

A LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR DIOMEDE

Top Economic Priorities - 2003

1. Search and Rescue/Fire Department Training
2. Housing Improvement and New Housing
3. Prevention Programs
4. Sanitation
5. Law Enforcement
6. Employment Opportunities (Job Creation)
7. Vocational Training and Higher Education Programs Improvement
8. Land Expansion for Progress
9. Communication Improvement (new telephone system)
10. Lobby Wildlife Services (i.e. State and Federal agencies) for quality of life improvements

Workshop Participants

Carolyn Ahkvaluk,	IRA President
Donna Ahkvaluk,	IRA Member
Orville Ahkinga Jr,	IRA Member
Dora Ahkinga, IRA	Treasurer/City Mayor
Arthur Ahkinga,	IRA Member/President Inalik Native Corporation
Becky Kunayak,	City Council Member
Martha Kayouktuk,	City Council Member
Mary Menadelook,	City Council Member
Patrick Omiak Sr,	Vice-Mayor
Patrick Soolook	Member Inalik Native Corporation
Frances Ozenna	City Manager
Etta Menadelook	Tribal Coordinator
Charles Menadelook	Facilitator
George Ahkinga	Resident
Jamie Ahkinga	Resident
Marlene Ahkinga	Resident
John Ahkvaluk	Resident
Ernest Iyapana Sr	Resident
Edward Soolook	Resident
Robert Soolook Jr	Resident

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NATIVE VILLAGE OF DIOMEDE VISION STATEMENT

Our Village of Diomedes's Vision for the Future is to promote Health and Education for our Children, Protect their well-being through Healthy Living and Education. Protect and preserve our cultural heritage through Educating our children about our Unique Culture. Ensure services provided by State, Federal, and Non-Profit Entities that the Native Village of Diomedes is entitled to are received for the benefit of the residents of the Village of Diomedes.

INTRODUCTION: Diomedes has a population of 138 people 2000 U.S. Census and is located on the West coast of Little Diomedes Island in the Bering Strait, 80 miles northwest of Teller and 130 Miles Northwest of Nome Alaska. The island which is located only 2.5 miles from Big Diomedes Island, formally the U.S.S.R., is a mass of boulders and is approximately seven miles in area. There is a small rocky beach immediately West of the village and from there the land rises steeply on all sides to 1,250 feet. The top is broken tableland with no trees or shrubs and scant vegetation. The international boundary between the United States and the Russian Federation lies between the islands. In summer nearly 2 million seabirds nest on the island cliffs and crevices.

HISTORY: Inupiaq on the island were fearless men of the ice and sea. There were great travelers to both Siberia and the Alaska Mainland, conducting trade with both continents. The Present Village site, which is believed by some archaeologists to be 3,000 years old or older, was originally a spring hunting site and gradually became inhabited as a permanent settlement. The Inupiaq name for the village is Inalik, meaning "the other one" or "the one over there." The name "Inga-Look" was first recorded by Captain C.L. Hooper in 1880; on August 15, 1728, Captain Commander Vitus Bering discovered the islands and named both in honor of St. Diomedes. The village is now commonly known as Little Diomedes. Early explorers noted that the islands' inhabitants had an advanced culture and practiced elaborate whale hunting ceremonies.

After World War II the Soviet Union established the Iron Curtain and Big Diomedes became a Russian military base. All native residents were forcibly moved to the mainland Russia and the residents of Little Diomedes never saw their relatives again. During the post World War II Cold War, Little Diomedes residents who went to visit Big Diomedes to see relatives were taken captive and held as prisoners in Siberia for a whole summer. The villagers are very cautious about straying into Soviet waters today. Many of the Diomedes People have relatives in Siberia and on occasion have met their Siberian relatives in the middle of the strait separating the two islands.

ACCOMMODATIONS: There are no public accommodations available. Arrangements for accommodations can be made at the school or through the Inalik Native Corporation. Diomedes has no restaurant or banking services but meals can be bought from the Diomedes school cafeteria. Limited groceries and sporting goods are available at the Diomedes store. Arts and crafts available for purchase include carved ivory and hand sewn slippers and other garments. Fishing and hunting licenses are not available nor are guide or repair services. Arrangements can be made to rent boats. Fuel available includes marine gas and number one fuel oil.

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PRIVATE HOUSING: Housing consists mainly of BIA and HUD prefabricated houses. Prior to 1976 the housing consisted mainly of traditional (Kugrie) housing. These sod houses were made of wood frame covered by a layer of sod and then covered entirely by rocks.

INFRASTRUCTURE: There is no permanent airstrip for planes, but the village uses heavy equipment and sometimes water to create a landing strip on top of the ice that freezes during the winter. A helicopter flies out to the village once a week during the ice free months and when the ice has not frozen hard enough to make a landing strip. In 1994 the Department of Transportation constructed a heliport and the helicopters now have a permanent place to land.

The fresh water system in Diomedes consists of one large water tank which is filled in the summer months by runoff and sometimes by desalinization of sea water. There is no running water going to the village's houses except to the high school and elementary school and the teacher's living quarters. There is however a public washateria with showers and laundry services as well as a watering point where the residents can get fresh water at 50 cents per 10 gallons. Due to the ground consisting mostly of boulders and the steep terrain, the PHS and other authorities have ruled out underground piping of water.

There is no community sewer system in Diomedes, and most residents use honeybuckets. The untreated waste is dumped directly into the sea or, in winter, onto the ice. The school has a chemical toilet with a 12,000 gallon bio-pure treatment plan. Because of the rocky terrain and steep slopes and inaccessibility, PHS and BIA have ruled out alternate methods of liquid waste disposal.

Solid Waste (trash) is dumped directly onto the ice in the winter and into the ocean in the summer. Burnable products are incinerated. Due to the ground condition and the isolation of Diomedes, the PHS has found no other alternative.

The village has a high school and elementary school serving grades 1-12 both run by the Bering Straits School District. There are 3 High School teachers, 2 elementary school teachers and one teacher for pre-school and Head Start. The school sponsors trips for the students to participate in the district wrestling tournament and volleyball tournament held at different villages throughout the region.

Jobs in the village consist mainly of service oriented employment. The employment statistics are as follows: School 18 employees, City of Diomedes 27 Employees, Native Village of Diomedes 11 employees, Inalik Native Corporation 3 Employees. Of these about 15 to 20 Percent are temporary or as needed in nature. While the rest are full or part-time employees. The rest of the village residents make their living on subsistence, governmental assistance and Retirement Pay.

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Plans for a Small Boat Harbor are being studied and the Army Corps of Engineers are doing the Feasibility Study prior to actual construction which will happen in the next 5 to 7 years.

DIOMEDE STRENGTHS

1. Good Organizational Management, Diomedé has Good Organizational Management at City and IRA Councils as well as the Inalik Native Corporation
2. Healthcare has Improved a little over the years for the residents of Diomedé
3. Subsistence Hunting has always been and continues to play an important role in Diomedé Life
4. Traditional Food Preservation and Preparation our traditions and customs are strong where food is concerned
5. Youth Diomedé's Youth is the most important resource that Diomedé has
6. Good Participation at meetings and responding to an emergency Situation
7. Good Parents Diomedé has Good Parents
8. Versatility in Dealing with Everyday Life Issues in Diomedé. Diomedé residents have an uncommon knack in dealing with issues that affect life in Diomedé
9. Subsistence Gathering. Has always been and continues to play an important role in Diomedé Life
10. People Share whatever they have with each other.

DIOMEDE WEAKNESSES:

1. Substance Abuse in Diomedé is a growing Problem
2. Low Participation at meetings meetings are posted and people seldom participate
3. Lack of Respect for People and Property
4. Family Politics causes loss of morale and causes bickering between families
5. Isolated Diomedé is too isolated and it causes unique issues in Diomedé
6. Lack of Community Activities I.E. No One Plays Community Baseball or Games anymore
7. Loss of Language People are speaking English more and more
8. Loss of Traditional Values
9. Poor Parenting Skills children are doing poorly at schools and misbehaving in the village
10. Lack of Local Employment Opportunities
11. Low Cash Economy
12. Not Enough Recycling
13. Low Job Skills or Training
14. Lack of Childcare Services
15. People Being Stranded in Wales
16. Not Enough Mail Flights

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17. Lack of Health Care Transportation for emergency and medical checkups
18. Lack of Employment or Post Employment Counseling
19. Not Enough Health and Mental Professional Visits to Diomed
20. Littering
21. Sanitation
22. Lack of Respect for Local Laws
23. Lack of Local Law Enforcement
24. Lack of Respect for Traditional Resources
25. Lack of Parent and Community Involvement with the School
26. Lack of Designated Duty Guards
27. Not Many in the Village Can Swim

DIOMEDE OPPORTUNITIES

1. Crab Fishery
2. Harbor Facility
3. Carving
4. Ivory Co-Op
5. Small Businesses
6. VPSO
7. Tourism
8. Sauna
9. Teaching Traditional Values
10. Child Care
11. Border Enforcement for a Customs Agent
12. Local Walrus Monitor
13. Wildlife Tourism Guide
14. Bed and Breakfast
15. Coffee Shop
16. Snack Shop
17. Full-time Youth Coordinator
18. Local Food Distributor
19. Transportation Opportunities
I.E. Boat Transportation for People from Diomed to Nome Postal Contract
20. Village Planners
21. Outdoor Recreation for Children
22. Improved Airport Maintenance Equipment
23. Health Club

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DIOMEDE THREATS:

1. Loss of Traditional Values
2. Loss of Local Business to Outside Businesses
3. Hunting Regulations
4. Hazardous Living Conditions
5. Land Slide
6. Avalanche
7. Fire Safety
8. Tidal Wave
9. Loss of Language
10. Substance Abuse
11. Too Much Verbal Abuse Towards Children
12. Too Many Conflicting International Laws for the Border
13. Lack of Foster Parents in Diomedes
14. Seabird Sanctuary Interfering with Progress
15. Non-Natives Coming to Diomedes Waters to Hunt or Fish
16. Not Teaching Youth to Respect Others Mainly Elders
17. Not Enough Social Interaction
18. Gambling and Bingo
19. Too Much Television
20. Too Much Television Games
21. Too Many Aircraft flying overhead, Interferes with Wildlife and Hunting.

TOP 10 ECONOMIC PRIORITIES FOR DIOMEDE

Priority #1. SEARCH AND RESCUE, FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING

GOAL: Establish a Fire Department to Facilitate the Training and recruitment of Volunteers for both Fire Fighting and Search and Rescue.

Objective #1:

- Post Sign-up Sheets for the Volunteer Fire Department and solicit Support from the Local Governments to organize the Local Volunteer Fire Department.
- Appoint a Fire Chief through the Diomedes City Council. Diomedes is in need of training for fire fighting and organizational training.

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Timeline: As Soon As Possible

Person/Agency Responsible: Fire Chief

Possible Funding Sources: Department of The Interior, Indian Health Service, Diomedes City Council, Native Village of Diomedes

Objective #2:

- Post Sign-up Sheets for the Diomedes Search And Rescue First Responders
- Solicit support from the local governments to organize the Diomedes First Responders Program. Diomedes is in need of training for Search and Rescue Organization and First Aid and Rescue Procedures.

Timeline: As Soon As Possible

Person/Agency Responsible: Search and Rescue Coordinator

Possible Funding Sources: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, Alaska Department of Emergency Services. Kawerak, Inc.

Priority #2: HOUSING IMPROVEMENT AND NEW HOUSING

GOAL: Get Adequate Housing

Objective #1:

- It's been 30 years since the Village of Diomedes has received any assistance in housing improvements or new housing. Seek assistance from Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority and Kawerak Housing Improvement Program to address the issue or ask what else needs to be done to alleviate the situation.

Timeline: April 19, 2003

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Person/Agency Responsible: Carolyn Ahkvaluk, President Native Village of Diomedede

Possible Funding Sources: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Private Funding Grants, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

Priority #3. PREVENTION PROGRAMS

GOAL: Establish Prevention Programs for the Newly Released Criminal Offenders

Objective #1:

- Work with the Department of Corrections to ensure that the Newly Released Criminal Offenders are at the lowest amount of risk of repeat offense before being released in the village of Diomedede.
- Establish if feasible, a tracking procedure to ensure or to minimize the likelihood of repeat offense by newly released criminal offenders.

Timeline: As Soon as Possible

Person/Agency Responsible: City Manager or VPSO

Possible Funding Sources: State of Alaska Department of Corrections, Department of Justice Grants.

PRIORITY #4: SANITATION

GOAL: To Improve the Health and Well Being of the Village of Diomedede through Improving on Sanitation Issues in the Village

Objective #1:

- Work with the Native Village of Diomedede, Inalik Native Corporation and the Diomedede City Council to develop a comprehensive Waste Management Plan.

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Objective #2:

- Work with the Native Village of Diomedes, Inalik Native Corporation and the Diomedes City Council to develop and enforce Waste Management Ordinances within the Village of Diomedes.

Objective #3:

- Research, and apply for, grants and contracts with the State of Alaska and Federal Agencies to fund Services provided by the Diomedes City Council.

Timeline: Grant Deadlines

Person/Agency Responsible: Diomedes City Council, Native Village of Diomedes, Kawerak, Inc.

Possible Funding Sources: State of Alaska Village Safe Water Project, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, Public Health Service

PRIORITY #5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

GOAL: Provide Adequate Law Enforcement to the Village of Diomedes

Objective 1:

- Recruit for and hire Law Enforcement Personnel for the City of Diomedes. Law Enforcement Personnel will attend Village Public Safety Officer Training in Sitka.

Timeline: As Soon As Possible

Person/Agency Responsible: City Manager

Objective 2:

- Work with The Native Village of Diomedes and the Diomedes City Council to look for funding sources for the newly filled positions.

Timeline: As Soon As Possible

Person/Agency Responsible: Tribal Coordinator and City Manager

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Possible Funding Sources: Kawerak, Inc., State of Alaska State Troopers.,

PRIORITY #6:. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (JOB CREATION)

Goal: Create Feasible and Long Lasting Employment Opportunities and Provide Maximum Support of All Employment Opportunities in Diomede

Objective 1:

- Through the Grant Writer, working with the Diomede City Council, Native Village of Diomede, and Kawerak Community Services, research and write grant applications for both organizations to create employment opportunities for Diomede Residents.

Timeline: Quarterly

Person/Agency Responsible: Grant Writer, Tribal Coordinator, and City Manager

Possible Funding Sources: Kawerak, Inc., Public and Private Grants

PRIORITY #7: VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IMPROVEMENT

Goal: To Provide Vocational Training Opportunities for Individuals within the Village of Diomede who are Interested and Improve the Higher Education Opportunities for High School Graduates and Individuals Interested in Attending College.

Objective 1:

- Research and Develop Training Opportunities for individuals in Diomede to Improve the list of skilled workers in Diomede.

Objective 2:

- Work with Kawerak Higher Education Program to improve coordination efforts to assist interested Individuals and High School graduates attend colleges of their choice.

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Timeline: As Soon As Possible

Person/Agency Responsible: Tribal Coordinator

Possible Funding Sources: Kawerak, Inc., Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, Public and Private Grants

PRIORITY #8: LAND EXPANSION FOR PROGRESS

Goal: Expand the Land Base of the Village of Diomedes to Provide for Expansion of the Village of Diomedes by Making More Room for Housing and Village Infrastructure.

Objective 1:

- Write to the Department of Defense to see if they could assist in developing a feasibility study for land expansion in the village of Diomedes.

Objective 2:

- Work with the Department of Defense, Army Corps of Engineers to see if it is feasible to expand the village out to the west in order to build Private and Public Buildings.

Timeline: August 30 2003

Person/Agency Responsible: Tribal Coordinator and City Manager

Possible Funding Sources: Army Corps of Engineers, State of Alaska Department of Transportation, Private and Public Funding Grants.

PRIORITY#9: COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT (NEW TELEPHONE SYSTEM)

Goal: To Improve the Communications Capability for Diomedes Residents and Businesses

Objective 1:

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- Petition the AT&T Alascom Company to see if they could set up a direct link to Satellite for Telephone Services in Diomedede.

Timeline: June 2003

Person/Agency Responsible: Diomedede City Council

Possible Funding Sources: N/A

PRIORITY #10: LOBBY WILDLIFE SERVICES (I.E. STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES) FOR QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENTS.

Goal: Work to improve Native Status in the Wildlife Services' community Goal.

Objective 1:

- Work closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service to make our issues heard and recognized through letters and if possible meetings with Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Fish and Game.

Timeline: As soon as Communications are opened

Person/Agency Responsible: Tribal Coordinator and City Manager