

A Chilly Place for the President

(Juneau, Alaska) Up here many folks don't much like President Obama's vision of a big government colossus dictating health care, doling out entitlements, and generally meddling in the affairs of the citizenry. Alaska voted against Mr. Obama by 14 percentage points in 2012, and if another election were held today, the anti-Obama vote would most likely be higher.

This is a tough, self-reliant state. The weather is harsh and expenses high. But there is work. With a 6.1% unemployment rate, Alaska is doing much better than the nation as a whole (7.6%). The median household income in the 49th state is \$69,000 – \$16,000 higher than the national average.

Historically, Alaska is a place that has attracted those fed up with conventionality. On my trip here, I did not see one person dressed in a jacket and tie. The prevailing wisdom promotes individuality. Alaskans are basically "leave me alone" type people who respect and embrace different strokes.

Maybe it's because nature is right on top of them that the folks don't seem to care much for trends. The weather changes dramatically and quickly, there are far more dirt than paved roads, and wild animals are everywhere. Nobody is really interested in the latest fashion when you can be snowed in for weeks at a time. I mean, who's gonna see you?

With a population of 731,000, Alaska is ranked 47th in size, only beating out North Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming. Of course, Alaska is the largest state in the union by far, so there is plenty of space to get away from the trappings of modern America. Most everybody has a gun – there are big bears around – and the majority of folks are happy not to be dealing with bureaucracies.

So, the Alaska mentality is directly opposite the federal intrusion that is being fostered by the Obama administration. Mention Obamacare and you'll likely get icy stares, even in the summer. And while poor people do receive entitlements, and the oil industry kicks in some money for the folks, few Alaskans are asking for handouts. This is an old fashioned place that still embraces the Klondike mentality: take chances and maybe you'll hit it big, but if you don't – don't whine about it.

Alaska has some of the best scenery in North America but it is the spirit of rugged individualism that I found most interesting. Capitalism is firmly embraced and hard work is the order of the day. I visited a tourist dog-sledding site on top of a glacier where the young employees stayed for weeks at a time. No showers, no computers, no TV. They made some good money but paid the price. And they seemed happy to be up there far away from the BS that is floating around this nation.

There is something to be said for living life on your own terms. Many Americans simply don't want the pinheads in Washington or the various state capitals to be telling us how to live. But we are absolutely going in that direction. President Obama is hell-bent on imposing a bureaucracy that levels all playing fields at great expense in coin and in freedom.

So, visit Alaska if you get a chance. It's far away from everything but well worth the trip. This is America the way it used to be. And the way things are going in the lower 48, the way it used to be is likely gone forever.