

NEWTOK RELOCATION QUARTERLY UPDATE

INFORMATION FOR NEWTOK RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROVIDED BY PROJECT MANAGER ANTHC TO KEEP STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED OF PROGRESS, KEY MILESTONES AND NEXT STEPS OF THE RELOCATION.

Power plant module shell complete



The module power plant shell was completed in Anchorage in March, at which time UICC began interior work on the facility.

Mertarvik accomplishments

HEAVY EQUIPMENT SHOP

The design for Mertarvik's heavy equipment shop was completed in March. The shop will be a two-bay, pre-engineered metal building capable of sheltering heavy equipment from the Newtok Village Council (NVC) fleet. Equipment needing repairs can be stored and fixed at the shop. The shop will also store equipment for maintaining roads and will temporarily house equipment used to maintain the emergency landing strip until a full-service, Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT) airport can be constructed. The village asked that the main structure of the building be painted green and the shop doors black. UIC Construction (UICC) will build the heavy equipment shop foundation in the spring. Service members from the Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program will erect the pre-engineered building this summer.

PASS UNITS

Portable Alternative Sanitation System (PASS) units are being installed in every home in Mertarvik, including the eight existing homes currently on site and the 13 new homes that will be completed by October. In March, ANTHC employees drove snow machines from Newtok to Mertarvik to take photos and measurements of the interiors and exteriors of existing homes for engineers to determine the correct fit and design of the PASS units. In April, ANTHC engineers completed the design of the PASS units for all Mertarvik homes.

MERTARVIK EVACUATION CENTER

This past winter, ANTHC worked with the Lower Yukon Kuskokwim School District to determine design criteria for a pioneering school in Mertarvik, which will serve the community until funding for a full service school is secured. The pioneer school will be housed in the Mertarvik Evacuation Center (MEC), a 6,500 square foot building designed by LCG to hold five classrooms, a kitchen, an office, a storage room, two full bathrooms, two half bathrooms and a sprinkler system. Approximately 40 students will start school there this fall, but the facility has enough space to accommodate school growth over the next couple of years. The MEC will also serve as a gathering place in the evenings for community meetings and student events.



UICC will construct the interior of the MEC to accommodate school service starting this October.

Design and construction update

ONGOING CONSTRUCTION EFFORTS IN MERTARVIK

Major construction will begin in Mertarvik in June. To prepare for the aggressive summer schedule, UICC began camp and equipment mobilization in April. UICC's initial start-up projects included completing an airstrip extension to allow for the landing of Medivac planes, a critically important measure for the safety of residents before the full-service airport is constructed. UICC also widened the extended airstrip road and installed turnaround points for planes to safely maneuver about the runway.

In addition, UICC made repairs to the Newtok Village Council's equipment fleet, some of which UICC is leasing for the summer. Other initial projects included building IRT and UICC camp pads, expanding the laydown area, constructing access trails for house pad construction and installing water and sewer service for construction camps. Brice, Inc. also arrived to Mertarvik in April to start gravel production at the quarry and in May they began construction of house pads.

UPCOMING CONSTRUCTION

Starting in June, an estimated 90 people will be working in Mertarvik, including 50 members of the military IRT program, and many local Newtok residents working for UICC and Brice Inc. The IRT construction crew plans to build the heavy equipment shop, community roads, the landfill and four homes. During the IRT's stay, UICC will coordinate with their crew and the IRT on safety and joint projects. Through August, the UICC crew will upgrade the bulk fuel storage, construct the power plant and build nine homes. After the IRT leaves in August, an estimated 45 workers will be present in Mertarvik through November. UICC will finish building houses,

perform interior renovations to the MEC in preparation for fall school service, and install the modular water plant and water distribution system. UICC will also begin installing the PASS systems in each home, construct power lines through the community and make energy efficiency improvements to the NVC camp before closing it down for the winter. Community houses and the MEC pioneering school facility will be ready for an October 15 occupancy date.

Community Partnerships

The Center for Safety Equity in Transportation (CSET) at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF) is working with the Newtok Village Council to develop outreach activities concerning road safety, bike education, dust mitigation and more. Newtok is a boardwalk community, but Mertarvik will have gravel roads.

CSET is developing information to help residents transition to a gravel road network, such as how to safely navigate mixed-use roadways that may include walking, biking and ATVS. They are also developing a program on dust mitigation and management, which will increase overall air quality and help the community maintain its gravel roads.

Planning

SOLID WASTE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

ANTHC and Zender Environmental are working with Newtok to develop a solid waste operations and maintenance plan for Mertarvik that best fits the community's needs. Options being considered are in-home collection or collection at a central location in the village where residents can self-haul trash. Instead of self-haul to the landfill, residents could haul to a collection bin at the landfill entrance where an operator would collect trash weekly.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ensuring that residents in Mertarvik can access services similar to those in Newtok is an important part of the relocation planning process. Services include access to health care, groceries, internet and more. ANTHC is working with various partners to provide services to residents, including GCI for telecommunications, YKHC for health care services and U.S. Postal Service for mail delivery to create a smooth and successful transition to Mertarvik. Initial services will be less robust than in Newtok, but will grow as the relocation progresses. For example, the store and clinic in Mertarvik will be housed in temporary structures until permanent facilities can be established. These pioneering facilities will ensure Mertarvik residents have access to services that safeguard their health and quality of life before the relocation is complete.

ANTHC is working with partners to provide services to residents, including the U.S. Postal Service for mail delivery.

MOVE-IN MANUAL & GUIDEBOOK

ANTHC is striving to provide as much relocation support to Newtok as possible. Partners are working on more than just funding, design and construction for the new village; they are creating resources to ensure the transition is as successful as possible and that Mertarvik is a vibrant, thriving and healthy community. ANTHC and Sally Cox of the State of Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) are creating a relocation guidebook with information on living in the new community, such as available health care, school services, air service and more. In addition, ANTHC's Air and Healthy Homes program is working with the Newtok relocation team to create a move-in manual on living in and maintaining the homes in Mertarvik. Each resident will receive hands-on training and a manual on living in their CCHRC or AVCP home, as Mertarvik homes will contain more advanced systems than Newtok's. Training topics will include using and maintaining the in-home PASS unit, proper ventilation, air quality and the heating system.



Anticipated support needs

COMMUNITY HOUSING

AMOUNT NEEDED PER HOME: \$400,000

OTHER SUPPORT: COMMUNITY OUTREACH ON LOAN OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL HOMEOWNERS

The greatest need in Mertarvik is funding for community housing. The pace of the relocation is partially based on the amount of funding that can be secured for home construction. Occupied housing in Mertarvik will expedite the relocation; when a critical mass of people lives in Mertarvik, the community will become eligible for many traditional state and federal funding programs.

Additionally, there is a critical housing shortage in Newtok with multiple families living in single family homes. Because of this, residents of Mertarvik may still live in overcrowded environments before additional housing is provided. To alleviate housing shortages, the community would like to explore opportunities beyond grant funding, such as loans to individuals and the village council. Outreach and information on loans and other housing opportunities for Alaska Native people are desired.

PROPOSED DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION EFFORTS (PENDING FUNDING)

TOTAL AMOUNT NEEDED: \$5,605,000

For the 2020 construction season, ANTHC and the NVC are seeking funds for the construction of homes (\$4,000,000), funds to install a well field near the future water treatment plant and storage tank (\$500,000), and funds to construct power poles to supply all 2020 infrastructure with electricity (\$250,000). Design funding is needed as well, including design of water distribution and sewer services for the community's lower road, and a water treatment plant and storage tank (\$500,000).

As the relocation progresses, community members will need access to crucial services, such as those provided

by a full-service clinic, store, post office and small motor shop. By the end of 2020, it is anticipated that half of Newtok's residents will have relocated to Mertarvik. At this point, construction of permanent community facilities will be critical and funding for both design and construction is needed. In 2019, design of the clinic (\$80,000) would begin and in 2020, the store (\$100,000), small motor shop (\$100,000), and post office (\$75,000). If funded, these community buildings would be constructed in 2021, providing invaluable services to Mertarvik residents by the fall of that year.

COMMUNITY CLINIC

TOTAL AMOUNT NEEDED: \$2,000,000

Mertarvik needs funding for a full-service community clinic. Before funding for this essential facility is acquired, Mertarvik residents will visit a temporary clinic housed in the NVC man-camp cafeteria. At the end of the summer, this space will be renovated to accommodate the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation's requirements for

provision of medical care. The temporary clinic will have one exam room, an urgent care room, a pharmacy and bathroom. However, this space will not suffice when all 400 Newtok residents have relocated. Another exam room will be needed, space for dental care, a room for itinerant health care providers, and more.

MOVING SUPPORT

Donated totes and other packing materials are needed for households moving to Mertarvik this fall. Community members will also need help moving their belongings from their homes in Newtok to Mertarvik. Transporting belongings from homes to the Newtok dock is not an easy process. Many of the boardwalks are broken and unable to support ATV travel, which makes coordinating the move of multiple households a difficult task. Support could be provided in the form of volunteer labor to help move boxes and furniture to a staging area at the dock, loading items onto Newtok's landing craft and off-loading items in Mertarvik.



Broken and sinking boardwalks are prone to flooding and make it hard for community members to transport belongings in Newtok.



ANTHC employee, Martin Wortman, and a local hire from Newtok work on the Washeteria renovation.

Newtok community update

UICC HIRING FAIR

In April, UICC held a hiring fair in Newtok where they selected seven residents to join their early season mobilization efforts. For mid-season work, additional positions to be filled include carpenters, truck drivers, laborers, housekeeping and heavy equipment operators.

UTILITY UPGRADES

From January through March, issues with the community's generator caused intermittent brown-outs with power outages lasting up to 10 days at a time. Severe coastal weather prevented a new generator from being flown in until March. Newtok's power is supplied by their Tribally-owned and operated Ungusraq Power Company (UPC). UPC contracts with Current River Electric, a general contractor specializing in power generation, to ensure their power plant needs are met. Alaska Energy Authority provided and Current River installed the new generator in Newtok.

Newtok's washeteria is currently being upgraded by ANTHC's Department of Rural Utility Management Services (DRUMS). Most of the community washers

and dryers are broken and the washeteria lacks a functioning bathroom or shower unit. Upgrades, which will be completed this summer, include constructing two bathrooms, each with a toilet, sink and shower, and installing four new washers and four new stackable dryers. To cover the operating costs of the washeteria, the bathrooms, washers, and dryers will be coin operated, while the self-haul water system will remain free to residents. The waste water generated by the washeteria will be discharged into the sewage lagoon adjacent to the school, which is currently unused. Local laborers were hired to work on the upgrades.

PASS INTRODUCTION

In April, ANTHC employees assembled and demonstrated a PASS toilet in the Newtok Village Council office. Residents were able to view this key element of the PASS system first-hand. Later this summer, ANTHC employees will conduct local training in Newtok on the use and maintenance of PASS with the goal of preparing residents for the move to Mertarvik. Residents will be able to ask questions about the system and learn about its specific operating requirements.

A Student's Perspective on Traveling to Anchorage for the Class 1A Basketball Tournament

Kmiisaaq, a student-athlete on Newtok high school's basketball team, shared her recent experience at the 1A/2A Alaska School Activities Association State Basketball Championship held in Anchorage the week of March 11. Kmiisaaq's team, the Lady Jaegers, placed first in the Coastal Conference Tournament, earning a ticket to the state championships in Anchorage.

In her story, Kmiisaaq emphasizes how much "waiting" one does when traveling out of rural Alaska. Three girls on the basketball team almost missed the games because they were unable to get a flight out of Newtok for several days due to weather. Fortunately, the weather cleared and they made it, but when they got to the city, the waiting didn't stop.

Brief Moment by Kmiisaaq

"On Sunday morning, I woke up, to pack up some more. I went to the school and bring my bags. I waited, and waited, and waited. Then the others left, except, Shania, Tomo, and I. We waited and waited and waited. The next day went by, and the other teams left to Anchorage. We waited and waited and waited. The next day went by, and we went to school. We did our assignments we had to do. Still we waited, until that moment finally came.

I boarded the plane, but I waited and waited and waited. Then finally the plane flew off to Anchorage. While we flew, I fell asleep, because I was tired of waiting. We finally landed.

We almost left Shania's backpack, so we went to get it. We were going to the hotel, but we were hungry. So we went to Taco Bell for a to-go order. Then we waited and waited and waited. Then it was our turn. Then we ordered and then waited again.

The next day passed, and I don't remember, but the basketball games - we lost, but it was a fun game. After the game, we watch Qipneq play. They were fun to watch. For the rest of the days, we went to the games or to the stores. We would go out to eat, in different restaurants, mostly buffets.

Then on the last day, we were at the ceremony, and there were many people. We went back to the hotel, to pack up, so we did. The next day came, I packed up some more, and we went to the car and went to the airport. The others left Tomo, Shania, and I because we had the later flight, then we waited and waited and waited. As we were waiting, I visited my aunts. My cousins that were younger, are taller than me. I went to back to the airport to check in my luggage. I was happy that I visited them before we went to Bethel. They were fun to hang out with, I miss them very much. I went back to the airport, to check in my backpack.

I walked all the way to C3 waiting area. I charged my phone, as we waited. We went to get snacks, but I was running out of money. Then we went back and we waited and waited and waited. Our flight finally came, and we went to our seats. As we were flying, I fell asleep. But I was tired, then we landed at Bethel. Then we waited and waited and waited to get our bags.

The next morning came, and we didn't have breakfast. We just went straight to Yute Air. We checked in and waited and waited and waited, then we finally went home."

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

NVC = Newtok Village Council

MEC = Mertarvik Evacuation Center

UICC = Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation Construction

CCHRC = Cold Climate Housing Research Center

PASS = Portable Alternative Sanitation System



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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:
GAVIN DIXON, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
GNDIXON@ANTHC.ORG | (907) 729-3586 | ANTHC.ORG

