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RURAL CAP'S *Village Voices*
 Healthy People, Sustainable Communities, Vibrant Cultures



Paul Cleveland, RurAL CAP Energy Wise team member in Quinhagak, sorts the federal stimulus fund supplies for use in reducing energy costs in rural communities. Photo by Tara Loyd

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Message from the Board President

Subsistence: Healthy People, Sustainable Communities, Vibrant Cultures

Andrew Ebona,
RurAL CAP Board President

by Andrew Ebona

This fall and early winter have been a time of renewed hope for the thousands of Alaskans who rely on traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering activities that continue to sustain us physically, culturally, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally as well. RurAL CAP's vision of Healthy People, Sustainable Communities, Vibrant Cultures is embodied in Alaskans' ability to engage in subsistence activities on an ongoing basis.

The recognition of the significance of subsistence to Alaskans extends beyond the many individuals and statewide organizations which have worked diligently for years to uphold it. President Barack Obama held the first White House Tribal Nations Conference with tribal leaders on November 5, 2009 and spoke of the historic event and reiterated its significance in that it was the largest and most widely attended gathering of tribal leaders in our history. He stated that "Tribal nations do better when they make their own decisions" and directed that every Cabinet agency provide him with a detailed plan within 90 days of how to fully implement EO 13175 "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments" to improve tribal consultation.

Prior to this announcement, RurAL CAP was enlisted to arrange a meeting of tribal representatives with the National Marine Fisheries Service to determine what meaningful tribal consultation would look like. The tribal representatives took this task seriously and developed 20 recommendations at their meeting on November 9-10, 2009 to guide how NMFS' work with tribes could result in more favorable fisheries decisions.

In addition, prior to the President's meeting with tribal leaders, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced to the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention in Anchorage on October 23, 2009, the initiation of a Departmental review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program in Alaska. The review will focus on how the program is meeting the purposes and subsistence provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), and how the program is serving rural subsistence users as envisioned when it was begun in the early 1990s.

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, NANA, Chugach Regional Resources Commission, Ahtna, Inc., and other tribal, non-profit, and ANCSA organizations

Walter Nelson at his family's fish camp in Napakiak. Photo by Rebekah Lührs

are dutifully working on their respective responses due by the end of December, 2009. AFN has requested that comments be sent to them as part of their statewide effort.

AFN is mobilizing to take the messages of our rural communities to Washington, D.C. and has begun corresponding with the White House, the Secretary of the Interior and our Alaska Congressional delegation about rural communities' subsistence needs and experiences. AFN has created a Subsistence Committee with a representative from each region and will keep rural Alaskans informed about the progress and ways to help through a series of guest commentaries in various news outlets throughout the state beginning in 2010.

As part of his call for a review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, the Secretary of the Interior last month announced his intention to appoint a Chair of the Federal Subsistence Board. Nominations and applications for this position closed on December 4, 2009. The appointment is expected to be made in the next several months.

The Federal Subsistence Board was created in the early 1990s and is the decision-making body that oversees the management of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. It is composed of the Alaska directors of the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Forest Service, and a Chair appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

The unified commitment by Alaskans to work on subsistence is not new and RurAL CAP will continue to do its part to maintain the critical role that subsistence has to the health and well-being of Alaska Natives.

The coming year is one that we can look forward to with the many positive efforts already underway. On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of RurAL CAP, I send our warmest wishes to you and your families for a healthy, safe, and bountiful New Year!

More info on the President's meeting with the tribes and developments with Subsistence can be found on these websites: National Congress of American Indians, www.ncai.org; Alaska Federation of Natives, www.nativefederation.org; Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, www.aitc.org; Federal Subsistence Management Program, www.doi.gov/subsistencereview. ●



Message from the Executive Director

Using Energy More Wisely and Putting Alaskans to Work



David Hardenbergh,
RurAL CAP Executive Director

by David Hardenbergh

With "stimulus" funding from the 2009 American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA), RurAL CAP has the opportunity to work with a total of 32 communities across rural Alaska and hire approximately 150 local residents to work on energy conservation projects in their communities. Energy Wise is a RurAL CAP project designed to improve residential energy efficiency and temporarily employ rural Alaskans to perform energy-efficiency upgrades. The project design includes installing window film, testing appliances for energy consumption, cleaning refrigerator coils, sealing doorways, installing compact fluorescent light bulbs, and providing energy-efficiency education to residents.

When ARRA funding began in July 2009, RurAL CAP identified 16 communities to participate in the first of two phases of this project. Priority was based on the level of need, recent natural disasters such as flooding and whether a community had recently been served by the Weatherization program or was scheduled for the near future. After requesting applications from these 16 communities, 12 were selected. Each demonstrated their need for the resources as well as their commitment to complete the project. The 12 villages are Akiak, Quinhagak, Tuluksak, Kasigluk, Chefornak, Nunapitchuk, Ruby, Huslia, Gambell, Savoonga, New Stuyahok and Selawik. The enthusiasm from these 12 communities started strong and has not decreased in the months since.

In order to enhance RurAL CAP's ability to support each community at the highest possible level, the start dates and crew leader trainings were split into two groups. Five communities launched projects in September 2009, and seven will begin in January 2010.

After working with the local city or tribal council staff in the first five villages, RurAL CAP posted

recruitment flyers for the crew leader positions and selected one crew member to support each of the five communities. At the end of September, a week-long training was conducted in Anchorage for the five crew leaders. The training included conducting home evaluations, coaching on how to educate residents during a home visit, and general hands-on education about electricity usage and costs.

In late October, after ordering and shipping approximately \$300,000 worth of tools and supplies to the first five communities, RurAL CAP staff traveled to Akiak for its official launch week. As repeated in the following weeks, six to ten crew members were hired in each village and were trained to perform the efficiency upgrades during the one-week launch. The staggered start dates ensured that staff from Anchorage could be present to train and assist with problem solving in each of the villages as energy efficiency upgrades began. The immediate impact surpassed expectations.

While in Akiak, window film was added, door jams were sealed with spray foam, and insulating pads were installed behind outlet covers and receptacle plugs in unused outlets to eliminate much of the draft blowing into homes.

The morning after working on the first home, the resident who slept under a window that had just been filmed came to the local office to share his elation that he did not wake up cold. The resident, who used a wood stove to heat the home, also mentioned that he would not need to burn as much wood to stay warm this winter.

In addition to upgrading insulation, Energy Wise crews also installed carbon monoxide monitors, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, and educated residents about the dangers of carbon monoxide.

Now, after launching the Energy Wise project in the first five communities, RurAL CAP is receiving

positive feedback and has retained 95% of our crew members. As of the beginning of December, 2009, 337 home visits have been completed.

We anticipate similar success when the additional community projects launch next month, as new crew leaders take the information and skills provided through the Energy Wise project back to rural Alaska, improving the quality of life in Alaska Native villages by increasing local knowledge about energy conservation in seven more communities.

Next summer RurAL CAP plans to implement the second phase of the Energy Wise project, expanding to include 20 communities – each with a locally hired AmeriCorps Members sponsored by RurAL CAP and two locally hired youth crew members. Over the course of about ten weeks, these 20 AmeriCorps Members and 40 local youth will aim to visit a total of 1,200 homes. They will provide residents with home energy-efficiency education materials, demonstrate how compact fluorescent light bulbs use less power than standard bulbs, measure the energy use of household appliances with a Kill-A-Watt meter, demonstrate how to clean fridge coils, and provide an energy efficiency starter kit including a power strip, CFLs, a fridge coil cleaning brush, and educational materials to remind residents of cost-reducing and energy-saving habits.

ARRA funds are making a significant difference in rural Alaska in two important ways: the funds are being used to create local jobs and the jobs and materials are being used to reduce the energy burden of low-income families who experience some of the highest energy costs in the country. As the "Wise Men" of Akiak can tell you, another benefit of the Energy Wise project is the opportunity to build sustainability by educating youth who then educate other community members about energy saving and cost reduction practices. ●

*RurAL CAP Energy Wise team members
launch efforts in Quinhagak*



Census 2010 in Alaska: Stand Up and Be Counted!

by Angela Gonzalez,
Communications Coordinator

On January 25, Noorvik will be the first community in the United States to be counted in the 2010 Census. Beginning in late January through April, you can expect a knock on your door from a locally-hired Census 2010 worker in rural Alaska. If you live in hub cities, a survey form will be mailed to you. Whether you get a knock on the door or receive a survey in the mail, the '10 questions in 10 minutes' survey will be the same.

Barbara Fleek, a Senior Partnership Specialist at the U.S. Census Bureau Alaska Office, indicated it is important for Alaskans to be counted "because Alaskans were so undercounted in the 2000 Census. We were the last state to be counted. We got only a 56% response in that Census." She states a primary reason for the low response was the long and intrusive survey 10 years ago which had 32 questions on it. The short form survey does not have as many questions and is not as intrusive.

There are many questions about what these once every 10-year results will mean for Alaska. Will rural Alaska lose funding with lower population counts? Will Alaskans see less political representation? What will the results of the American Community Survey mean for rural Alaskans, since the survey will be a smaller sample of what is an already decreased population?

According to Brigitta Windisch-Cole, a Research Analyst at the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development in the Division of Community & Regional Affairs (DCRA), the "Census intends to count everyone and not leave anyone out. They are making a big effort."

Windisch-Cole says it is important to be counted because "so many programs are based on population counts, including funding and grants. DCRA, our department, supports the census. Programs rely on the statistics." DCRA provides detailed information from the Census and other sources online about each community in Alaska. Their Community Database is available online at www.dced.state.ak.us.

The First Alaskans Institute houses a Census Information Center (CIC), one of 36 across the U.S. , Gary Hanson, Policy and Research Coordinator at First Alaskans Institute, stated it is important to be counted because the information gathered will determine "redistricting and representation for state legislators and funding formulas." Hanson also says, "If you can tell how many people there are in specific areas, you can ensure policies are set in place to help our communities."

Hanson says the Census Information Center's role is to help educate and train people on what the census does and what information is available. CIC staff provide information on what data is and is not available from the Census and alternative data sources.

The Census 2010 is reaching out to Alaska Native people through tribal liaisons and posters, such as the one on page 5 encouraging Yup'ik speakers to be counted. Fleek says Alaska Census Office workers traveled to villages last fall to raise awareness about the 2010 Census and recruit local residents for census taker and lead positions. Applications were taken and some applicants participated in the 30 minute applicant test. Names were put on a list as potential job candidates. The Census is hiring now and in January, and the jobs will provide about 6-8 weeks of work in each community. Fleek says it is important to hire locally because "Who knows the people better than the residents themselves?" Fleek says the Census Bureau is also reaching out to count the homeless population in the hub communities. ●



Rural Providers' Conference
game in Kodiak.
Photo by Cathie Clements

What are the long & short form surveys?

The short form survey will be used for the 2010 Census and replaces the longer detailed form used 10 years ago. For a sample of the population, a longer survey is conducted each year by the American Community Survey (ACS) which includes questions to collect socio-economic data. This survey is not as intrusive as the long survey. Census data is confidential and protected. Go to Census.gov for more information on that survey.

Resources

2010 Census - Census.gov
First Alaskans Institute Census Information Center –
www.firstalaskans.org
Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and
Economic Development in the Division of Community
& Regional Affairs (DCRA) - www.dced.state.ak.us

The First Alaskans Institute and DCRA are looking forward to receiving the updated data from the ACS to be released in 2010 and the Census in 2011.

A Call to Action Alert

The 2010 Census will be an important snapshot of Alaska's population. It determines the distribution of more than \$400 billion annually of government funding for critical community services. It generates job opportunities for thousands of Alaskans and impacts our voice in the State Legislature.

Get the word out about the 2010 Census...

- Raise awareness and encourage participation in this historic event, assure people that it is important – and safe – to answer the census.
- Help spread the word about census jobs in your community. Encourage your peers to get involved by joining a Complete Count Committee (CCC), an organized group of other influential leaders in your area who are committed to increasing participation in the census.
- Issue a proclamation or other public endorsement of the 2010 census.
- Include census information in newsletters, mailings and online.

It's Easy! – One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 census asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

It's Safe! – Every Census Bureau worker takes an oath for life to protect the confidentiality of Census responses. By law, the Census Bureau does not share your answers with anyone, not even other government agencies. The Census Bureau takes your privacy seriously.

It's Important! – Census data is used in determining your representation in Juneau as well as for community planning for roads, hospitals, schools and more.

Take a job that counts! Census Jobs will offer opportunities for nearly 2,500 Alaskans. Apply Now! 2010censusjobs.gov or call the census jobs line at: 866-861-2010. Good pay, temporary, part-time jobs, flexible hours, up to 40 hours a week, and mileage reimbursement. You can make a difference!

WHEN:

2010

Current: Preparations for census continue – Recruitment for census takers

January: 2010 Census begins enumeration in village Alaska

Feb – March: Questionnaires mailed or delivered to households

April 1: Census Day

April – July: Census Bureau delivers population counts to President for apportionment

Sept. 1: Members of Alaska Redistricting Board must be appointed by this date

Dec. 31: Census Bureau delivers population counts to President for apportionment

2011

March 31: Census Bureau delivers redistricting data to states by March 31

April – May: Alaska Redistricting Board publishes preliminary plan 30 days after receiving data

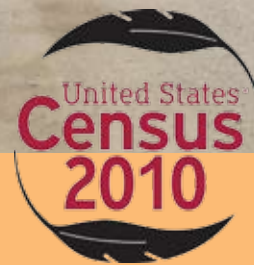
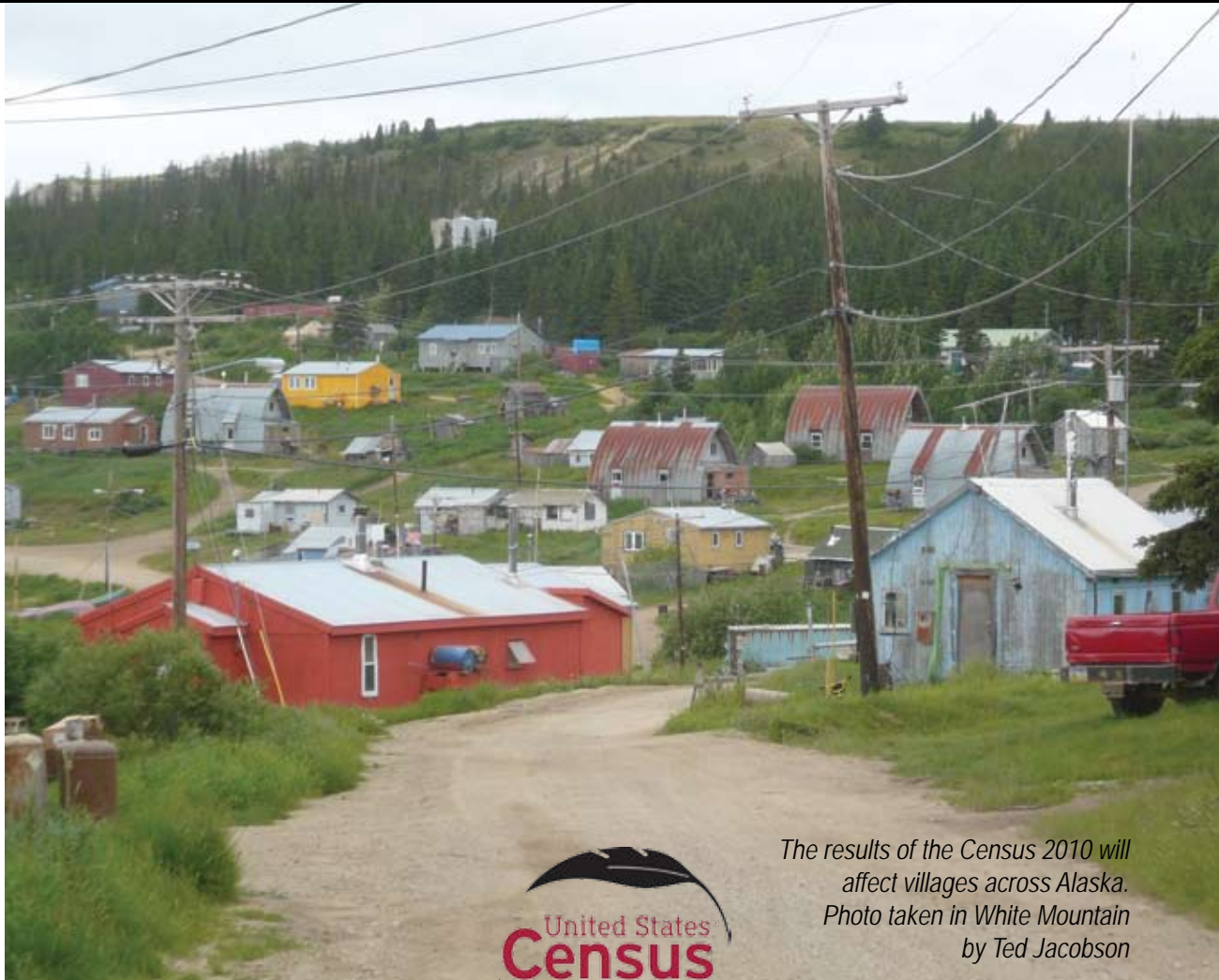
April – June: Alaska Redistricting Board conducts open meetings and public hearings

June: Alaska Redistricting Board reports plan 90 days after receiving data

July: Voters may write to compel Alaska to complete/correct redistrict within 30 days

Fall: Department of Justice has to rule on state's redistricting plan

Alaska Decennial Census 2010 Office is located in Anchorage, AK (907) 249-2900.



The results of the Census 2010 will affect villages across Alaska. Photo taken in White Mountain by Ted Jacobson

Nangerluten, Naaqevkaqilta!

3 Reasons Your Participation in the 2010 Census Matters

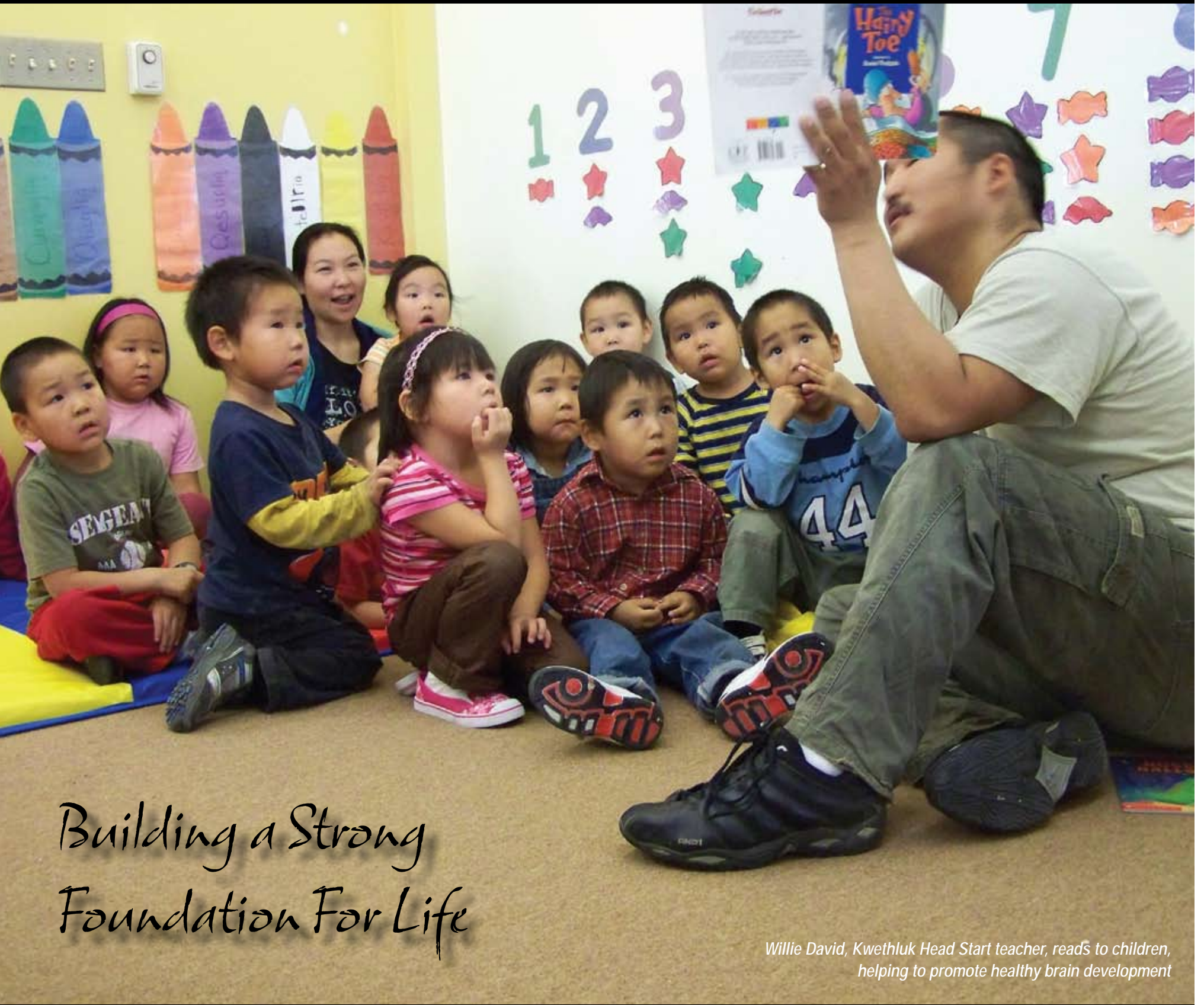
1. Every year more than \$400 billion in federal funds are awarded to states and communities based on census data. That's more than \$4 trillion over a 10-year period.

2. Census data affect your voice in Congress by determining how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives.

3. Census data guide local decision-makers in important community planning efforts, including where to build new roads, hospitals, and schools.

Unatemteni Uitauq

www.2010census.gov



Building a Strong Foundation For Life

Willie David, Kwethluk Head Start teacher, reads to children, helping to promote healthy brain development



Parents who play an active role in their child's early cognitive development build a strong foundation for lifelong learning, like Regina Nicholai in Napaskiak with son, Jeffery

by Melissa Pickle, Parents as Teachers Director

If you have ever held a newborn baby in your arms and watched him or her grow into a walking, talking, energetic little person by the third birthday, you know the amount of changes young children experience during the first three years of life. A baby's babbling turns into its first word. An infant who could not hold his/her head up begins to sit up, crawl and even walk. It is during this time that the foundation for all future growth and development is being laid.

When a child is born, the brain is still developing. At birth, a child's brain is just over 25% of its adult size; however, by the time the child reaches 3 years of age the brain has grown to 90% of its adult size. This is an amazing amount of growth in an extremely short period of time.

What is happening in the brain to make that growth occur? This growth is largely due to the rapid creation of connections in the brain. When we learn something new our brain makes a connection called a synapse. Each time we repeat that activity that connection in our brain gets faster and stronger. Every experience we have, whether it is positive or negative, either creates a new synapse or strengthens an existing one. For infants and toddlers, nearly every sight, sound, touch, taste and movement is new and this causes an explosion of synapse development. The rate of synapse development is at its greatest peak between birth and age three years. During the first year of life, the foundational brain connections for vision, hearing, language and various learning styles are all laid down in the brain. All future development is built upon these first connections.

Technological advances over the past several years have made it possible for us to view the brain activity of a young child and see the development of these brain connections. We are able to observe the connections and activity in children who have been raised in healthy and supportive environments as compared to those of young children who have experienced prolonged neglect or abuse. The differences are shocking. In a typically developing child we see many strong synapse connections as well as a lot of activity occurring in all regions of the brain. In children who have

experienced prolonged neglect or abuse, however, it is a very different story. These children show less brain activity as well as have fewer connections in the brains and often these synapses are damaged. These children struggle with activities that involve memory and learning and have less developed social skills, all of which are needed for school success.

Research has also shown us that the more risk factors a child birth to three years of age is exposed to, the more likely that child will experience difficulties in language, learning, social emotional development and even physical health.

Risk factors

- Poverty
- Child abuse or neglect
- Domestic violence
- Parent with a substance abuse issue
- Parent with a mental illness
- Parent with a low level of education
- Teen parent
- Being a minority
- Single parent
- Living in a home with 4 or more children

Risk Factors	Potential Chance of Developmental Delay
1-2	5%
3	20%
4	40%
5	80%
6-7	90%

As you can see from the chart above, if a child experiences one or two of these risk factors, there is about a 5% chance of a developmental delay. This percentage increases with higher numbers of risk factors such as those listed above. It is clear that early experiences and a child's environment impact brain development.

What experiences promote healthy brain development? One of the most powerful experiences an infant can have is bonding with the parents. Holding the baby, singing, talking, responding when he/she cries, rocking and



Holding and talking to your baby promotes healthy brain development. Huslia mothers gather their babies for a photo. Photo courtesy of Colleen Weter

gazing into the baby's eyes all help to make strong connections in the brain. The messages being sent tell the child he or she is safe and secure, and allows the child to focus on learning about the world around him/her. Reading a book together, playing games like peek-a-boo, building with blocks, coloring, and talking to the child about what he/she sees or is experiencing all help to create positive synapses.

Although it is clear that experiences during the first three years of life are critical to brain development, sometimes the brain can be repaired for a child who has had negative experiences through intensive intervention. However, it is much easier to build a strong base through providing positive early experiences than it is to try to repair a fragile one later on. We can all make a difference by giving our children a solid foundation to grow on and the best possible start in life through positive experiences and loving care at all times.

Editor's Note: Melissa Pickle is the Parents as Teachers Director at RurAL CAP. Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based international home visitation program dedicated to providing parent education services to families with children prenatal to five years of age through home visits and group meetings. There are many PAT programs around Alaska. More information can be obtained at <http://tinyurl.com/AlaskaPAT> or by contacting Melissa Pickle at (907) 865-7345 or mpickle@ruralcap.com.



Children at the Parents as Teachers Program in Hyدابург

Calendar

Mark your calendars for upcoming events!

RurAL CAP's 27th Annual Rural Providers' Conference
 June 7-11, 2010
 Location: Kodiak, Alaska
 (907) 279-2511
www.ruralcap.com



Photos wanted...



Photo taken in Akiak by Tara Loyd

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. 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.
To receive the Village Voices
for free and join our mailing list
contact RurAL CAP at:

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Huslia sunset.
Photo by MaryAnn Sam

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Announcements

Housing Help Now Alaska

If foreclosure or eviction is a possibility for you, contact us now! We are Alaskans providing ABSOLUTELY FREE financial counseling and legal assistance to fellow Alaskans who may be facing the loss of their home. Visit www.housinghelpnowalaska.org or call our Hotline at 1-888-643-5725 for more information.

Pick.Click.Give. Program

RurAL CAP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. You may make a donation when you apply for your Alaska permanent fund dividend online at <http://www.pfd.state.ak.us/>. Visit the Pick.Click.Give. program website for more information: www.pickclickgive.org.

1968 Rural Action Reports - Available Online!

The Village Voices publication has marked the milestones and growth of RurAL CAP throughout the years. The earliest Village Voices publication was a six-page activity update with no pictures. It featured Alaska's early leaders of the time, such as Nels Anderson, Byron Mallott, Willie Hensley and many more. In 1969, the publication took the form of a weekly "RurAL CAP's Action Report". It had a more traditional newsletter style with a few pictures scattered throughout. Go to www.ruralcap.com and look under the 'Historical Archives' in the publications sections.

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 to download an electronic PDF version of the Directory. You may email info@ruralcap.com or call (907) 279-2511 for more information. ●



**I'm your neighbor.
A place to call home changed my life.**

YOU
KNOW
me...

Sober now for nine years, I have a home and a steady job. But I was homeless once.

Safe housing was the key to my recovery. After being on the streets so long, I didn't know where to start when I got sober. Having supportive people and services helped me break the cycle of addiction so I could rebuild my life.

Please support safe housing – a wiser way to solve homelessness.



Paul Morin, Anchorage, RurAL CAP Homeward Bound alumni and advocate meets with Ben Karohovula Jr., a current RurAL CAP Homeward Bound case manager.

