

# News from the villages

*Reports from communities in the Bering Strait region as noted in minutes of the Kawerak, Inc., full board of directors meeting April 18-19, 2002, in Nome*

## **Nome Eskimo Community**

Andrew Miller Jr. reported that they will renovate more houses this summer. Six people are working in the program. They are starting to do things on their own. They deal with court cases sometimes. They have an increase in applicants for membership at Nome Eskimo from other tribes in the region just because of their housing program.

## **St. Michael**

Carl Otten reported that the clinic is under construction. The Catholic Church is not finished. The house that caught fire is being renovated. The Native Village of St. Michael would like to offer Kawerak space for the Education, Employment and Training Program computer area in our upcoming library/cultural building. The IRA will build one home under the Housing Improvement Program.

## **Shishmaref**

Darlene Turner reported that the Shishmaref Erosion/Relocation Committee has been meeting to address shoreline protection and community relocation. A special election on the relocation issue was set. A public hearing will be held to select a relocation site by consensus. The shoreline protection project, estimated at \$4.1 million, will begin this summer. The tannery building will also start this summer. The Kawerak Board should play basketball next year at the Shishmaref Spring Carnival.

## **Shaktoolik**

Simon Bekoalok Jr. reported they had elections and three seats were up. They will have run-off elections soon. They submitted a roads inventory.

## **Teller**

Norman Menadelook Sr. reported that they need more products to process at Teller Fish and Meats. They are getting a new Head Start building. Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority renovation is on hold, because of overexpenditures. They are applying for a new clinic.

## **Diomedes**

Eric Iyapana reported that Kawerak Transportation had a meeting with good turnout. The community wanted the walkway fixed. They are rethinking the boardwalk system because of snow buildup. They met with the Army Corps of Engineers about building a small boat harbor. They also had a meeting with NSEDC and asked them for search and rescue equipment. They will get an incinerator next year.

## **Golovin**

Maria Dexter reported that they had three seats open and Peter Olson, Irene Sockpealuk and Frank Amaktoolik were elected. Peter Olson is president. Irene Sockpealuk became the accountant for Kawerak, but is based in Golovin. Frank Amaktoolik is vice president, but he applied to be a

coordinator, so he's going to resign from the council. Peter has been working on paperwork for the multipurpose building and getting ready to work on water and sewer. Frank will speak at the suicide prevention conference, since he had dealt with this in his family. They will be making a new high school this summer. Dora Davis is working on a grant for a new clinic. Fifteen people are taking the Kawerak carpentry training right now. They don't have a VPSO yet.

## **Koyuk**

Merlin Henry reported that the Native Village of Koyuk will have a carpentry/hazardous materials training. They are having firefighting training now. They will work on the IRA building this summer, as well as the tank farm and new school. Volunteers will clean up the hot springs and cabins.

## **Stebbins**

Francis Pete Sr. reported that health aides were working in crew quarters constructed by a contracting firm doing the Stebbins water and sewer project. The temporary clinic will have to do until a new one is completed this year.

Residents are using a makeshift washeteria in the water treatment and distribution plant. Many take their laundry to St. Michael but there has been a water shortage.

The city of Stebbins is primarily identified to receive Denali Commission funds for the new washeteria, with Stebbins Community Association listed as a supporting entity and eventual co-owner and operator. The water and sewer project continues.

## **Gambell**

Edmond Apassingok reported they are anticipating roads projects. When the snow melts, survey work will be done. The roads will be to the cemetery and southeast of Gambell. They also want roads to go to the south side of the Island and perhaps to Savoonga. As a new board member, Apassingok said it is good to know that dedicated Kawerak Board and staff continually try to improve the lifestyles and services to the whole region. Congratulations to Jason Nowpakahok for catching his first whale.

## **Gambell**

Elder Merlin Koonooka reported that school attendance is 70-75 percent. The tribal council sponsors a \$100 drawing each week for families who have a child who had perfect attendance. This is a good way to help solve the problem.

## **Nome**

Elder representative Jacob Ahwinona reported that he attends Regional Illegal Alcohol and Drug Advisory Forum (RID) meetings. They sent letters asking which villages would like to participate in a project. Villages that responded were Shaktoolik, Unalakleet,

Wales, and Koyuk. He said that, as an elder, he would like to see all villages addressing problems of suicide and drug and alcohol abuse. They should do it for their children and grandchildren. Anyone can write to the Elders Advisory Committee, call them or contact them in person for help.

## **Brevig Mission**

Gilbert Tocktoo reported they had their annual meeting in January. They amended the council terms to extended terms by a majority vote of their registered tribal members. The IRA purchased a trailer and will use it for office space. The city is interested in getting a VPSO from out of town. Water and sewer is an ongoing project. The city is getting a new power plant and tank farm through a grant from the Denali Commission. People are getting ready for seal hunting and are busy with subsistence hunting. Brevig Mission and Teller are out of gasoline again. This problem should be eliminated once Brevig's tank farm is replaced.

## **Mary's Igloo**

James Weyanna reported that the annual meeting was scheduled for April 8 but they did not have a quorum. They were resetting the meeting.

## **White Mountain**

Lincoln Simon reported they look forward to construction of a new Head Start building. Connie Peterson is the new grant proposal writer and they are happy to have her. Roy Agloinga is the tribal coordinator and their NSHC representative. The elder meal program is going well. They have a carpenter training in June or July. They have five new houses in Nome at the dock that are going to White Mountain. They are looking into building a new store next summer.

## **Council**

Steve Longley reported they had their annual meeting in February and elected the same board. They now have monthly meetings instead of quarterly. They are closing on a piece of property in Nome. They are working with a contractor to build an office so they can own a building instead of renting.

## **Unalakleet**

William Johnson reported they purchased a van for the elder lunch program. They will get ten new homes and are running their own Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) program. They had some problems with the contractor. They want to develop a deeper water port because they get so much buildup right in front of the river mouth. Fuel barges have a hard time getting in and out, especially in fall. They are planning a new consolidated bulk fuel storage farm near where the port would be. The road should be finished by this year. It was all local hire except the mechanic and the supervisor. They are considering building a six-plex

apartment unit for low-income individuals. They received a grant from Bering Sea Fishermen's Association to run their own counting tower this summer and are working with Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation to get equipment.

## **Norton Sound Health Corp.**

Emily Hughes reported that NSHC and Kawerak are developing new relationships to foster healthy communication and integrate programs. NSHC is receiving \$446,000 in pass-through funds from the \$1.1 million awarded to Kawerak by the Alaska Federation of Natives. Funds will be used to enhance current programs and to launch new efforts to reduce alcohol abuse and promote healthy choices.

## **Elim**

Robert Keith reported they had their annual meeting and he was re-elected IRA president. Frederick Murray was elected secretary. School construction is underway. The contractor, Osborne Construction, is in a lawsuit with the city. Local hire is a problem with that company. Projects for next year are a new tank farm and the AVEC electricity site. They will extend their airport. In partnership with NSHC they are building a clinic. Students get gas stipends for every "A" they get. They recognize the school situation and it is very problematic. They have a lot of kids dropping out and there is very low morale with children going to school.

## **King Island**

Lisa Ellanna-Brandt reported they had their annual meeting Dec. 29. Carmelita Nattanguk is still the chief. John Kokuluk is the vice-chief, Marilyn Koezuna-Irelan is secretary, Gabriel Muktoyuk Sr. is treasurer and they have three members: Francis Alvanna, Harold Muktoyuk and Lisa Ellanna-Brandt.

King Island members appreciate Kawerak's carpentry training. Several members who attended had never been to training in their lives.

They will rejoin Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority because their funding is getting lower every year.

The King Island community is excited about this year's Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC). The new Permanent Forum on Indigenous Rights will allow the ICC to communicate problems to the United Nations.

Some legislators want the state divided into boroughs. Everyone should call the city office in Nome and ask about it, because it may include their communities. The new government could tax our communities or property, such as fish nets, snowmachines, fish racks, four wheelers, and boats. It may be a good thing; if the city chooses to do the Unified Municipal Government, they can set their tax rate and make the decisions. If they don't, the state can form this borough on their own and set the tax rates.