

YK Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Energy Working Group

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm, Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Link to meeting recording [here](#)

Attendees (alphabetized by organization)

Name	Organization	Email
Audrey Alstrom	Alaska Energy Authority	aalstrom@akenergyauthority.org
Anne Kelly	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Rural Energy	aekelly@anthc.org
Anna Sattler	Alaska Village Electric Cooperative	asattler@avec.org
Diane Atti	Association of Village Council Presidents	datti@avcp.org
Regina Therchik	Calista	regina.therchik@calistacorp.com
Brenda Pacarro	Calista	bpacarro@calistacorp.com
Calista Gov. Relations	Calista	govrelations@calistacorp.com
Leila Johnson	Calista	ljohnson@calistacorp.com
Sean Glasheen	Nuvista Light and Electric Cooperative	stglasheen@nuvistacoop.org
Chris McConnell	Renewable Energy Alaska Project	cmccConnell@realaska.org
Facilitated by Molly Mylius and Meg Friedenauer, Agnew::Beck		

Objectives

- Introduce the Purpose and Process of the YK CEDS
- Reminder of the 2020/2021 YK CEDS Energy Strategy and Actions
- Share what we've learned based on recent interviews and supplemental research, including progress since the group last came together in March 2022
- Discuss solutions to the energy needs of the YK region and topics for collaboration this winter

Discussion Notes

Review and Discuss Past YK CEDS Energy Recommendations

- The project team shared the 2020/2021 YK CEDS Energy Strategy and Actions (copied below) and offered a brief recap of where the group left off at the March 2022 Energy Working Group meeting (see slides for additional details).

STRATEGY 6: Build renewable energy infrastructure and address barriers to building more renewable energy infrastructure in the YK Delta.

6-A. Implement energy action plans for TKC communities.

6-B. Collect energy audits that have been completed but not actioned. If possible, bundle projects for implementation.

6-C. Establish a Regional Utility Facility Support Collaborative to advocate for rural utilities. Create an inventory of existing/needed feasibility studies and bundle implementation of related projects.

STRATEGY 6: Build renewable energy infrastructure and address barriers to building more renewable energy infrastructure in the YK Delta.

6-D. Construct a gas line to deliver natural gas to the region, providing an alternative source for energy and heat generation.

Discussion on Existing Strategies and Actions

6-A: The Kuskokwim Corporation completed action plans. (TKC not able to attend today's meeting.)

6-B: Nuvista and ANTHC believe this work has been completed.

6-C: This action item should be divided:

- Establish a Regional Utility Facility Support Collaborative to advocate for rural utilities - Nuvista determined that a regional collaborative is probably not feasible or financially sustainable. It might be possible if outside funding was secured, but not if communities were funding it themselves.
- Create an inventory of existing/needed feasibility studies and bundle implementation of related projects – This action is still needed so that communities and organizations have technical data available for competitive grants.

6-D: This opportunity may present itself if a mine moves forward but until/unless that happens, this action doesn't have any updates.

Project Updates

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a grant opportunity to create community action plans for fossil fuel use reduction. ANTHC is applying for this grant to do community action plans to identify projects that in turn, can apply for funding from EPA. Projects not identified in those plans would not qualify for funding. The deadline for that grant is April or May. Information from the Community Assessment Tool in this CEDS process might help inform some of this work. The intent is to make the results of the tool widely available.
- Alaska Energy Authority has an [Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program](#) and are using funds from that to establish a renewable energy village energy efficiency program. This is a new resource available for communities in the region that are working on carbon reduction projects. This grant is available to local governments that haven't received funds directly from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG). AEA hopes to advertise the request for applications by the end of December and the application period will be open until February at least.
- AEA recently launched an online library where the public can access hundreds of past reports (i.e., recon and feasibility studies). <https://acalibrary.org/WebLink/> The library is only available in desktop mode, not for mobile sites. Library is easy to search by village or community.
- On the Project Updates slide 3 of 4, some of the communities mentioned have renewable energy in place already but may be looking to upgrades to existing renewable energy.
- Some resources for rural utilities and capacity development in the energy sector can be found at: Alaska Network of Energy Education and Employment: <https://aneetworks.org/>
- US Department of Energy has created a new program called [Arctic Energy Ambassadors Program](#). They will provide support for 12 individuals to focus on energy security around the state. The

application period is already closed. Sean Glasheen applied for this opportunity; results should be announced by end of January 2024.

Data Presentation – Sean Glasheen, Nuvista Executive Director

- Nuvista researched Power Cost Equalization (PCE) data and gathering other data with the help of ANTHC, like diesel loads, fuel costs, etc. That started to reveal some directions for what communities needed i.e., energy plans, projects, etc. Nuvista then created a prioritization rubric and identified six communities that Nuvista and ANTHC will work with to get technical feasibility studies done so they can apply for competitive grants for projects. The data comes from a variety of sources and has helped identify needs, potential project costs, and information needed for grant application. Nuvista may try to put this data into capital projects requests for the state and welcomes other ideas for how to use the data. While Nuvista can identify the potential cost savings and determine where projects would be the most beneficial, Nuvista does not have the funds to go after these projects on their own on behalf of communities.
- It would also be beneficial to look at the low percentages of communities utilizing PCE and encourage them to apply for their community facilities to receive PCE.

Potential Solutions (Bullets in bold were shared as potential areas of focus for the working group; related discussion is below each one)

- **Research and invest in renewable energy**
 - Need more support for communities with funding efforts. This includes Admin and tech support in finding and applying for project funding, and funding for project management if/when projects are funded.
 - Continue investigating energy needs that come out of action plans. Develop action plans when necessary.
 - Being realistic about what communities can and cannot do: finding eligible applicants, setting aside land, exploring partnerships between community/organizations/governing entities and outline responsibilities and expectations to help with efforts. Who has capacity for what.
 - Regional collaboration approach or broken into sub-regions for energy planning.
 - Identify/track tech innovations, sharing information about advancements and innovations across the region.
 - AEA offers PCE clerk training and can travel to complete the training. Requests can be made by emailing info@akenergyauthority.org.
- **Improve utility operations, reliability, and data collection**
 - Managing expectations is important – i.e., what is viable in our region, what is realistic.
 - Important to use reliable contractors (contact AVEC, other agencies/organizations to hear about experiences or for recommendations). DOE has resources for technical questions/assistance for helping select contractors, too.
 - Operator training opportunities - https://www.akenergyauthority.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jBEIvR_ua9s%3d&portalid=0
 - Heat recovery – ANTHC has heat recovery data for YK communities.
 - Catalog existing reports and plans.
 - If organizations would like to add documents to the AEA library, they can send the reports via attachment to aalibrary@akenergyauthority.org. Use “Request for Upload:

[xyz]” in the subject line so that it’s clear that it’s a request to have something added to the library.

- **Reduce costs and invest in weatherization**

RurAL Cap has residential weatherization programs <https://ruralcap.org/client-services/housing/weatherization/>.

- AEA is collaborating with AHFC and anticipates initiating a program that will distribute \$75 million through the HOMES rebate programs. These will be rebates, and no match is required.

- **Increase capacity of local energy workforce**

- Grant writing training, for all the money through Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), is really needed.
- PCE and QuickBooks, administrative capacity building.
- More local workforce and operator training (i.e., power plant training, bulk fuel storage training.)

Prioritization Poll

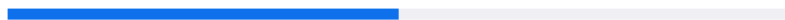
Prioritizing our Focus

Poll | 1 question | 6 of 8 (75%) participated

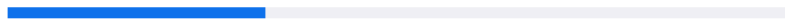
1. Which of these topics are most important for us to discuss at the February 2024 YK CEDS Work Session? (Multiple Choice)

6/6 (100%) answered

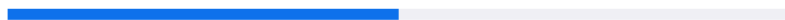
Improve Utility Operations, Reliability, and Data Collection (3/6) 50%



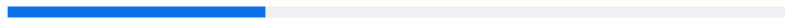
Increase Capacity of Local Energy Workforce (2/6) 33%



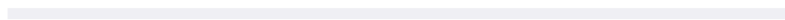
Reduce Costs & Invest in Weatherization (3/6) 50%



Research and Invest in Renewable Energy (2/6) 33%



Other (0/6) 0%



Wrap up and Next Steps

- Slides, notes, and the meeting recording will be sent out to all participants.
- The project team will be convening other working groups over the coming months.
- The YK CEDS work session will be happening this winter in early February 2024. This will be when the energy working group comes back together.