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Contact: Lanien Livingston, PIO  
t. 907-459-1304  
e. llivingston@fnsb.us

## **FNSB is pleased with the Air Force's decision to base F-35's at Eielson**

**Fairbanks, AK** – FNSB Mayor Karl Kassel along with Governor Bill Walker, First Lady Mrs. Donna Walker, and other local elected and civic leaders of the “Tiger Team” were on hand to hear the Air Force's announcement of the record of decision on the basing of two F-35 squadrons at Eielson Air Force Base. Alaska's senior Senator Lisa Murkowski along with U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan spoke with Lisa S. Disbrow, the Under Secretary of the Air Force to hear the good news.

FNSB Mayor Karl Kassel said, “**This is a great day for Fairbanks, for Eielson Air Force Base and for the nation.** The selection of Eielson for the basing of two F-35 Squadrons is good for national defense and good for our local economy. The work of the Fairbanks community and the Tiger Team in coordination with our Congressional Delegation has paid off. Recognition of Alaska's strategic location, the massive amount of aircraft training space (JPARC) and Alaska's proximity globally are essential to the strength of the nation.”

The basing of two squadrons of F-35A Lightning II squadrons, totaling 54 of the newest 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighter aircraft will bring approximately 1250 more active duty airmen and women and contractors along with approximately 2300 dependents. Eielson Air Force Base will grow from the current 5500 active duty personnel to about 9000. Eielson's wing commander, Colonel Michael Winkler emphasized today at the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce's Business Luncheon that this announcement will bring nearly \$500M of military construction to Eielson between now and FY19. The first F-35 aircraft are expected to arrive in 2020.

Also in attendance at this morning's meeting of the Tiger Team were state Senator Click Bishop, City of Fairbanks Mayor John Eberhart, former Borough Mayor Luke Hopkins and Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation CEO Jim Dodson.

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