

Nunaput umyuallgutkut pinirluteng-Ilu, Tegganerput qigcikliuk pirpakluki-Ilu, ayagyuaput-Ilu ciuliqagcimaut yuuyarakun



Qaspeq Friday photos on social media @avcpalaska

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Tribal Councils,

The Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) provides funding for safe and adequate transportation and public roads that are within, or provide access to, Tribal land, or are associated with a Tribal government, while contributing to economic development, self-determination, and employment of Indians and Alaska Natives. The TTP program is authorized by Congress, and jointly managed and administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The TTP funds the design, planning, and construction of proposed roads and primary access routes that have been added to the National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory (NTTFI).

In November 2016, the BIA implemented regulations at 25 C.F.R. § 170.447 that create a 15-mile length limitation on primary access routes. Tribes and tribal organizations in Alaska have for years challenged the TTP regulations found at § 170.447. If this regulation is implemented as written, tribes and tribal organization in Alaska stand to lose the majority of transportation funding we receive. The adverse effects on building tribal transportation infrastructure in Alaska would be catastrophic.

Congress directed the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to include proposed primary access routes in the TTP inventory, so they are eligible for TTP funding. The BIA regulations limiting the length of these routes to 15 miles was intended to prevent using TTP funding on roads that are maintained by another entity, such as a county, State, or Federal transportation authority. In rural Alaska, there is virtually no such transportation infrastructure and tribal governments are the only entities building and maintaining transportation routes. For this reason, the 15-mile limit in Alaska is unnecessary because there are no routes that would be double-funded by the TTP and other funding sources. Instead, applying the 15-mile limitation to Alaska tribes will make it impossible to connect the villages in our region. This undermines the efforts of tribal governments in Alaska and undermines the purpose of the TTP.

AVCP has worked with our sister organization, Kawerak, to request BIA to remove the 15-mile limitation for roads that are not maintained by another entity; this will comply with Congress' intent for the TTP and the best interests of tribes in rural Alaska. Because of these efforts, Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney has set up two consultation sessions via conference call for Alaska Tribes. The purpose of the consultation sessions is for tribal representatives to share views on the maximum length limitations of proposed primary access routes eligible for inclusion in the TTP facility inventory. Those dates, times and phone numbers for the consultation sessions for Alaska Tribes are as follows:

January 15 from 12:30pm–2:30pm (Alaska Time): 800-857-9676 (Passcode: "DOI")

January 19 from 12:00pm–2:00pm (Alaska Time): 800-857-9676 (Passcode: "DOI")

(A session for Lower 48 Tribes is being held earlier in the day on January 15.)

Please participate in this consultation to share your views. I will participate in both consultation sessions on behalf of our region. We have prepared the talking points below for you to use as you develop your own testimony for this important consultation.

If you have questions, please contact Clarence Daniel, AVCP Community Development Division Director and Alaska Region Tribal Transportation Program Coordinating Committee (TTPCC) Representative, at (907) 543.7461 or clarence@avcp.org.

Sincerely,

ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS FOR TTP CONSULTATION SESSIONS

- In our Alaska Native communities, as in most of rural Alaska, there is almost no transportation infrastructure at all. We do not have highways, county roads, or other transportation corridors.
- Participation in the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) will allow tribes in our region to build transportation infrastructure that is desperately needed. Building roads in our region will:
 - » Provide safer and more accessible travel for tribal members to reach employment opportunities, access public services and healthcare, and participate in familial and social activities;
 - » Reduce the likelihood of tribal members becoming lost, injured, or dying while traveling through remote areas;
 - » Reduce the cost of the transport of freight, fuel, and equipment;
 - » Increase commerce and trade between villages for traditional foods, fuel, and other goods; and
 - » Continue economic development activities through employment on TTP projects.
- Congress recognized our situation by ensuring that the TTP Inventory must include “primary access routes proposed by tribal governments, including roads between villages, roads to landfills, roads to drinking water sources, roads to natural resources identified for economic development, and roads that provide access to intermodal terminals, such as airports, harbors, or boat landings.”
- Congress stated that the maximum length of a primary access road is “the shortest practicable route connecting 2 points of the proposed route.”
- In our region, tribes have added more than 1,700 miles of proposed roads to the TTP Inventory. The average length of proposed primary access roads is 33 miles.
- Our village is more than _____ miles to the nearest village and _____ miles to the nearest sub-regional hub.
- The BIA adopted the 15-mile limit in Section 170.447 to prevent tribes from using TTP funding on roads that are already built, operated, or maintained by a county, state, or Federal transportation authority.
- Unlike the Lower 48, in our region, there are no other entities (county, state, federal) that own, operate or maintain roads that connect our communities to employment centers, public services or economic development opportunities.
- The BIA’s 15-mile limitation will prevent our region from achieving the connectivity enjoyed by communities in the Lower 48 and prevent our tribal members from easier access to economic opportunities, healthcare, and lower transit costs.
- These primary access routes are vital to our culture and our economic wellbeing by providing safe and reliable transportation access for our communities.
- Here in rural Alaska, the TTP regulation only serves to ensure that the transportation access routes that our communities need and our tribal governments propose will never be built.
- The BIA must implement the TTP as Congress intended to promote connectivity for all tribal communities, including those in rural Alaska.
- The BIA must eliminate the mileage limit in Section 170.447 and base the rule on connecting the key points, just like Congress instructed.

LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN AFFAIRS

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) is authorized under Chapter 2 of Title 23 and jointly administered by the Department of the Interior (Department) and the United States Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). As directed by Congress, the regulations governing the TTP are published by the Department at 25 C.F.R. Part 170 (regulations). One purpose of the TTP is to provide safe and adequate public roads that are within, or provide access to, Tribal land while contributing to economic development, self-determination, and employment of Indians and Alaska Natives.

In order to be eligible for assistance using TTP funds, roads and other transportation facilities must be in the National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory (NTTFI). The regulations limit the maximum length of access roads that may be included on the NTTFI for eligibility purposes to 15 miles. Some Tribes in remote rural areas have expressed concerns that the 15-mile limitation disproportionately affects their ability to plan and carry out important transportation projects. This raises the question of whether the one-size-fits-all mileage limitation can adequately accommodate the diverse geographic and regional conditions affecting the transportation needs of Tribes and their members, or whether a different approach may better fulfill the TTP's purpose.

I invite you to participate in consultation sessions on the access road eligibility criteria in 25 C.F.R. § 170.447. The schedule for the consultation sessions is listed below and includes sessions at times intended to accommodate Tribes in Alaska and the lower 48 States:

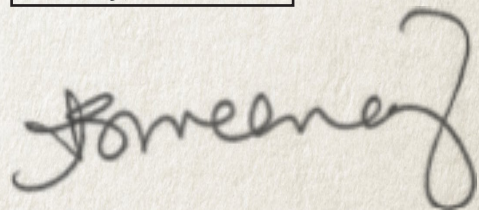
Consultation for:	Date	Time (Eastern Time)	Call-in Number	Passcode
Tribes in the Lower 48	January 15, 2021	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	888-606-8412	“DOI”
Alaska Tribes	January 15, 2021	4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	800-857-9676	“DOI”
Alaska Tribes	January 19, 2021	4 p.m. – 6 p.m.	800-857-9676	“DOI”

To assist in our discussions, and to ensure that the Department gathers all relevant information and views, I include the following questions as a starting point for our discussions:

- How has the existing 15-mile limit impacted Tribes, particularly in remote and rural regions?
- What criteria other than mileage could be used in determining which access roads may be included in the NTTFI?
- How regional differences that affect access to transportation and construction infrastructure could be factored into determining which access roads may be included in the NTTFI?

I also encourage you to send comments or inquiries to consultation@bia.gov as well. If you would like additional information or have further questions, please contact Mr. Matthew Kelly, Counselor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, at (202) 208-4319.

Sincerely,



Tara Sweeney
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Bethel Employee of the Year: Beverly Turner



Beverly Turner has been with AVCP for more than thirty years. She has spent a lifetime serving the AVCP region. She started her AVCP career in 1988, then spent the next 30 years as a EET Case Manager. She is currently the EET CC Manager. Some member tribes affectionately refer to Beverly as "Chief" due to her Yukon heritage.

Her work over the last 30 years has impacted hundreds of clients lives. She helped so many tribal members fulfill their dreams of becoming a pilot or teacher or VPO. She has assisted hundreds of families with child care, too. Her 30 plus years of service to the region has made the number of tribal members she's helped too many to count.

Beverly has always been determined to see her clients succeed. She is relentless; always looking for ways to support tribal members.

Her commitment to the betterment of the region is her life's work.



Bethel Employee of the Year: Charlene Wuya



Charlene Wuya has really stepped up as a new Program Manager. She has gone above and beyond the expectations of her role as Tribal Services Program Manager. Not only has she provided great leadership within her team to achieve day to day deliverables of existing Tribal Service's functions but she has led her team to be able to provide technical assistance to the 56 tribes on CARES Act funds that they have received. That means receiving random call throughout the day from all different types of tribes, compacted and non-compacted to provide guidance and field questions. They have also provided region-wide trainings on various subjects to assist our tribes build their capacity to manage their CARES Act funds. She has gone above and beyond and we are so grateful to have Charlene as part of the AVCP team. The region and AVCP have really benefited from her passion to do well for the tribes.



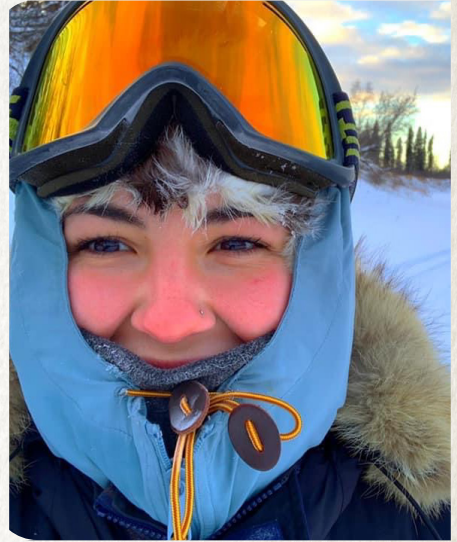
Village Employee of the Year: Audrey Leary



Audrey is an example of AVCP's grow your own commitment. Audrey is a former EET Client and was assisted by AVCP in her schooling. After completing college, and being a teacher, Audrey began her career at AVCP at TWD. She has filled nearly every role in TWD since she started working for AVCP, and is currently the Deputy Manager.

Audrey has played a key role in the growth of the TWD; whether it be planning and training, or developing new ways to assist clients. Audrey's finger prints are all over improving client service delivery. Her strong leadership, combined with her cooperative attitude, have helped her to lead by example. Her passion is helping youth succeed, and her goal continues to be to improve the lives of all Tribal Members.

Audrey's roots are deeply planted on the shores of the Kuskokwim and the AVCP Region, and she is committed to find ways to serve the people.



Department of the Year: Benefits Division



Despite the pandemic, the Benefits Division has continued providing much needed assistance payments to our TANF, SS, and LIHEAP clients. They are one of few departments that continue to come into the office to process these applications and payments. With the leadership and guidance from their Division Director, Kathy Nenneman, the division has created safe processes and procedures to continue operations during the pandemic. Their operations are working so well that they are on the process of opening our LIHEAP assistance payments to clients in December which the earliest we have made LIHEAP available to our clients to keep their homes warm in this cold weather season. Way to go Benefits Division!



QIP UPDATES

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.

AVCP Healthy Families Partners to Provide Support to Alaska National Guard Veterans and Families

AVCP has recently partnered with the National Guard to help veterans and families in need by giving them resources and referring them to services.

The National Guard provides a large number of resources. Our liason Kera Spoulding is interested in including some culturally relevant resources for recruits from the YK Delta, such as the Healthy Families Workshop. During this unprecedented time in our nation's history, it seems especially important to provide as many resources as possible.

AVCP is happy to partner with the National Guard to provide those resources and help our region through these trying times.

NATURAL RESOURCES

**Reminder that all AVCP locations are locked due to COVID-19 until further notice.
Please schedule an appointment for any client needs.**

**(907) 543-7300
or Toll Free
1 (800) 478-3521**

Wildfire Updates

Winter Safety

AVCP would like to remind everyone to take proper precautions for this winter season. We've lived here for many years, so it is easy to become complacent. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves of the basics, especially if we have been preoccupied with the new and unfamiliar.

Stay up to date on weather conditions, and dress appropriately. Be mindful of the terrain, as daymelt freezes into slick ice during the night. Listen to advisories on safe travel over the ice, and know not to risk yourself and others by trying to tread on something too thin to hold you.

Travel responsibly. Inform someone if you are going somewhere and when you expect to get there, so that if you are missing at that time people know to search for you right away.

Celebrate responsibly. Celebrations can often include releasing inhibitions, and judgement can be impaired. Take precautions, like having a trusted person check on you every so often. Do not overindulge. No one means to fall asleep in the snow, but we know the dangers of it. Make sure to protect yourself from that danger.

Galena Zone



Southwest Zone



END OF YEAR WRAP-UP

Annual AVCP All-Staff Training

Recently, all AVCP staff throughout the region (and in some cases, outside the region,) attended a virtual training seminar to realign and reaffirm our goals as a company. This included trainings on Program Coordination and Collaboration, Organizational Structure, Harassment, and Policy updates.

This training was hosted virtually to accommodate AVCP's efforts on mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Much of AVCP's staff have been successfully working remotely to ensure the safety of both our employees and our clients.

Though the seminars were not attended physically, our staff did not let that stop them from providing thought-provoking presentations, along with helpful supporting documents. With renewed understanding of our Policies and Procedures, we get a sense of what AVCP does for our community and how we achieve those results.

Not only did AVCP want to reaffirm our values, we wanted to bolster our spirits as well. Quizzes and prizes were dispersed throughout the training to break any monotony, and we took time to enjoy two singing performances from our staff. We also took some time to celebrate the years of service for many of our staff members.

Those reaching their 5 year milestones include:

Monica M Charles
Teresa Simeon Hunter
Robert Pitka
Cynthia J Ontiveros
Elizabeth M Pederson
Susan M Motgin
Martina Ayagalria
Martha L Mercurief
David L Andrew
Robert J Hunter
Nicole W George
Felica F Cook
Tom D Charlie
Audrey E Leary
Regina Diamond
William Kanuk
Kimberly Kozevnikoff
Laura Kashatok
Minnie Steven

Those reaching their 10 year milestones were:

Brent J Latham

Diane Nicholas

Josephine Daniel

Those reaching 15 years of service include:

Aaron Mute

Charlene Striling

Martina Brink

John McIntyre

Two who reached their 20 year milestones were:

Pauline Palacios

Mark Leary

And finally, celebrating a whole **25 years of service** with AVCP is our own Sharon Peter.

Our staff honors us with their long years of service and their continued faith in the mission of AVCP.

Lastly, we recognized the employees that exemplify what AVCP's mission is through their above and beyond efforts to help the company. Those Employees of the Year show us the success of our vision, along with our Division of the Year. (see page 4-5)

Going Forward

As we ring in the new year, AVCP thanks the strength of our people and our region. 2020 was a difficult time for us all, but we have hope for the future. It is through that strength that we may look forward to a brighter tomorrow, knowing that even in the darkest times, we supported each other. Even in uncertainty, we stuck to our values and protected what is dear to us.

It is easy to become discouraged, and it is easy to fall into carelessness from a desire to go out and escape that gloom. Especially during the holidays, where we want to celebrate with friends and family. It takes strength to resolve yourself, knowing that this distance is necessary. Showing your love and compassion for your loved ones without endangering them takes effort. We made that effort, and we continue to do so.

AVCP thanks our people, our staff, our communities. We believe in our region, and our region has never broken that faith. To all who read this, we thank you.

Here is to a brighter tomorrow. Happy 2021, Everyone!