

Renewable Energy in Alaska, Our Time is Now!

Twenty-one AYEA youth leaders from 10 Alaskan communities met Jan 8-11 in the Matanuska Valley to choose and plan their 2009 Campaign at the annual AYEA Statewide Leadership Retreat. The youth chose to focus their campaign on encouraging:

- **State congress to put 50 million in the Alaska budget for renewable energy.**
- **6,000 Alaskans from 20 communities to support renewable energy.**

AYEA members plan to accomplish these objectives by **creating a petition** to support renewable energy and taking it throughout their own and neighboring communities to be signed; **creating digital stories** and other presentations and presenting them for their communities and at conferences; **working with local media** to tell their story; **using social networking** tools such as Facebook and MySpace to spread their information and build an advocacy network; and **talking with political leaders** at home and in Juneau.

While at the Retreat, the teens learned how to develop a strategic plan, work with new networking technology, communicate with the media, lead successful chapter meetings, and manage their own chapter website. Youth from Sitka, Juneau, Homer, Anchorage, Palmer, Dillingham, Chertofnak, Emmonak, St. Paul Island, and Fairbanks networked, discussed environmental problems and solutions, and planned projects together. In the words of one participant "The most important thing [I learned] was that together we really can take on big issues." They also took some time in sub-zero temperatures to snowshoe, sled, and ski at Hatcher's Pass. No frostbite was found, but new friends and fun were in full force!

Stay tuned for updates on our Renewable Energy campaign at www.ayea.org