

Akiachak Activity Report

Community Overview

Lead RUBA Staff: Johnny Evan, Bethel Office

2001 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 is scheduled to continue through 2005 to plumb and connect 62 homes. Currently, 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.



RUBA Activity This Quarter

Altman & Rogers, a CPA firm hired under the VSW contract to work on accounting systems with Akiachak ceased work in February 2002 when the community staff became uncooperative. RUBA assistance was also reduced at that time. The community was provided a draft RUBA work plan, but they have not responded as to whether they agree with the tasks. The community is planning to hire Mikunda, Cottrell, and Company (CPA's) to reorganize their accounting system in the near future. With a change of attitude to consulting agencies, new plans for the utility services are being formulated and developed for the community's consideration.

Capacity Indicators

Finances

Essential Indicators

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All revenue and expenses for the utility are listed in the utility budget.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The utility has adopted a balanced realistic budget.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly financial reports are prepared and submitted to the policy making body.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The utility is receiving revenues (user fees or other sources) sufficient to cover operating expenses.

Finances Comments: The utility has not developed an operating budget for the fiscal year. The user fee of \$10 per month is not sufficient to cover the operation & maintenance costs. RUBA staff have recommended they increase the user fee to \$47 per month. The residential customers are billed, but the collection rate is very low. Many residential customers do not understand that they have to pay for the proposed services to operate and maintain the sewage services. A container haul rate analysis was completed for their consideration, but has not been implemented.

Accounting Systems

Essential Indicators

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The utility has adopted a collection policy and actively follows it.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The utility bills customers on a regular basis.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	An accounts receivable system is in place which track customers and reports past due accounts and amounts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An accounts payable system is in place.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The payroll system correctly calculates payroll and keeps records
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A cash receipt system is in place that records incoming money and what it was for.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Utility has a cash disbursement system that records how money was spent.

Accounting Comments: The community needs to reconstruct and reorganize their accounting system and upgrade their computer hardware/software. Despite the billing effort of the organization, the residential customers are not paying for services. The community has a utility ordinance, but has not developed a collection policy. The DOS financial software is outdated and records only ten months at a time in one fiscal year. Past financial records need to be reconciled to meet the VSW grant conditions. The community is planning to hire Mikunda, Cottrell, and Company (CPA's) to continue the audit starting early July 2002.

Tax Problems

Essential Indicators

Yes	No	NA	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		The utility has a system to accurately calculate, track, and report payroll tax liabilities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		The utility is current on filing tax reports.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		The utility is current on making tax deposits.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If there are any past tax liabilities, a repayment agreement has been signed and repayments are current.

Tax Problems Comments: The community is current with their tax liabilities.

Personnel System

Essential Indicators

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The utility has a posted workers compensation insurance policy in effect.

Personnel System Comments: Currently, there is not a workers compensation policy in effect. The utility uses and enforces the organizational Personnel Policy for all employees. There is no written hiring process for the community, nor is there an evaluation process that ties in with the job description. There is no probationary period and there is no evaluation process. In most cases, staff are expected to know what to do from the first day on the job. Training of staff relies on availability of funding.

Organizational Management

Essential Indicators

Yes	No	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The entity that owns the utility is known and the entity that will operate the utility is set.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The policy making body is active in policy making of the utility.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The policy making body enforces utility policy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The utility has a adequately trained manager.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The utility has a adequately trained bookkeeper.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The utility has a adequately trained operator(s).
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The utility has adopted the necessary ordinances (or rules and regulations) necessary to give it the authority to operate.

Organizational Management Comments: The utility policy making body needs to be more active in making substantial decisions for the utility services, i.e., setting user rates, pass and adopt utility budget, and implement essential plans to meet the utility service requirements. There is no one appointed to oversee the utility operations for the community and this is why the level of service has not been met. The bookkeepers seem capable, but there was substantial resistance to recommendations by Altman Rogers. The organizational chart needs to be updated to reflect the current staff for the community.

Operation of Utility

Essential Indicators

Yes	No	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The utility operator(s) are actively working towards necessary certification.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The utility has a preventative maintenance plan developed for the existing sanitation facilities.

Operation of Utility Comments: The community needs to be more involved in the operation and maintenance of the water sewer system. The main problem lies with who is accountable for the utility services. The community needs to appoint a utility coordinator to oversee the administration and management of the water sewer services.

RUBA Activities For The Coming Quarter

The goal for the coming quarter is to reestablish communication with the community; review the discrepancies outlined in Altman Rogers financial review and develop an acceptable community work plan; and have the community identify a utility system liaison.