

# NEWTOK RELOCATION QUARTERLY UPDATE

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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.

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*Finished home, constructed by the regional housing authority Association of Village Council Presidents.*

## Mertarvik accomplishments

### MERTARVIK EVACUATION CENTER

Summer 2018 was a time of progress for the Mertarvik Evacuation Center (MEC), which will serve as the school site for Mertarvik's first residents. In addition, it will serve as a community gathering place, house the Newtok Village Council's (NVC) offices, and potentially hold Catholic services before a church is constructed in the village. The MEC's shell, and mechanical and electrical infrastructure will be completed by Wolverine Supply in November and the structure will be winterized until spring, protecting the unfinished building from winter weather.

### SUMMER 2018 HOME CONSTRUCTION

This past summer, four Mertarvik homes were constructed by the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), the area's regional housing authority. Two are AVCP owned, Title VI homes and two are NVC owned, built with a HUD Imminent Threat grant. They will be ready for occupation when the first wave of residents moves to Mertarvik in September 2019.

### INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING

NVC will be working with the U.S. Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program to develop Mertarvik. During the 2019 construction season, the military will donate labor provided by an estimated 44 military personnel. Potential IRT projects include the landfill, heavy equipment shop, MEC interior, sewage lagoon, and power lines for phase 1 of electrical distribution in the new community. The expected labor contribution of the IRT is valued at as much as \$1.7 million. NVC will provide the IRT with completed engineering designs, permits, materials and provide equipment to support their activities.

# Design and construction update

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

In August 2018, the NVC and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) selected Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation Construction (UICC) to be the master builder for construction in Mertarvik. Currently, UICC is developing the barge landing road and quarry road emergency landing strip to prepare for the 2019 construction season.

The barge landing road spans 600 linear feet connecting the new town site to the barge landing. The landing strip is part of the quarry road; it will serve as a temporary site suitable for delivery of freight and passengers by chartered plane. When the permanent airport is established in 2021 by the AKDOT, this temporary site will continue serve as a passing and turnaround for construction equipment. Gravel for the roads is being produced at a quarry site by Brice Inc., a subsidiary of Calista Corporation. Brice expects to produce 50,000 cubic yards of gravel by the end of October and an estimated 150,000 cubic yards to complete all future construction in Mertarvik.



*September site visit of the MEC, which is being constructed by Wolverine Supply. Gavin Dixon (left), ANTHC Community Development Manager and Chris Olds, Project Manager with UIC Construction.*

## UPCOMING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The construction season will extend through the winter; modular buildings that will become the power plant and water plant will be constructed for installation in the village in summer 2019. These buildings will be constructed by UIC between October and March in Southcentral Alaska.

The modular water plant will be designed by CRW Engineering Group, LLC, an Alaska based engineering firm. The modular power plant was designed by HDL Engineering Consultants, LLC and is a standard Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) design capable of integrating significant wind power in the future.

In summer 2019, 13 homes are expected to be erected in the village. Currently, the Cold Climate Housing Research Center and UICC are preparing alternative designs and cost estimates to install housing in 2019, with further alternatives being developed for housing in 2020.

Other ongoing design activities include preliminary water and sewer design (CRW), village road design (DOWL), and design of electric power distribution to the current homes and infrastructure in Mertarvik and the public infrastructure to be constructed next summer (HDL). In addition, ANTHC is working with R&M Consultants, Inc., an Alaska-based civil engineering firm, to produce aerial and ground surveys of the village site and Golder Associates, Inc., a global consulting, construction services and design firm, to produce geophysics surveys. These will inform road development and foundation recommendations for housing and other key infrastructure in the village.

Additionally, R&M and Golder's investigations will inform and influence the design of the future AKDOT airport which R&M is also designing.

## Funding successes

Because of the increasingly dire state in Newtok, the 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Act allocated \$15 million to the Denali Commission for construction at Mertarvik. Following this announcement, NVC passed a resolution requesting ANTHC to assume the lead project-management role. Two weeks later, the Commission issued these funds with \$5 million of prior year funds and \$3.5 million of matching funds from the State of Alaska to ANTHC for the 2018-2019 construction season.

NVC recently received a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Indian Energy grant: Energy Infrastructure Deployment on Tribal Lands. The DOE grant is for \$500,000 and matched with Denali Commission funds. This grant will be used to implement energy efficiency upgrades in the construction camp. In addition, the funds will be used to construct a buried heat recovery system to capture by-product heat from the power plant that would otherwise be lost. This system is estimated to save the village around \$100,000 a year in fuel costs once complete. Other recently acquired energy funds include a major contribution of \$3.5 million from the Alaska Energy Authority to develop the Mertarvik Phase I Bulk Fuel Farm.

The village also recently received a grant through the Bureau of Indian Affairs Housing Improvement Program. They were awarded \$300,000 to put toward housing design and construction in Mertarvik.

## Anticipated support needs

ANTHC is managing approximately \$23 million to spend on planning, design and construction in Mertarvik during the 2018 and 2019 construction seasons. These funds will be used to build homes and basic infrastructure in the village. In 2019, UIC and IRT will construct 13 homes, the water and power plants, town-site roads, and infrastructure to provide sewage and water services to support the first residents. NVC has additional funds from the BIA Tribal Transportation Program and FEMA Pre Disaster Mitigation program; estimated at just over \$1 million. These combined funds are enough to start construction in the community, but not enough to finish it. Denali Commission's estimates indicate that the cost to fully relocate the community will approach \$110 million. ANTHC and the NVC are actively seeking funding agency support, not limited to the critical needs below.

### COMMUNITY HOUSING

#### AMOUNT NEEDED PER HOME: \$400,000

The greatest need in Mertarvik is funding for community housing. Currently, there is a critical housing shortage in Newtok with multiple families living in single family homes. When surveying Mertarvik housing needs, the Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC) identified eight additional families that moved away from Newtok because of limited space, but would like to relocate to the new village site.

Based on the number of people in Newtok and those who would like to move back, CCHRC estimated a need for 105 houses at Mertarvik compared to the 66 in Newtok. Healthy and sufficient housing in Mertarvik will expedite the relocation and provide improved quality of life. Occupied housing at Mertarvik will also allow for eligibility for many traditional state and federal funding programs to be accessed by Newtok.

### PASS

#### AMOUNT NEEDED TO INSTALL PASS IN ALL MERTARVIK HOMES: \$800,000

Before piped water is distributed to the community, a Portable Alternative Sanitation System (PASS) will be installed in each home. The PASS is equipped with a separating toilet, allowing liquid waste to be disposed of in a seepage pit, and solid waste dried through an integrated ventilation system. This reduces odors and improves community health by allowing the dried solids to be disposed in a landfill. A low-flow sink and gravity-fed water storage tank allows residents to wash their hands. This system is not a replacement for a piped water system, but rather will provide basic sanitation needs for each home: hand-washing, clean drinking water and safe human waste disposal until a piped water system can be installed. ANTHC and NVC are currently working with the UMCOR foundation to fulfill this opportunity.

### TEACHER HOUSING

#### AMOUNT NEEDED TO CONSTRUCT A DUPLEX: \$625,000

The village would like to build a duplex unit for teacher housing in the 2020 construction season. NVC and ANTHC are currently working on an AHFC grant for this project.



An installed PASS.

## Additional Support Needs

### COMMUNITY HOUSING SELECTION

Newtok needs support to develop a housing priority list by identifying when residents should move to Mertarvik considering housing program eligibility, risk of displacement, and community infrastructure needs (access to clinic, full service airport, etc.)

### NEWTOK HAZARD MITIGATION

The first line of houses in Newtok is projected to erode into the river this fall. There is trash and hazardous materials in the community that could contaminate the landscape if left behind. Newtok needs a built-environment assessment and guidance to further these clean up activities: disassembling houses and associated infrastructure, disposing of waste, identifying reusable materials, etc. Recently Newtok has begun utilizing \$1.7 million in funds from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to buyout and demolish the 7 most imminently

threatened homes in the community. Laying the groundwork to guide future efforts to mitigate hazards in Newtok is critical to continuing this progress.

### PREPARING NEWTOK FOR THE MOVE

Newtok residents need support to prepare themselves for the move to Mertarvik. ANTHC employees and Sally Cox of the State of Alaska DCRA, are putting together content for a relocation guidebook. This guidebook will serve as a resource for community members, containing all the information they need to know for a successful transition to Mertarvik. It will include information on packing and shipping, a move-in manual for their new home, and everything in the village including but not limited to: airport access, dock/barge, fuel, health clinic, landfill/dump site. Developing the material will require the support and guidance of government agencies in the fields appropriate to their expertise.



## Newtok community update

In July, three Newtok high-school students and one youth mentor bore hot and humid weather to attend the 2018 Native Youth Leadership Congress in West Virginia.

The purpose of the congress is to develop future leaders with the skills to tackle environmental and conservation challenges in their home communities. The students learned about the social and environmental issues faced by other Native youth across the U.S., surprised by the similarities to Newtok. Bosco Charles, Newtok's youth mentor, explained, "every community had problems similar to us, including language loss, crime and environmental change."

At the congress, the Newtok students were able to share their culture and experience the culture of others. On the last night of the conference, the Newtok students performed a blessing dance. Other youth joined in and Bosco explained they were excited because it was something new for them. Bosco, an experienced dancer, enjoyed watching the dancing of others, especially the Hawaiian group and "how they move, dance, sing, yell." Even though West Virginia was unbearably hot, at the end of the conference, nobody wanted to leave.



*Bosco Charles and other Newtok youth performing traditional Yup'ik dance at a community event.*



*ANTHC relocation team photo. From left to right: Gavin Dixon, Liz Wulbrecht, Ellie Jackson and Bart Adams*

## ANTHC relocation team

This summer, the relocation team at ANTHC hired three new employees!

Bart Adams, PE, civil engineer, will serve as engineering project manager for the Mertarvik construction. He will focus on overseeing design and construction activities, including plan development and construction administration.

Ellie Jackson will serve as project manager for development of the new location, focusing on contract oversight, scheduling, and budget.

Lastly, Liz Wulbrecht, an Americorps VISTA, joined ANTHC to help with youth outreach and career development for Newtok residents and provide other relocation support, such as creating content for the relocation guidebook.

Gavin Dixon, community development manager, oversees the relocation team, and is responsible for coordination with the community of Newtok, federal, state and other community partners on the relocation effort.



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

