

November 28, 2007

To Whom It May Concern,

I am the former Borough (County) Manager of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and during my 5-years in that position, I had the pleasure of working with Dawson Construction on several major projects.

Dawson Construction was the successful bidder on the new Fawn Mountain Elementary School here. The Borough was under a very tight timeline to get the project done, as the former school had been condemned due to age and conditions, and there was no place for the students to attend school after the deadline given by the local building official. Dawson Construction started with the foundation work in March, and completed the school in December of the same year, which was phenomenal considering the size of the school and shipping of materials from Washington State, weather, and coordination of sub-contractors which were busy on several other major City and Borough projects at the same time. I was impressed by the professionalism of the entire Dawson team, and their quality of workmanship which has been proven to be above and beyond any company I have seen during my 28 years in municipal management.

I believe that what makes Dawson so successful is their pre-construction analysis and communication skills, and working closely with the owner, which makes the construction process almost seamless and error free. I sat in on pre-construction conferences with Dawson and their sub-contractors, Borough officials and the project manager and local building official and the architect. We explored every blue-print and detail, including materials, that could possibly save money, or cause problems not only during construction but also in future maintenance or operation of the facility. One thing that Dawson brings to the pre-construction process is decades of experience in what does and doesn't work in the actual construction of a facility. In pre-construction, Dawson was able to point out architectural designs that were not practical or even workable for the school. What an architect designs hoping to win an award for may have serious flaws in the construction process and result in cost overruns and delays. Dawson has the ability to find these and suggest corrections prior to construction. In our construction of Fawn Mountain Elementary, if a delay was caused for any reason, including architectural design flaws, the crew did not stop work, but were shifted to another area of the school, which avoided delay and delay claims. This was a result of the pre-construction meetings and built-in contingencies that Dawson excels in.

To prove that point, the Borough had awarded a Middle-School renovation project just prior to my employment with the Borough in 2002, and it was not to Dawson Construction. The Borough has just finished a lengthy litigation process, with dozens of change orders and hundreds of thousands of dollars in delay claims, and during the litigation we suspended the contractor and asked Dawson to step in and correct the mistakes of the former contractor and finish the project. The former contractor was several years behind schedule, and due to our weather conditions here in Ketchikan, the building had seriously deteriorated during that time. Dawson literally had to take the building apart – walls, roof, some finishes, windows and doors – and basically re-build the school. Three-years of students literally had no middle-school experience, as they had to be housed in both the high school and an elementary school. Dawson was able to meet a very tight deadline and tear-down and rebuild in 1 (one) year what a former contractor tried to do in 4 years. The students and staff of the middle school are more than pleased with their new facility, and the entire community will be eternally grateful for the commitment, effort and quality of work that Dawson gave to the community. Needless to say, the Borough did not have a similar

pre-construction experience with the other contractor, and certainly no contingencies for anything, which proved disastrous for the community.

From a management standpoint, it pleases me to state that both projects that Dawson was involved in came in on-time and on-budget, with very few change-orders. In fact, a couple of change-orders resulted in savings to the Borough, and those were recommended by Dawson's staff. The other change orders were due to the School Board wanting to make changes, to which the Borough Assembly agreed. Working with Dawson Construction has been one of, if not the best, public-works experiences in my 28 years of public service. I can highly recommend them for any project you may be considering. I can assure you that should my career take me anywhere within range of Dawson's company, I will do whatever it takes to work with them again in any project that requires their type of services.

Sincerely

Roy A. Eckert  
Former Borough Manager  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
Ketchikan, Alaska