

Akiachak Activity Report.

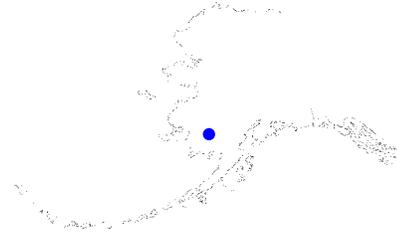
Community Overview

Lead RUBA Staff: Mike Black, RO Manager

2000 Census Population: 585

Region: Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta

Local Governments: Village Council



The Village Council operates the washeteria, watering points and water haul system as well as the honeybucket haul. The Village Council is the policy making body for the utility.

Construction of a piped water and gravity sewer system is underway. A new well, water tank, water treatment plant and a road to the new lagoon have been completed. Construction will continue through 2005 to plumb and connect 62 homes on the west side. Currently 12 facilities, the school and teacher's housing are served by a piped system; most residents haul water from the washeteria. 25 households have honeybuckets hauled by the City; the others haul their own honeybuckets or use septic tanks. The village would like to purchase an incinerator and use the waste heat for public buildings.



General Information

The Akiachak Native Community (ANC) continues to struggle with improving its ability to take on the responsibilities of running a sewer and water utility service within the community. A recent development that holds some promise of improvement is the hiring of a CPA firm to analyze and recommend a course of action for correcting financial record keeping and management systems. Still they will need to act upon whatever recommendations come out of this work. The Council and the CEO will need to make changes that are unlikely to be popular with the some of the community and with current employees, some of which will be undoubtedly laid off, and the pressure to avoid painful improvements may be too much.

Observations and Recommendations

Finances — The indications are not good. RUBA has previously identified numerous unpaid vendors, services and departments running in the red, grant concerns from agencies having funded tribal program in Akiachak and excessive administrative costs and overhead. These indicators of financial problems were also identified in the recently completed audits. However, recommendations for improvement were not followed.

Accounting Systems — RUBA has in the past identified many deficiencies. The CPA’s assessment confirmed many of the problems identified by RUBA and added some more to the list. They need a realistic accounting system and competent bookkeepers to keep it going.

Tax Problems — Tax problems were discovered this quarter. Previously they were no problems with taxes. This may indicate a decline in the financial viability of the ANC.

Personnel System — There is a Personnel Policies Manual that was in draft but never adopted. The Manual is not adequate according to the CPA firm. There is certainly a need to improve lines of authority and supervision. There are also a lot of paid employees who increase the probability that the ANC is carrying an unrealistic overhead burden.

Organizational Management — There is discussion by the Council about hiring a full time manager and departing from the elected CEO approach that we have criticized. This should make disciplining and making organizational changes easier.

Leadership/Governance — The ANC chair has taken an interest in making improvements in line with the CPA firm’s assessment and recommendations.

Operation of Utility — The utility system has yet to be made operational. A new water plant stands idle until the management and finance issues can be addressed. Other services continue to operate but not at an optimal level.

Ranking

1 = Inadequate

4 = Adequate to meet minimum requirements

7 = Exceeds requirements

Category	1	4	7
Finances	X		
Accounting Systems	X		
Tax Problems			X
Personnel System	X		
Organizational Management	X		
Leadership/Governance	X		
Operation of Utility	X		

Anticipated Activity

The ANC has undertaken the improvement plan recommended by the CPA. We will see whether the Council can keep with the difficult decisions that must be made.

