircon, Inc., Timing of Brooks Range Uplift and Denudation: A Summary of Fission Track Results Over the Last 25 Years.
October 2009	Thursday, Oct. 15 <sup>th</sup> , Steve Wright, Chevron, Cook Inlet Gas Shortage: Fact of Fiction?
November 2009	Thursday, Nov. 19 <sup>th</sup> , Stephen Hubbard, University of Calgary, High Relief Clinoform Development
December 2009	Thursday, Dec. 10 <sup>th</sup> , John Howell, University of Bergen, Laser Scanning and Geological Modeling.
January 2010	Thursday, Jan. 21 <sup>st</sup> , William Morris / Mark Scheihing, ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc., Tanqua Karoo, South Africa
February 2010	Thursday, Feb. 18 <sup>th</sup> , Mark Myers, State of Alaska; Geoscience, Ideology, and the Politics of Energy
March 2010	Thursday, March 18 <sup>th</sup> , Pat Druckenmiller, UAF, Mesozoic Marine Reptiles
April 2010	Wednesday, April 15 <sup>TH</sup> , Don Gautier, USGS, Circum-Pacific Resource Assess.
May 2010	Thursday, May 20 <sup>th</sup> , Brigitte Martini, Ormat, Geothermal Prospects of Mt. Spurr