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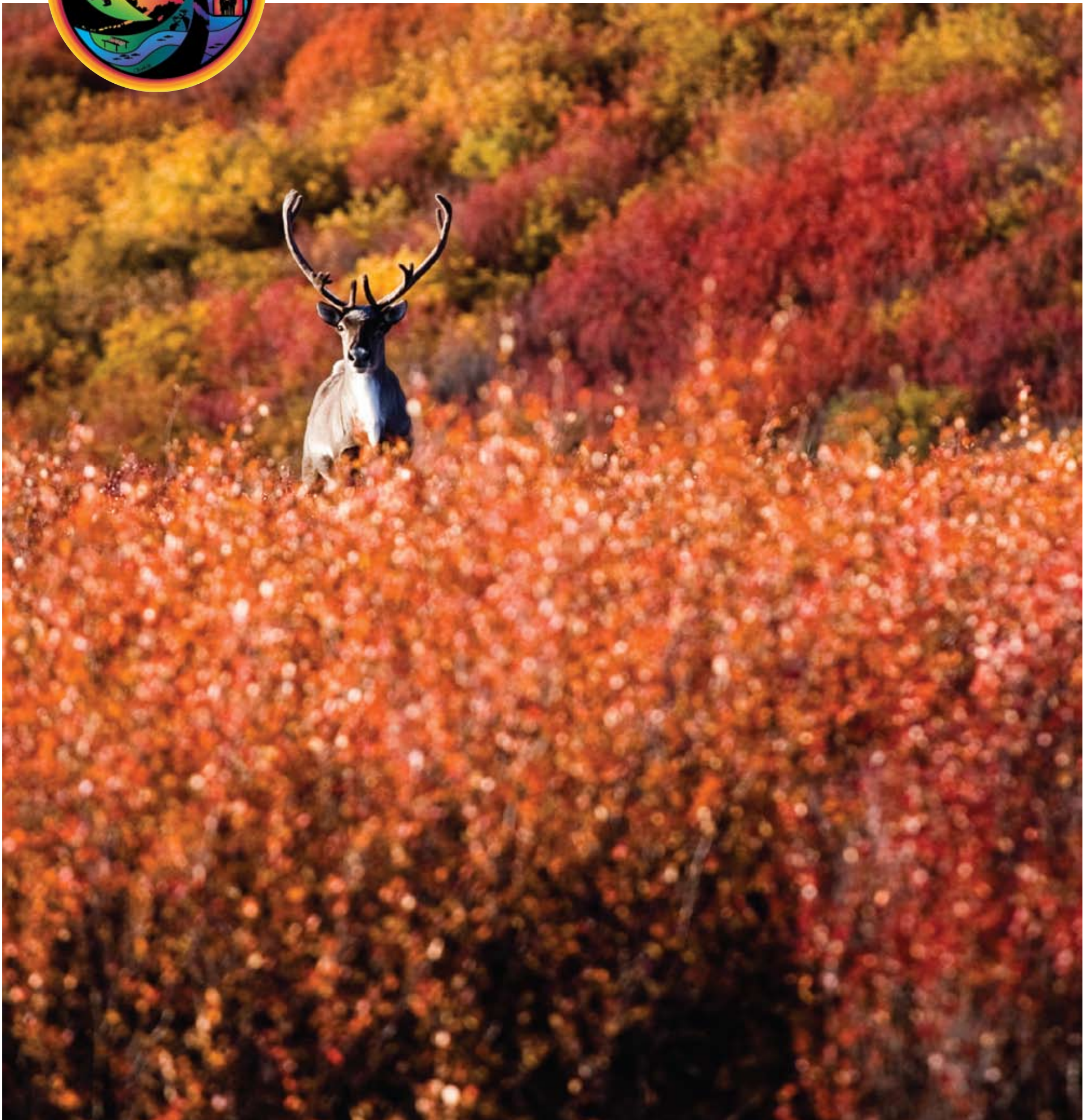
Announcement & Calendar



RURAL CAP'S

# Village Voices

Healthy People, Sustainable Communities, Vibrant Cultures



Curious caribou peers across fall foliage near Red Dog Mine in September. Photo courtesy of James Stewart



Message from the Board President:  
*Resiliency and the  
 Ability to Adapt  
 Keeps Us Strong*



Andrew Ebona,  
 RurAL CAP Board President

The Red Dog creek rushes past the autumnal tundra in the Northwest Arctic Borough.  
 Photo by James Stewart

## RURAL CAP Board of Directors

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 John Moller, *Governor/Lt. Governor of Alaska*  
 Eleanor Yatlin, *Huslia Tribal Council*  
 Amy Sparck Dobmeier, *Municipality of Anchorage*  
 Taquilik Hepa, *North Slope Borough*

by Andrew Ebona

As we move from summer into fall, we've switched from green to bright yellows and orange and red. Farther up north, we're starting to see more ice and snow. School has begun across the state. Freezers have been filled with moose, deer, caribou, fish and berries. Planning is underway for the statewide gatherings where Alaskans will come together to discuss the many issues before us.

The high cost of energy (gas, heating fuel, and electricity), food and transportation continue to top the list of critical issues for rural Alaska. Other items weighing heavily on peoples' minds include public safety; physical, emotional and spiritual health; water and sewer upgrades; student well-being; Elder care; erosion, relocation and evacuation plans; climate change; regulations and the potential impact of economic development on subsistence activities; substance abuse; and keeping up with ever-changing technology and information. Ultimately the survival of our remote villages is dependent on our ability to maintain decent education and job opportunities.

It is no secret that Alaska's Native people have survived in the harshest of times for centuries. We have been good stewards of the land and gracious hosts to the many newcomers to our homelands over the past 100+ years. Through our resiliency we have figured out what had to be done to make it through the tough times.

The last 50 years have moved rural Alaska to a different place: it received running water and electricity that quickly transitioned residents to a cash economy; it shifted from the always-ready-to-go dog team to snow machines; it welcomed motorized boats and most communities got schools to keep children at home for their education. We got TVs, phones, computers, clinics, washeterias, fuel storage tanks, and the land claims act provided land and financial resources for economic development and job

creation. Tribal organizations took control of the huge economic engines that fuel a good portion of rural Alaska's economy through the regional and local hospitals and clinics, housing authorities, and other tribal operations.

Some would say we've come a long way; others would say much work remains. We collectively envision a time when our children are doing well in school and life in general, when our Elders are well cared for, when we have made great progress in the emotional and spiritual arena just as we have in physical health, when our communities are sustainable and we truly move to self-sufficiency and subsistence again means that which sustains us.

Our history is filled with examples of past times when families and communities have endured and survived tough periods. They figured out what had to be done and followed through with their plans to provide food and shelter to their families.

We know change well. While many of our villages still communicate by VHF radio, cell phone towers are being installed, and soon grandkids will be texting their grandparents. Rural Alaskans are a part of America's movement to research, develop and test alternative energy for our homes, vehicles and communities. Alaska and the Arctic are the 'canaries in the coal mine' for global warming as evidenced by increases in melting ice, eroding sea shores, and changes in the flora and fauna.

In our roles as tribal leaders, community organizers, power plant operators, electricians, teachers, corporate leaders, financiers, professors, doctors, hunters, gatherers, family members and many more, let's look to the resilience within us. As we convene in the coming months while preparing for the winter, let's draw on our age-old strength and willingness to work together to continue to build healthy communities. ●

Message from the Executive Director:

# "Stimulating" Local Economies with Green Collar Jobs



David Hardenbergh,  
RurAL CAP Executive Director



by David Hardenbergh

As fall descends upon us, we have heard from many friends across the state about the summer to remember. The high number of sunny days and warmer weather allowed us to get out and enjoy Alaska's great outdoors, while preparing for the winter ahead. We fished, harvested berries, gardened, camped, boated and now many are hunting.

Unfortunately, the good days were overshadowed by low fish escapements and prices throughout Alaska. While we expect to see some reprieve from lower fuel costs compared to last year, some rural families may again need our collective support to get through the coming winter.

RurAL CAP is fortunate to be one of the many organizations in Alaska to receive federal stimulus funds officially known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. We are also one of Alaska's five original weatherization service providers that provide weatherization services at no cost to qualified applicants who meet certain income guidelines. The Regional Housing Authorities are now also assisting the Alaska Housing

Finance Corporation to administer last year's State legislative appropriation of \$200 million dollars to improve the energy efficiency of low-income homes statewide.

It is a welcome relief for Alaska to have received stimulus funds. RurAL CAP joins the other organizations across Alaska that are working on ways to create and retain jobs and to provide much needed services that keep our local economies afloat. The high costs of living and in particular, the continuing high costs of fuel and electricity made RurAL CAP's focus of the ARRA funds an obvious one geared toward minimizing those expenses for Alaskans. As a result, communities responded to the call for proposals to hire local people in up to 12 communities who will provide energy efficiency enhancements and training in homes across the state.

In addition, efforts are underway to work with other public facility owners to conduct energy assessments on those facilities, and RurAL CAP will provide energy upgrades to its Head

Start facilities throughout Alaska. Earlier this year, the RurAL CAP Head Start maintenance staff received training on energy conservation in Anchorage. Staff went home with new skills in building basics including airflow, heating and preventative maintenance, weatherization issues and energy conservation methods. They will be involved in the follow up recommendations from the energy assessments on their respective Head Start facilities and share the information they learned with other staff, parents and community members. We appreciate the knowledge gained by these individuals who can assist in ways to reduce energy use in private homes as well as in community buildings.

RurAL CAP has entered into arrangements with credit counseling and legal services to provide default avoidance services for the Mat-Su, Anchorage, Kenai, and Southeast Alaska areas. Working with the United Way and other statewide non-profits, we will also provide information statewide to identify and enroll eligible individuals and families in federal, state, and local benefits programs.

RurAL CAP will continue to work with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations to provide support and services that help low-income Alaskans make it through another year as we all work together on energy solutions. The ARRA funds will go a long way toward reducing energy costs, creating green collar jobs in a tough economic time, getting help for the people who need it, and stimulating the Alaskan economy. ●

Weatherization Workers in Nightmute



RurAL CAP Maintenance Staff Attend Energy Conservation Training (from left to right) **Back Row:** Bill Stacy (spouse of attendee Anneliese Stacy); Leonard Bergman, Mountain Village; Gabriel Joekay, Napaskiak; Nicholas Cartier, Pilot Station; Sonny Dock, Akiak; and Bruce Greer, Anchorage. **Middle Row:** Francis (Yogi) Uttereyuk, Kwethluk; Cathy Henderson, Kake; Allen Reynolds, Kluti-Kaah; Isidore Sheldon, Alakanuk; and Brian Thompson, Tok. **Front Row:** Anneliese Stacy, Haines; Bobbi Nixon, Kodiak; Judy Miller, Sterling; and Jay Prutsman, Ketchikan. **Not pictured:** Lawrence Martin, Stebbins.



# H1N1 (Swine) Flu in Alaska

by Angela Gonzalez, Communications Coordinator

According to CDC.gov, during week 33 (August 16-22, 2009), a total of 8,843 hospitalizations and 556 deaths associated with novel influenza A (H1N1) viruses have been reported to Center for Disease Control (CDC). As of August 26, the State of Alaska Department of Health & Social Services reported 434 confirmed cases of the H1N1 flu in Alaska. Hospitals, clinics, schools, Head Start centers, businesses and more are preparing for the flu season in Alaska and taking precautions.

According to the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC), patients with basic flu symptoms do not need to see a health care provider unless they develop serious flu symptoms or they belong to a high-risk group for serious complications. The people who are at high risk include pregnant women, people with chronic disease, young children, elders, etc. Dr. David Vastola, SEARHC Medical Director for Community Health Services in Sitka, says, "When immunizations come out, we are going to strongly recommend people get them, especially those who are high-risk." Dr. Vastola says that people who have symptoms of the flu should call their local health care provider to ask their advice on what to do. SEARHC will take precautions for persons suspected of having the flu by having the patients wear masks and entering through a separate door.

Dr. Vastola says, "The best thing to do is prevent the disease: Good hand washing; teaching people, especially young children, how to sneeze and cough; ready access to disinfectants and having people get vaccinated." Dr. Vastola oversees 11 clinics in southeast Alaska.

Businesses and other organizations should prepare by following the tips to stay healthy by following the tips on the next page. They should also cross-train employees for absences that may be caused by the H1N1 flu. The H1N1 flu vaccinations should be available in mid-October. According to the CDC, the seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against the novel H1N1 flu. They recommend individuals get vaccinated for both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu.

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that certain groups of the population receive the novel H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. These key populations include pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and people ages 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Greg Wilkinson, spokesperson for the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, says rural Alaskans who may be in situations where they don't have hot running water "should stock up on hand sanitizers and use that as often as they can." It is especially important for people to sanitize before working with young children. According to Wilkinson, "Children under 6 months can't be immunized."

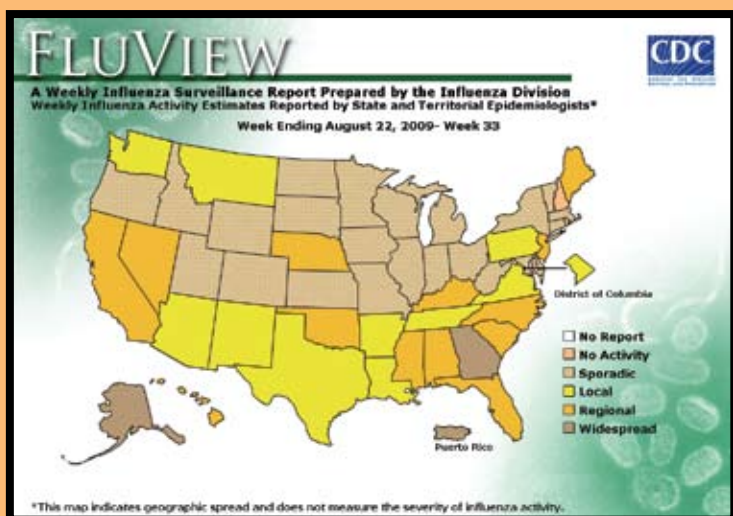
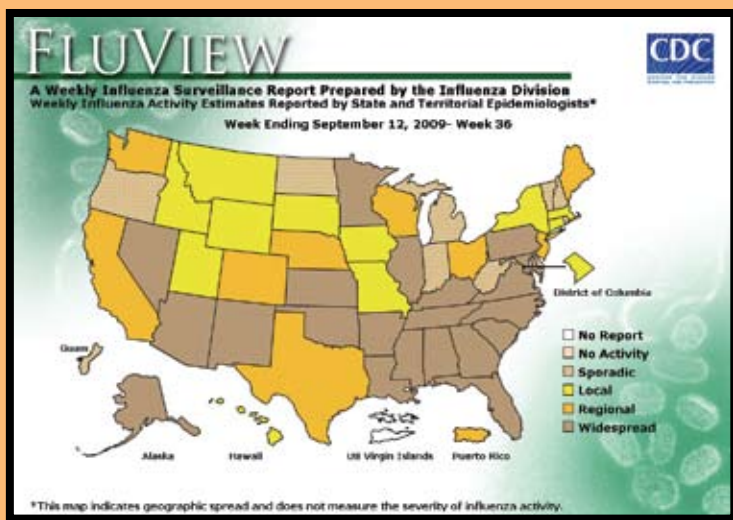
Wilkinson says Alaska has had significant outbreaks of RSV or respiratory syncytial virus. In addition to hand sanitizing, it is important to wipe off hard surfaces. The tips for prevention of the swine flu will also work to prevent other diseases. Wilkinson says, "The vaccines are the #1 way we can stop the virus from spreading. If they can take a vaccine, they should." ●

Even our little ones at the Child Development Center in Anchorage, are learning how to prevent the spread of H1N1.  
Photo by David Hardenbergh

## What is H1N1 (Swine) Flu?

H1N1 (referred to as "swine flu" early on) is a new influenza virus causing widespread illness. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. Other countries, including Mexico and Canada, have reported people sick with this new virus. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.

In July 2009, the World Health Organization declared the H1N1 (Swine) Flu a pandemic flu, meaning it is a global disease outbreak. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza A virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness, and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide. (Source: Flu.gov)



## Symptoms

H1N1flu symptoms are similar to those of seasonal flu and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Chills
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Body Aches

## Tips to Stay Healthy

Help  **STOP THE SPREAD of SWINE FLU in ALASKA**

Swine flu is spreading in Alaska. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, aching muscles, cough and runny nose.

If you're already sick, see your health care provider.

Remember, even if you are not sick, you can spread the germs at home or when you travel.

**Don't let it spread, wash instead!**

**Wash your hands** for 30 seconds in hot soapy water — or use hand sanitizer



**Cough in your sleeve or use tissue** — then wash your hands

**Stay home if you're sick**  
Avoid close contact with others.



Alaska Department of Health and Social Services  
Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology:  
907-269-8000

*Cut out and place on your refrigerator or someplace in your home as a reminder.*

The State of Alaska  
Department of Health & Human Services ([www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov))  
recommendations:

## CDC Recommendations:

### If You Get Sick

Most healthy people recover from the flu without complications. If you get the flu:

- Stay home from work or school.
- Get lots of rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.
- There are over-the-counter (OTC) medications to relieve the symptoms of the flu (but never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever).
- Remember that serious illness from the flu is more likely in certain groups of people including people 65 and older, pregnant women, people with certain chronic medical conditions and young children.
- Consult your doctor early on for the best treatment, but also be aware of emergency warning signs that require urgent medical attention.

## Emergency Warning Signs

Seek emergency medical care if you or someone you know is having any of the following warning signs discussed below.

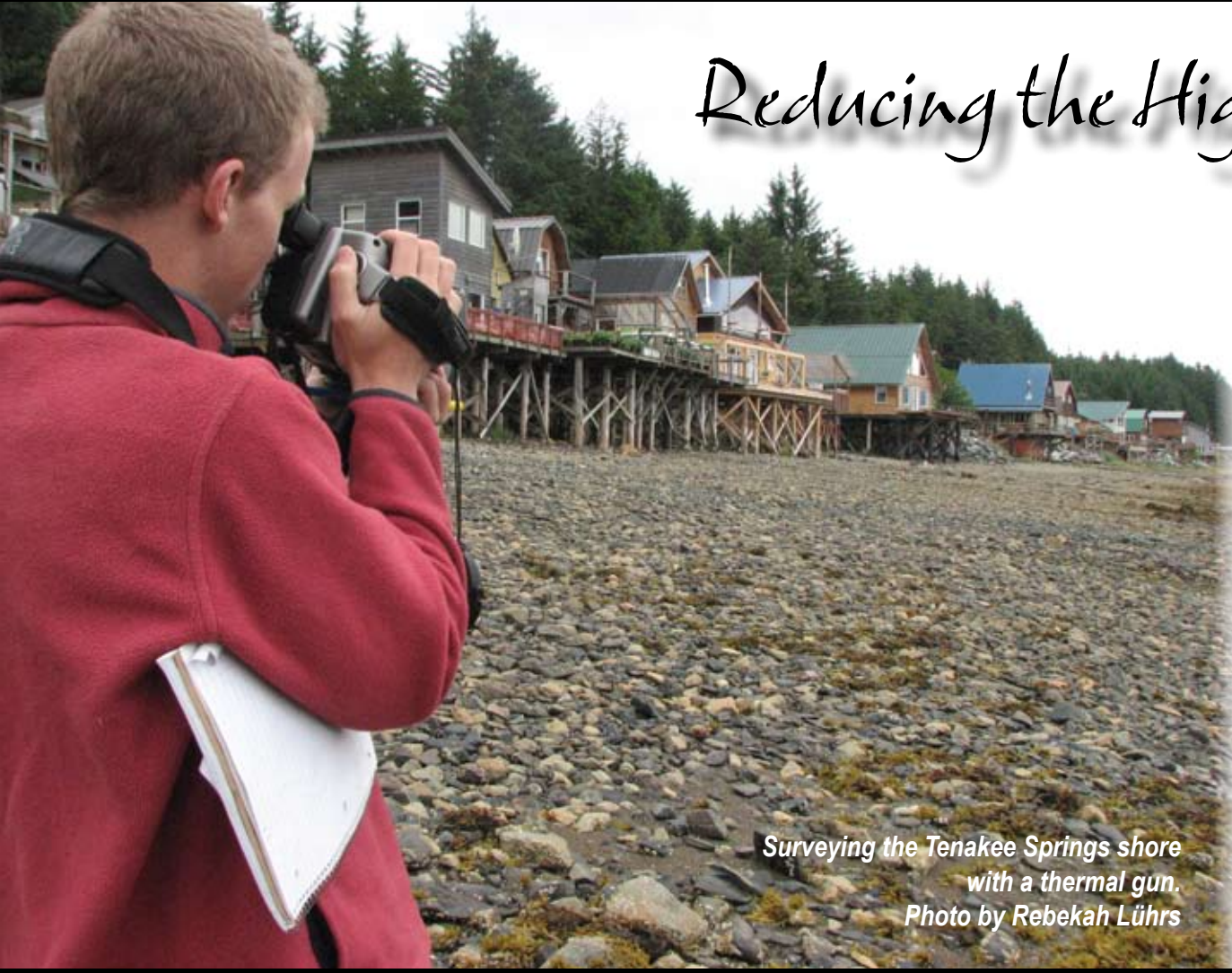
**In children**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

**In adults**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Sources: [www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov) & <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/takingcare.htm>  
Visit: [Flu.gov](http://Flu.gov): One-stop access to U.S. Gov. H1N1, avian & pandemic flu information.



# Reducing the High Cost of Energy in Rural Alaska:

## Learning from Each Other's Successes

*Surveying the Tenakee Springs shore with a thermal gun.  
Photo by Rebekah Lührs*

by Rebekah Lührs,  
RurAL CAP Energy Program Coordinator  
Charlie Ess, RAVEN AmeriCorps Program Coordinator  
Cam Garner, VISTA Energy Coordinator

### Introduction

Addressing the high cost of energy in rural communities is no small venture. However, sometimes just a few people in a community can make all of the difference. Since high energy costs are reflected in the money we spend on electricity, heat, transportation and even in fresh produce that we buy, projects such as home energy education, community gardening, addressing renewable energy options, and energy efficiency can be done around the state.

Throughout rural Alaska, community leaders have been putting together and implementing projects that have reshaped how communities address energy issues. By gathering community support and local resources, leaders in communities across Alaska have found ways to start tackling these issues. Many of these projects stand as models that other communities can use to work together and lower energy costs.

### Tenakee Springs, Alaska: Exploring Geothermal Energy Potential

Rebekah Lührs,  
RurAL CAP Energy Program Coordinator

Tenakee Springs is living proof that one person can motivate an entire town to get involved and make a difference. Tenakee Springs has had known hot springs for many years. Some say it is their best kept secret. When VISTA Energy member Bruce Burwell started assessing the community on how it could save money on energy costs, his initial thought was geothermal power. The hot springs were ample and it seemed to make sense.

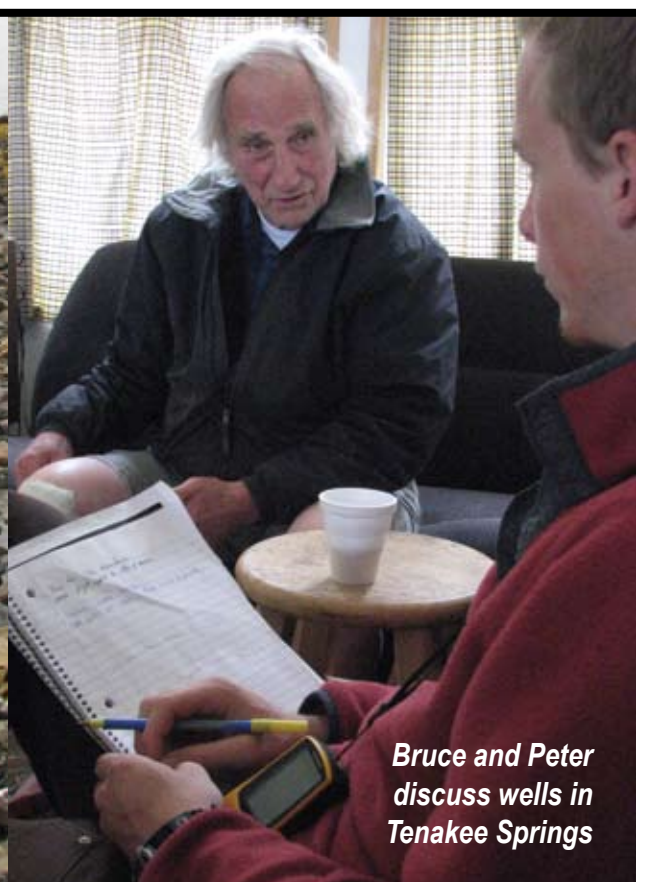
He started by engaging community members in casual conversation, wanting to know their ideas and thoughts on the matter. The community was hesitant at first, but willing to learn more about how geothermal would work in their community. Bruce went to the Geothermal Energy Conference in Chena Hot Springs in May of this year and learned as much as he could to see if this was a viable

option for Tenakee. He made some great contacts and was able to raise funds to get a few speakers to educate community members. He hosted two speakers for a Community Conversation Series on Geothermal: Bernie Carl from Chena Hot Springs and Gwen Holdeman from Alaska Center for Energy and Power (ACEP). Over 90 people attended the two events which is a big deal for a town of 150 during the summer months. By the time these presentations were completed, everyone in Tenakee was talking about geothermal power.

Tenakee decided it was time to take the next step to see if geothermal power was an option. The community took action and supported Burwell and gathered resources and donations to bring in Peter Illig from the ACEP to spend a week testing temperatures, getting water samples, surveying the geology of the area, and mapping out the hot springs and hot water seepages. When Peter came, the community mapped out the hot water wells and the owners gave him permission to test these. He spent an entire week in Tenakee doing tests and gathering data. ACEP is in the process of putting together a community profile on Tenakee to see what next steps they can take.



*Measuring surface water seepage temperature at Tenakee Springs*



*Bruce and Peter discuss wells in Tenakee Springs*

## Napakiak Energy Savings

Charlie Ess,  
RAVEN AmeriCorps Program Coordinator

The chart to the right is a comparison of average electrical bills for Klukwan, Emmonak, Shageluk, Shungnak and Ambler. RAVEN AmeriCorps Members measured electrical readings for the two types of bulbs.

RAVEN AmeriCorps Member, Franklin Evan of Napakiak, knows that big energy savings come from low wattage bulbs, especially when electrical rates climb north of 50 cents per kilowatt hour. As part of his AmeriCorps service project, Evan replaced conventional incandescent light bulbs in about 65 homes with compact fluorescent bulbs. In some instances, residents were using 60-watt and even 100-watt incandescent bulbs for more than 12 hours a day. As Evan began replacing the high-wattage incandescent bulbs with 13-watt CFL (Compact Fluorescent Lights) bulbs and recording data from the homes he visited, he also discovered that many residents turned on five or more lights at a time.

How much did residents save after switching to CFL bulbs? "Some people said that they were paying \$30 to \$40 less per month," says Evan. Funding for the bulbs in the CFL lighting project in Napakiak came from a \$1,500 RurAL CAP Foundation grant that Evan successfully applied for about halfway through his service year.

In his attempt to reduce solid waste volume in the Napakiak dump, Evan won another grant and installed "a can crusher in every home" as part of his campaign to have residents separate aluminum cans out of their trash. The cans were backhauled to recycling facilities in Anchorage.

## Community Members Make a Difference in Kalskag

Cam Garner, VISTA Energy Program

Volunteers in Kalskag worked on several projects over the summer. The main project was a community green house. Curtis Paul, a VISTA Energy Member, said that the successes of these projects are based on the investment

the community makes. He would not have been able to complete the community green house without the help of the youth and other community members. Youth from the Summer Youth Employment Program helped Curtis build a greenhouse. Curtis said, "They did everything I asked them to do. They really did a great job in working on this greenhouse." Curtis soon noticed various community members eager to visit and ask questions about the project they were working on. Not long after people started to donate tools and help haul water.

Now that the green house is finished it is deemed a success and Curtis and other community members are proud of the work they accomplished this summer. It has given Curtis the confidence to be more visible in Kalskag. He has begun to research a possible future as a Home Energy Auditor, a career he never considered before this experience. "Curtis has become the 'go to guy' for energy related issues," Bonnie Perrson, the Tribal Administrator, commented, "People visit the Tribal Office to talk to him about their homes and ideas for the community."

In the winter, Curtis will focus on home energy conservation. He recognizes the benefits of helping people in his village lower energy costs and will be going home-to-home educating people on what they can do save energy. "The

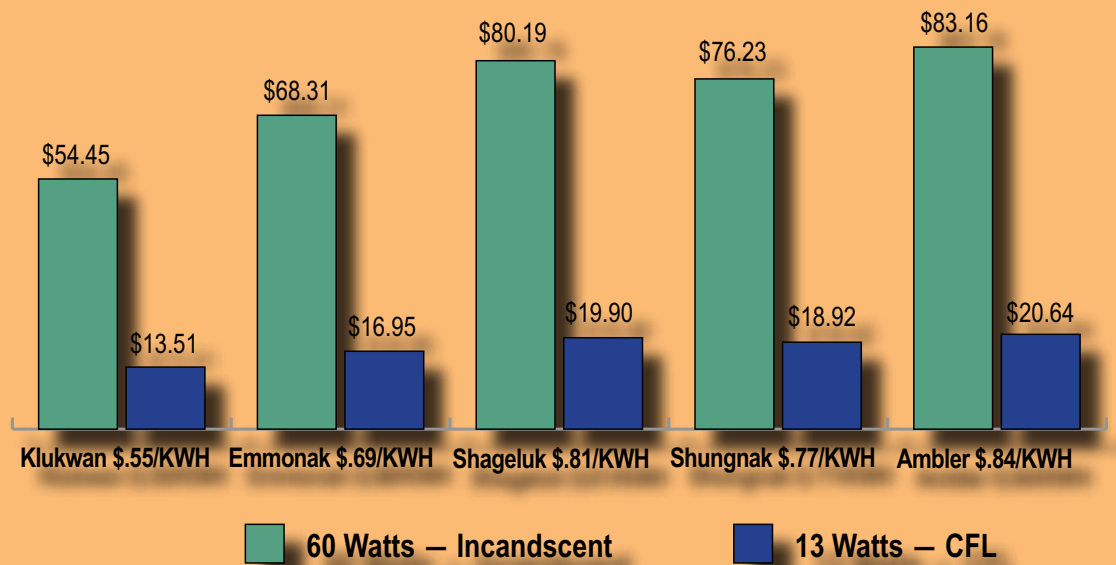
next thing I'm going to be doing," Curtis said, "is going into homes and seeing if people need any weatherization. Making sure these people will be warm for the winter." He may also have the youth help on some of these projects.

Having community members help and volunteer in projects such as gardening and participating in home energy demonstrations provides many positive opportunities. The community has access to fresh vegetables, energy bills go down and the youth have positive projects to work on. It also shows the actions of one person can echo throughout a community. People might come from different communities and have different problems to face, but if we all share the same willingness to make a change, that is the greatest reward of all.

## Conclusion

Throughout rural Alaska, these are just a few of the many different efforts to address energy issues and lower energy costs. The small energy efficiency measures can add up to big savings for communities. There are many things a community can do to lower costs, whether it is looking into renewable energy options for a community, showing villages how to lower electric bills through conservation and efficiency, starting a community garden, or getting the youth involved in positive projects. ●

## Total Cost Per Month



Children in Kodiak enjoy a beach break during the Rural Providers' Conference

Photo by Cathie Clements

Please continue to send photos of special events and activities in your community: fishing, berry picking, summer construction or other employment opportunity and community improvement projects, Elders, youth, scenery from your community, cultural activities, etc.

Minimum requirements:

- Photos must not be cropped.
- Photos must be of the highest quality possible (300 dpi or higher) for print.
- Photos must be submitted in digital format.
- Submitted photos give RurAL CAP permission to reprint in the *Village Voices* newsletter.
- No payments will be made for any photos used.
- Identify who is in the picture, what activity is going on, where and when photo was taken, and who took the photograph.
- Include your name, address, phone and email address with your submission.
- Photos will be considered by quality and appropriateness.
- The photographer for selected photos will be acknowledged in the *Village Voices*.

For more information or to submit photos, please contact Angela Gonzalez at (907) 865-7389, toll-free at (800) 478-7227, extension 7389, or by email at [agonzalez@ruralcap.com](mailto:agonzalez@ruralcap.com). Please call to make sure we received your email. ●

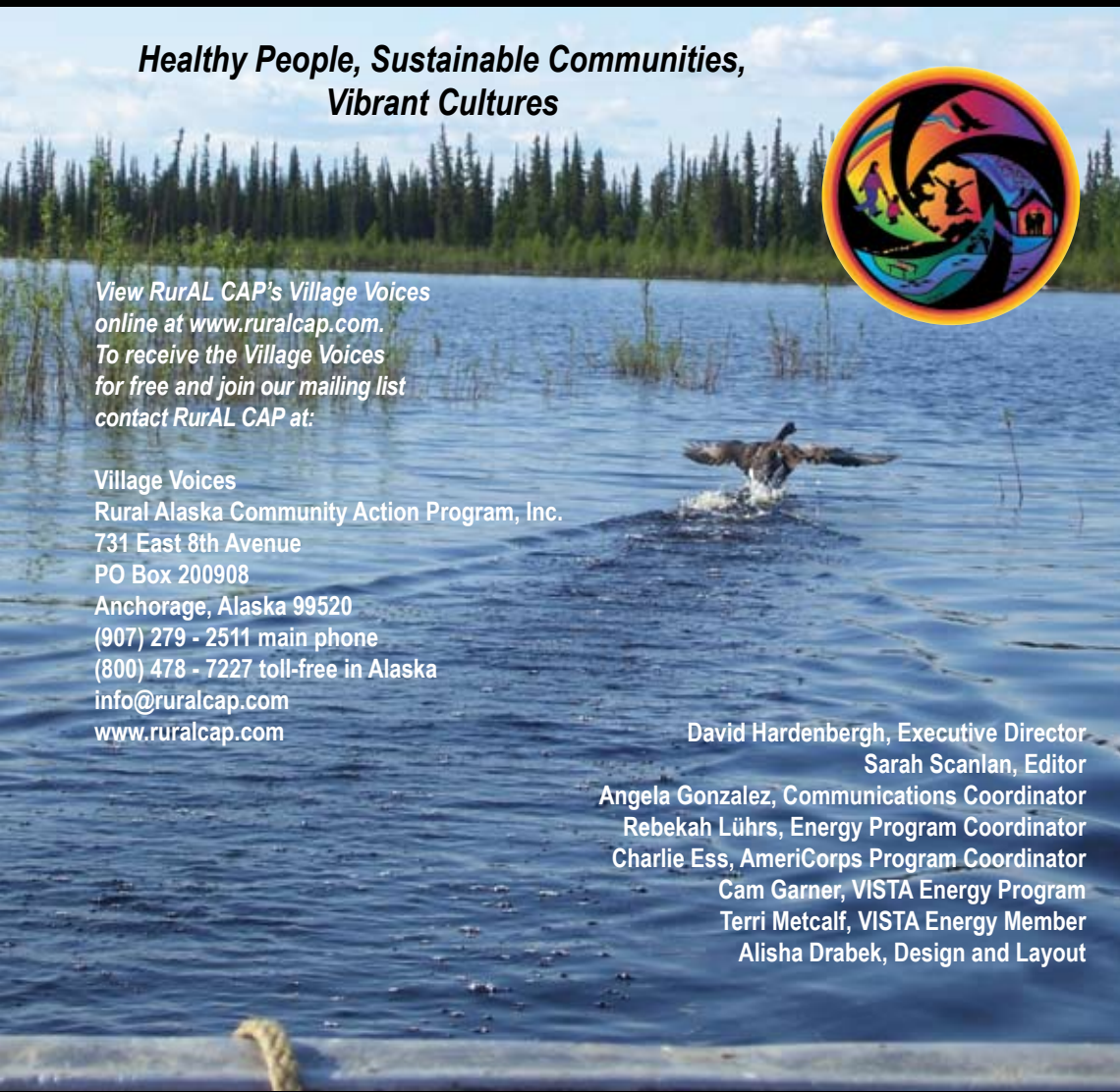
**Healthy People, Sustainable Communities,  
Vibrant Cultures**



View RurAL CAP's Village Voices online at [www.ruralcap.com](http://www.ruralcap.com). To receive the Village Voices for free and join our mailing list contact RurAL CAP at:

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# Calendar

Mark your calendars for upcoming events!

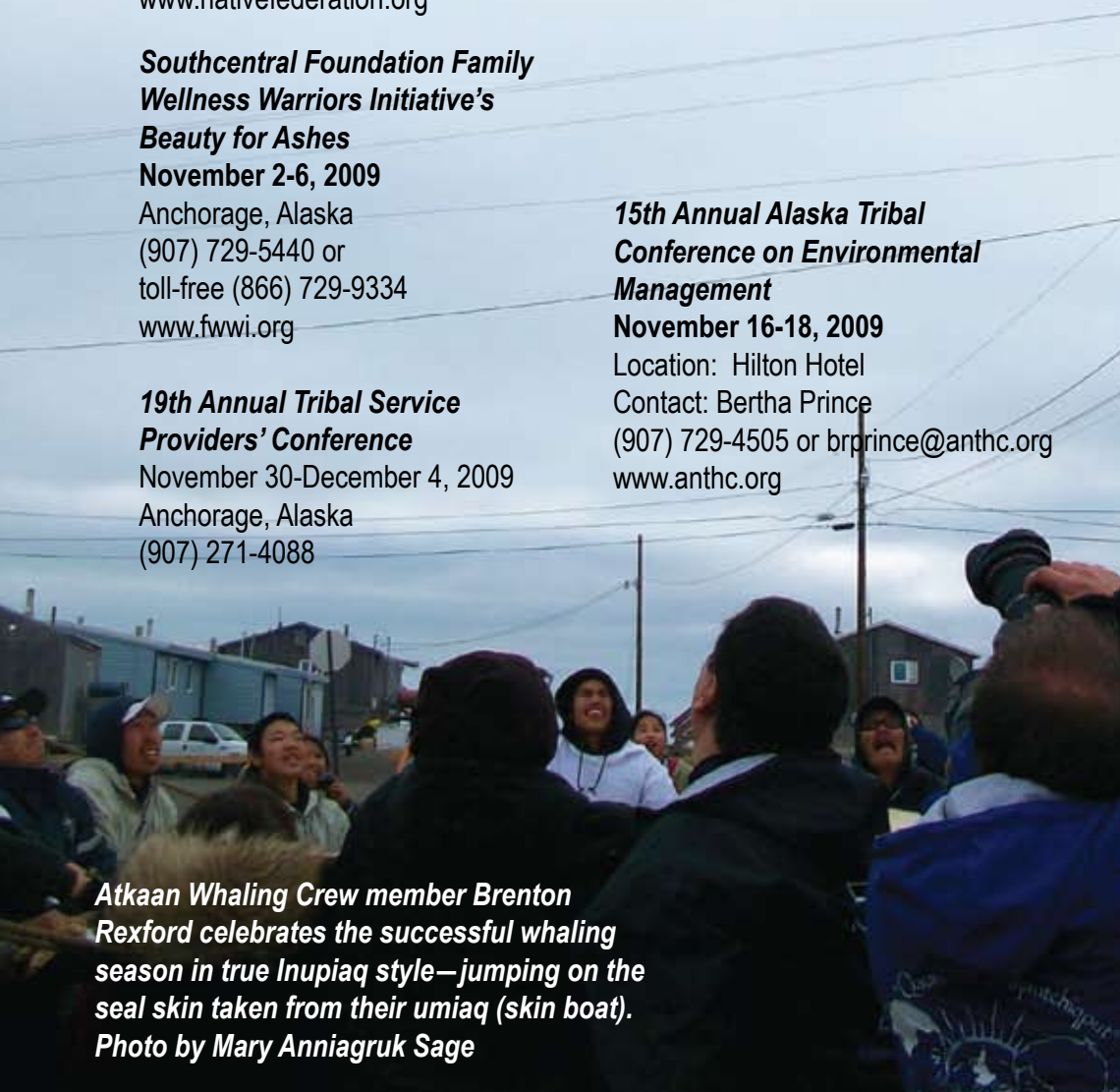
**First Alaskans Institute 2009  
Elders & Youth Conference and  
Business and Services Expo**  
Oct. 19-20, 2009  
Anchorage, Alaska  
(907) 677-1701  
[www.firstalaskans.org](http://www.firstalaskans.org)

**Alaska Federation of Natives  
Annual Convention**  
October 22-24, 2009  
Anchorage, Alaska  
(907) 274-3611  
[www.nativefederation.org](http://www.nativefederation.org)

**Southcentral Foundation Family  
Wellness Warriors Initiative's  
Beauty for Ashes**  
November 2-6, 2009  
Anchorage, Alaska  
(907) 729-5440 or  
toll-free (866) 729-9334  
[www.fwwi.org](http://www.fwwi.org)

**19th Annual Tribal Service  
Providers' Conference**  
November 30-December 4, 2009  
Anchorage, Alaska  
(907) 271-4088

**15th Annual Alaska Tribal  
Conference on Environmental  
Management**  
November 16-18, 2009  
Location: Hilton Hotel  
Contact: Bertha Prince  
(907) 729-4505 or [brprince@anthc.org](mailto:brprince@anthc.org)  
[www.anthc.org](http://www.anthc.org)



**Atkaan Whaling Crew member Brenton  
Rexford celebrates the successful whaling  
season in true Inupiaq style—jumping on the  
seal skin taken from their umiaq (skin boat).  
Photo by Mary Anniagruk Sage**

## Announcement RurAL CAP's 2009-2010 Rural Directory – Available Online!

The RurAL CAP Rural Directory lists organizations and companies serving rural Alaskans. The 2009-2010 Rural Directory will not be printed, but is available for free online. Go to [www.ruralcap.com](http://www.ruralcap.com) to download an electronic PDF version of the Directory. You may email [info@ruralcap.com](mailto:info@ruralcap.com) or call (907) 279-2511 for more information. ●

