Waqaa! What a year 2019 has been!

Looking back, I am amazed at the goals we have achieved together this year. Most notably, we gained both international and national attention through our public safety advocacy. When we point out problems, we always come prepared with solutions to that problem, and that is what we did in the case of U.S. Attorney General Barr’s and Sen. Lisa Murkowski’s site visit. We also worked with Sen. Murkowski and Tanana Chiefs Conference on the proposed Alaska Tribal Public Safety Empowerment Act, which Sen. Murkowski introduced in October. In August, the U.S. Department of Interior held a listening session in Bethel, to better understand the public safety crisis.

In this one focus area alone, we have accomplished a lot for one year. We proved that with focus, purpose, and planning, we are able to achieve more than we thought. This momentum we have created is important because we have a lot left to do. Please keep in mind that every time you sign a letter of support or send a tribal representative to a meeting, you are strengthening the message. Quyana for your support.

On Feb. 5, the U.S. Department of Justice will visit Bethel. Invitations have been sent out to tribal administrators by our Tribal Services team, requesting the presence of a representative from your tribe, to participate in this discussion with the Department of Justice to be held in Bethel.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the work of our Department of the Year, Finance and Grants and Compliance. Thanks to their dedication, we filed a timely audit. As our auditing firm’s representative said at our 2019 convention, it is very difficult for an organization of our size to catch up after falling behind. But we did, because we did not hesitate. We kept moving and improving, by making substantial structural changes to our organization, all while continuing to provide services. This is a huge accomplishment.

You may have heard Acting Chief Operating Officer, Brent Latham, refer to his four goals (a timely audit, organizational chart, strategic plan, and the budget). These are all foundational ingredients for our success. Administration believes it is our job to create these strong foundations and to provide our staff with the tools they need to achieve their goals. Brent has pursued these goals with a focus that only a clear sense of purpose provides. Not only did he help us file a timely audit, but we also (for the first time) have an organization-wide organizational chart and an organization-wide budget. Right now, he is focused on helping us balance the administrative and programmatic sides of the budget. This is an excellent example of the overall Quality Improvement at AVCP.

Quyana to all of our program administrators and department directors for doing their part in creating a strategic plan that interfaces with our budget and provides solid foundations for the sustainability of our organization. Quyana to all the AVCP staff for all the work in 2019.

While it is comforting to have a real winter again, unexpected cold spells like this can be hard on the bank. If you are in need of some assistance during this cold spell, please reach out to our Benefits Division at AVCP. We are here and prepared for exactly these situations. Please do not hesitate to apply. Reach out as soon as you expect to need assistance. See page 10 for more information from our Benefits Division.
Employee Spotlight

Andrew “Jimmy” Larson
Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

Oscarville has been Jimmy’s home for most of his life. His parents Nastasia Steven-Larson and Andrew Larson Sr. moved there in 1942 (when it was one of the busier locations on the Lower-Kuskokwim River) and raised their three children, Jimmy, Eliza and the late Steven Jack Larson.

Jimmy graduated with 12 others from ZJW Memorial School in Napaskiak in 1986, and has since studied and obtained his degrees in rural human services and his associates of applied science of human services. He also got his associates degree in theology back in 1996.

His first job working for the Oscarville tribe was as the tribal administrator from 1995 to 1998. In 1998, Oscarville compacted with AVCP and Jimmy soon found himself taking care of everything from payroll to record keeping, accounting to tribal services, on top of working with AVCP Regional Housing Authority, all of which he did with minimal training.

He found himself getting a little overwhelmed, and in 2008 he took the AVCP ICWA case manager position in Oscarville, where he has been since.

Jimmy feels comfortable in his new role and enjoys working extensively, not only with AVCP in Bethel, but also with tribal courts, and working closely with the State of Alaska Office of Children’s Services (OCS).

The most rewarding part of his job is knowing that he puts in effort to make a difference, developing newsletters for all ages in his community focusing on prevention and healthy living. He shares topics like gun safety, dog safety, tips for traveling, healthy practices in-home and outside of home, for both parents and their children. See pages 13 - 16 for examples of the prevention newsletters he makes for Napaskiak.

Even when Jimmy is not at work, he finds himself researching different community projects, collecting ideas from other organizations and programs - both state and nation-wide. He also spends a significant amount of time practicing and sharing the Yup’ik language, traditions, and knowledge that has been shared with him by Elders in and around his community.

All of his time and dedication to his work hasn’t gone unnoticed. Jimmy was nominated and chosen as AVCP’s 2019 Employee of the Year. He was recognized at the 2019 Annual AVCP All-Staff training. When they said his name he was totally caught by surprise, he didn’t expect it but accepted the custom plaque graciously, and shared a few words with his AVCP family.

Moving forward into the next year, Jimmy hopes to obtain his bachelor’s in social work. He feels prepared to return to school after a break. He especially looks forward to learning and teaching more about child safety and well-being.

~ Katie Nick, ICWA Advocate II

Jimmy is very dedicated to the work that he does for his community, he has worked in his position for over 15 years and has so much knowledge that is shared continuously within his community and also with coworkers. He is such a wonderful asset to our department.

Jimmy’s passion for prevention activities is contagious. He has dedicated his entire career to child welfare, and he has gotten his BSW in Social Work. He has dedicated fifteen years to our department and volunteers with the Lower Kuskokwim School District.

~ Dalarie Peters, CFSS Sub-Regional Manager
Growing Our Own

Introducing the New Communications Creators’ Studio

In an effort to reach deeper within each department to source more information and increase transparency, the Communications Department has established the first staff-driven social media information outreach group, named the Creators’ Studio.

Members of the Creators’ Studio were selected by their supervisors based on the following criteria:

1. Interest
   An expressed interest in learning to develop multimedia communications skills.

2. Qualify at the Source
   Demonstrable history of consistently producing sleek, polished, final products.

3. Capacity
   The time and space to create informative posts without distracting from the productivity of their department.

4. Feedback
   Demonstrated the ability to independently seek out, receive, and incorporate feedback.

5. Initiative
   Consistently exhibited initiative and ability to be self-motivated.

Using social media platform management software, members of the Creators’ Studio will be empowered to create social media posts that best communicate information that is valuable to Tribes and tribal members about AVCP services. The software aggregates all social media platforms into one calendar, so posts are able to be drafted months in advance.

In order to ensure quality control and consistent messaging, each post draft will go through an approval process. We have created a post approval process that is simple and designed for timely communications. In other words, members of staff who have successfully engaged in the Creators’ Studio activities (we call them “creators”) will have the ability to create posts even when they are way from their desks (using mobile devices). Social media administrators will also be able to approve posts, from any location.

Again, since this group was created for increased transparency, creators will only begin to draft posts once they have completed and posted their introduction video. Look out for those videos in the following months!

So far, the group has met twice over the last two months. Right now, they are in the process of learning about branding, how communications has changed since the inception of the internet, as well as photography and videography basics such as: the law of thirds, how to frame a shot, and the 180-degree rule.
What is QIP?

The Quality Improvement Process (QIP) was established in 2016, in an effort to better provide services to our people. At the outset, it was easy to identify immediate needs, especially gaps in coverage. The creation of the Grants and Compliance and Communications Departments are examples of how we quickly and successfully built up our capacity to meet those immediate needs.

After two years of addressing immediate needs, we entered the second phase of the QIP, and were able to pick our heads up and look further down the trail, to the future. Over the last year we have been able to apply the lessons we have learned over the past three years to design systemic solutions and set lasting, solid foundations for the future.

Over the last quarter, as we established an organization-wide strategic plan through substantial cross-departmental communication, we empowered the department leads to revise their structures to meet the long-term needs of clients, tribes, and the region as a whole.

In an effort to balance our administrative and programmatic capacity, we have done a lot of work in administration, especially in three key areas, outlined in our regular QIP section.

Administrative Support

This quarter, our receptionist team has been reduced. We have concentrated our receptionists to one centralized location, the Joe Lomack Building in Bethel, our administrative headquarters. We are moving toward this one point of access for all incoming inquiries. Our full-time receptionist, will route all calls and visitors to the appropriate services.

Former members of our receptionist team, who were stationed at the two other Bethel sites, are now full-time employees. However, instead of being on the “administrative side” they have moved to the “program side.” As a result, the Resource Center is now able to leverage the experience of a longtime receptionist, in a similar capacity, as a navigator.

The Navigator is trained to assist clients in navigating all of the services the Resource Center encompasses (scholarships, child care, vocational rehabilitation, resume writing, etc.). Of course, an added benefit of two staff members moving from administration to programs, is that it assists in balancing our budget and right-sizing our ship.

This is an example of how taking the time to revisit and reassess our structure and processes, bearing in mind long-term goals, can lead to creative solution that better serve our people.
Information Technology (IT)

Our IT teams have been the axis that has support some of the more significant changes we have seen in our organization as a whole, over the past three years. To meet the long-term needs of our region, our IT team has helped us leverage the power of cutting-edge technology to create a client management tracking system, purchasing and internal travel processing system.

Introducing any enterprise-scale technology requires significant time and attention. The new IT organizational chart is designed to respond to the implementation and maintenance of these new systems, while still responding to the usual user support requests through the IT Help Desk, in addition to maintaining our internal networks. In revising the organizational chart, the two sub departments (IT Operations and Network Infrastructure) have now been consolidated into one department (just one IT department). Additionally, the two positions that were vacant will not need to be filled.

Like most people who choose to serve the non-profit sector, our individual IT staff members wear many hats. Every member of our IT team has experience in areas outside their immediate job description, which will allow this department to have the flexibility to work as a team when project-specific needs arise.

Facilities

One of our greatest strengths is found within our Facilities Department. We benefit from the advantage of staff with decades of experience and a diverse skillset that allows them to adapt, as a team, to meet our region’s needs.

The most Facilities staff we have had at one time is 17 team members (most of whom were part-time or temporary staff). Starting this quarter, our facilities team includes six full-time, highly experienced staff members.

Our new Facilities structure includes a specialist responsible for construction projects, another specialist for our newly established AVCP Vehicle Fleet, as well as an electrician and janitorial services for the three Bethel centers (the Family Service Center, the Resource Center, and the administrative center in the Joe Lomack Building).
Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan

The comment period has been extended for one regulation and one statute that already exist within the Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan. Please take time to review these points in the contingency plan and provide comments to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Division of Spill Prevention and Response before March 16, 2020.

For more information and to submit comments, please visit: <bit.ly/2ZUOKta> or click HERE

Please note that the DEC is not proposing changes to the contingency plan, they are opening up parts of the plan that are already in effect, for public review and comment. No specific regulatory changes have been proposed yet.

Please note that the Plan only applies to State of Alaska waters, up to approximately three nautical miles from our coast.

View all Alaska area contingency plans here: <dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/> or click HERE.

John Orr, AVCP Resource Coordinator, is a member of the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee. This area committee only makes recommendations concerning the coast. Join John in participating in the Alaska Regional Response Team Meeting on Jan. 30, 2020, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Join from home using: <www.alaskarrt.org>

The inland area committee in our region, the Alaska Inland Area Committee, will hold a meeting on Friday, Jan. 31, 2020, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Anchorage, Alaska, at the British Petroleum (BP) Energy Center.

Join from home using: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/inland-area/>

Directly following the Alaska Inland Area Committee meeting, starting at 1:30 p.m., look out for a two-hour webinar titled, Alaska Inland Area Contingency Plan, which will provide an overview of the proposed changes to the Area Contingency Plan before the upcoming public review period. Again, this is directly flowing the Inland Area Committee meeting, in Anchorage at the BP Energy Center.

Join from home using: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/>

~ John Orr, AVCP Resource Coordinator

Save the Date

Jan. 17 - 20, 2020
Western Arctic/Western Region Board of Game in Nome, Alaska

Jan. 28 & 29, 2020
Federal Subsistence Board Work Session in Anchorage, Alaska

March 6 - 14, 2020
Interior and Eastern Arctic Region Board of Game in Fairbanks, Alaska

April 20 - 24, 2020
Federal Subsistence Board Wildlife Regulatory Meeting Location TBD
Natural Resources (cont.)

Wildland Firefighting Contracts

The Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service (BLM AFS) is soliciting contracts for Type 2 wildfire hand crews. BLM divides Alaska into three zones, known as protection areas (see map to right). The AVCP region is in the Galena Zone.

Type 2 firefighters are contracted year-round by different entities to do work outside of just fire suppression, such as fuels mitigation, trail marking, and other funded, contracted work. During fire season, they can be flown to various parts of the state to be an Emergency Firefighting Crew (EFF) or be doing the other contracted work. Typically, crews consist of 20+ people but the minimum amount is 18 with a crew boss, crew representative, and trainees.

Proposals are due Jan. 24, 2020.

For more information regarding the contract solicitation, contact BLM Contracting Officer Theresa Coffenberry at the National Operations Center at (303)236-5437 or tcoffenberry@blm.gov.

For more general information, please contact Paige Jones, AVCP Resource Coordinator at (907) 543 – 7472 or pjones@avcp.org.

The communities in our area that are eligible for proposals include:

1. Bill Moore's Slough
2. Hamilton
3. Kotlik
4. Emmonak
5. Alakanuk
6. Mountain Village
7. Saint Mary's
8. Pitka's Point
9. Pilot Station
10. Marshall
11. Ohogamiut
12. Russian Mission
Tribal Workforce Development

#MotivationMonday #ClientSuccess

What is reach?

In the social media world, “reach” is the number of unique clicks on a given social media post.

Reach is the most important metric to track in order to understand the impact of social media posts, because it affects all other metrics (such as comments and likes).

All of AVCP’s social media reach is “organic” – meaning that we do not use paid advertising.

Some of our posts with the highest reach are our client success posts. Below are a couple of recent examples with the great reach.

### Dec. 30, 2019 on Facebook @AVCPAlaska
Reach = 1,295  Reactions = 47

Patrik Šúň is AVCP’s top Facebook fan! Quyana to Patrik and everyone who helped us increase our reach in 2019.
Energy Assistance

Opened Jan. 2, 2020
Do not wait for applications to arrive in the mail!

If you need assistance with heating fuel, please do not wait for your application to arrive in the mail.
Visit <www.avcp.org/services/benefits-division/>
For fastest results, email completed applications o social-services@avcp.org
Unfortunately, faxing application will create a delay in services.

Ask your TANF case worker about free bed bug kits!
or
Call the Family Service Center
1-800-478-3157
The first round of kits will be sent out by Jan. 15, 2020
Public Safety

Village Public Safety Officer Program

The VPSO Working Group has compiled recommendations and will be meeting Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020. To listen in to the meeting, please visit the www.aklge.gov and navigate to ‘Meetings.’

The working groups analysis will include, as recommended made by the commission of the Alaska Department of Public Safety and her staff, an examination of the program statues. The working group will explain how the statues, especially compared to the duties of Alaska State Troopers, have led to the current shortcomings in the program due to differing interpretations of expectations for the program.

The creation of this Joint House/Senate Working Group was announced on May 9th, 2019, by Senate President Cathy Giessel and House Speaker Bryce Edgmon for the purposes of providing substantive policy recommendations related to the VPSO program. The working group was assigned to coordinate with stakeholders to examine the underlying causes of the recruitment and retention obstacle and provide proposals to turn around the epidemic rate of personnel turnover within the VPSO program.

“The working group’s recommendations focus on short term goals—that can be accomplished within a year or perhaps legislative session —and long-term goals. “

Appointed to the working group are: Senator Donny Olson, Co-Chair; Representative Chuck Kopp, Co-Chair; Senator Click Bishop; Senator Mike Shower; Representative Bryce Edgmon; and Representative George Rauscher.
**Event Calendar**

**January**

- **09** Joint House/Senate Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) Working Group meeting
- **14 - 17** Healthy Families Workshop in Bethel
- **20** Martin Luther King Day (Holiday)
- **29 & 30** New Employee Orientation

**February**

- **05** U.S. Department of Justice Site Visit in Bethel with AVCP Tribes
- **12 & 13** New Employee Orientation
- **11 - 14** Healthy Families Workshop in Bethel
- **17** President’s Day (Holiday)
- **26 & 27** New Employee Orientation
- **27 - 28** Tribal Justice Summit

**March**

- **11 & 12** New Employee Orientation
- **17 - 20** Healthy Families Workshop in Bethel
- **25 & 26** New Employee Orientation
- **30** Seward’s Day (Holiday)

**April**

- **08 & 09** New Employee Orientation
- **22 & 23** New Employee Orientation
- **28 - 30** Tribal Court Master Series Training: Tribal Court Boot Camp
- **28 - May 01** Healthy Families Workshop

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**U.S. Department of Justice Site Visit in Bethel with AVCP Tribes: Feb. 5, 2020**

AVCP member tribes are invited to an in-person discussion about public safety challenges in rural Alaska and Department of Justice resources, with representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Tribal Justice.

**Tribal Justice Summit: Feb. 27 - 28**

This summit will provide a forum for our tribal leaders and Tribal Court Personnel to guide our work in addressing Tribal Justice and training Tribal Court Personnel while identifying opportunities for collaboration and partnerships throughout the region.

Open to tribal court judges, tribal court clerks, tribal court administrators, tribal councils that act as tribal court, and Tribal Administrators.

AVCP Tribal Justice Department will provide scholarships for up to 2 people from each community with preference given to Tribal Court staff and Judges.

**SPACE IS LIMITED.**

If AVCP is not able to offer travel assistance, the tribe or individual will be responsible for paying that individuals travel, lodging and per diem.

*Registration will be required Friday, Feb. 7, 2020.*
ICWA News Letter/Prevention

Newsletter Date: 8/12/16/2019

Volume 1, Issue 6

Tengun-August: Dog Safety Awareness

The summer months have been exciting with all the fun activities the kids had with their family, friends, and relatives.

I just got back from my leave. I had the chance to share with OTC Board Members, given advice to work on a prevention project and talk about loose dogs in Oscarville. It was evident we need to address the concern for kids safety with animals.

rather it may be tied up. The thought of children being killed or mauled by a group of dogs or puppies caused me to act with urgency. It is common and can happen to any one child. A kid is not aware of those dangers.

Our Elders have said, it is especially important to talk about safety to kid's around dogs. You cannot be sure your pets will never bite. Fact: ALL DOGS BITE.

In conclusion, be safe around pets. Kids and pets have a playful connection. Adult supervision keeps everyone, children and every dog happy and safe! Dogs can be the best companion, friend, and guardian for growing children. Dog prevention starts with you.

Dog Safety Rules For Kids

Dogs can be unpredictable. It is particularly important to keep in mind for pet owners with kids, kids in contact with dogs, or live in your community with pets of prevention.

Educate kids that dogs or puppies can bite, are harmful to hurt you.

Children should not approach a dog that are tied up, chained up, or in a cage.

Pets get overwhelmed in their surrounding, seek a place to rest, and be comfortable. Don’t chase a dog. The dog put in this situation will bite.

A dog will smell with a clinched hand when it’s safe, get down to the animal’s level, and it will be safe to touch. Teach to hold out hand closed. Don’t push your hand to the dog.

Children should not approach a strange dog. When you see a stray dog, back away slowly, inform an adult, don’t run, cry, or scream.

In dog language eye to eye might it’s a challenge to them. Approach by keeping eyes averted. Kids to keep the gaze relaxed, look at the dog’s feet, nose, etc.

When your child is interacting, they want to keep a safe distance, it’s clear that they are acquainted. Don’t let your kid be too close or talk loudly.
Kayangut Anutiit, Hunting & Gun Safety

In the month of May (Kayangut Anutiit) is the time to go out with family by boat to go hunting for migratory birds or find bird eggs. Indeed a fun time for the whole family.

♦ Have a trip plan and return date.

Our Elders say that an unsuspecting hunter who is not aware of safety has to be prepared for lurking accidents along with the anticipation of countless flocks of birds that come to Alaska to have there eggs.

It is especially important to talk about gun safety to young kids. A great time to break down the fascination about guns.

♦ The harvest will return in abundance to the young hunter.

In conclusion, be safe around guns, and always make sure you have your float coats worn at all time when inside the boat, along with your walking stick, and rain gear.

As children come of age it is culturally encourage for both boys or girls to share their bird catches to the Elderly, Widows, Orphans, and to your Grandparents.

Gun Safety Reminders for Kids & Parents:

♦ Teach children to know that every is loaded and dangerous.

♦ Explain that guns, pistols, rifles, and shotguns, are not toys.

♦ Teach children to never point a gun at another person or to look down the barrel.

♦ Make sure all fire arms are locked up safe and not placed where kids can get to them.

The Children and Gun Safety are present in the home, and your kid will mimic shooting a gun from young age or see his or her fathers bring home water fowl.

The fascination brings children into contact with guns through friends, neighbors, and relatives. A parent is responsible to teach gun safety at home.

Children have no awareness to the dangers of guns in the home if parents do not explain about weapons and reason why they are locked away or hung out of reach of kids.

A lesson taught to a kid is to assume that a gun is loaded and dangerous. Explain guns are not toys. Most often they get the impression from cartoons, movies, and video games.

When you talk to kids if they visit relatives or friends it they have guns, stored can save a life. A barrel should not be viewed or pointed directly at other children or a person.

Accident happen at home. Children are killed when playing with loaded guns left unattended. Create simple rule to tell an adult about guns laying around or not locked. Safety practices will help kids be aware of dangers.
Our ancestors worked hard and lived a healthy life. At the age of five years old both boys and girls were given instructions by our Elders in the (Qasigiq) in the village communal houses.

The two most important ways of living was teaching the (Inernuqetnuk) laws and the other covering (aleqnuqetnuk) rules that will guide them to become independent by making healthy choices.

The AVCP ICWA Community Family Service Specialist Program and the LKSD School Staff want to see every kid in school be successful.

In the past I wanted to see more male figures get more involved with a kid’s social structure. I grew up with my grandparents and they gave me the belief, respect, and love matures a well-behaved individual.

Children’s Education Begins

We have built partnership with OTC ICWA and LKSD to conduct Prevention Projects that benefit Parents, Children, Elders, and Community.

On 8/8/2019 the KYUK Yupik Talk Show highlighted from community members from the YK Delta voicing out concerns as...