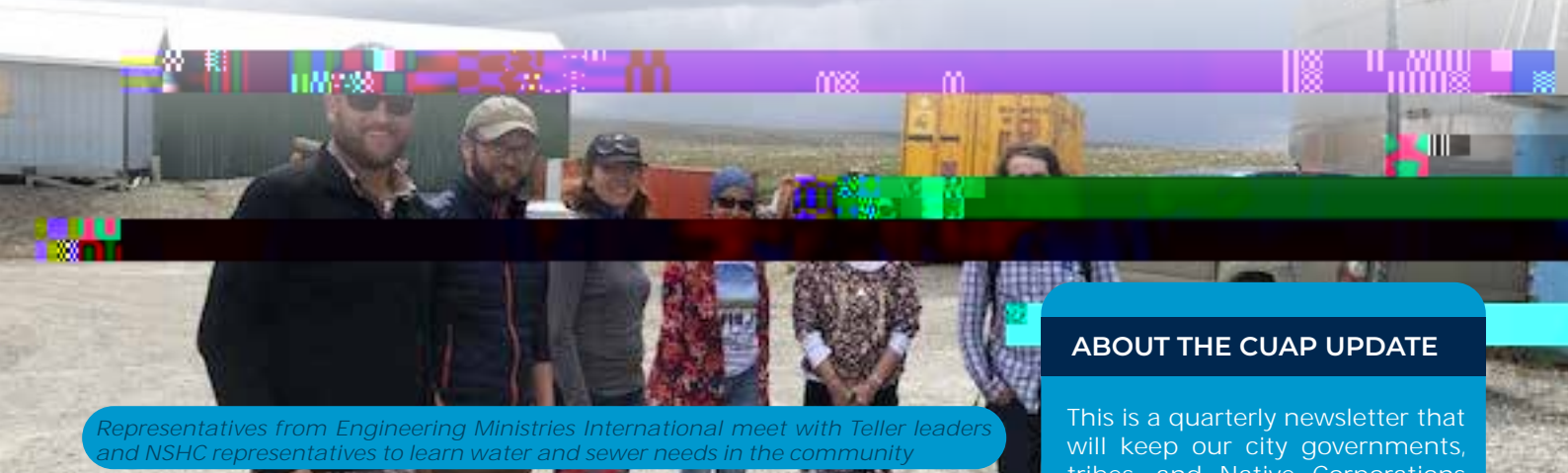




CUAP Update

A newsletter of the Bering Strait Tribal Water and Sewer Community Utility Assistance Program



Representatives from Engineering Ministries International meet with Teller leaders and NSHC representatives to learn water and sewer needs in the community

ABOUT THE CUAP UPDATE

This is a quarterly newsletter that will keep our city governments, tribes, and Native Corporations informed about the Bering Strait Regional Tribal Water and Sewer CUAP.

Most articles included in this first edition were written by Sierra Anderson, a civil engineering intern at NSHC. Sierra is going to school at the University of Alaska Anchorage and will graduate in 2023. Her career goal is to return to help the region through a meaningful career in engineering.



CUAP Development Powered by Community Leaders and Desire for Change

The Bering Strait Tribal Water and Sewer Community Utility Assistance Program (CUAP) was created to help each city government in the Bering Strait region carry out a high-quality, DEC-compliant water and sewer program. This can be accomplished through effective local leadership and certified water plant operators by using sound fiscal management, strong partnerships, collaboration, and the leveraging of existing resources.

The concept of establishing a CUAP has been under consideration for quite some time, and the program was already underway by leaders in villages and through assistance from Kawerak and Norton Sound Health Corporation.

In June 2021, the Helmsley Charitable Trust awarded the region the majority of a grant of \$20 million, which will be managed through Engineering Ministries International (EMI). This generous gift was the catalyst for the formation of the CUAP.

In addition to this grant, the NSHC Board of Directors and Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC) Board of Directors both

pledged \$500,000 on an annual basis to support the ongoing efforts of the CUAP, with a goal that the funds will directly support each village participating in the CUAP.

In Spring of 2021, Kawerak and NSHC met with each city government by teleconference or in-person to brief them on the preliminary details of the CUAP and the benefits, but most importantly, to gauge feedback about how the program should be designed. The CUAP is a technical assistance and support model, which has been created to focus on all criteria necessary to achieve the highest best practice score possible. City governments will continue to own and maintain the water and sewer utility systems.

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The CUAP development team in Stebbins.

WASH PROJECT

What a charitable grant is doing to kickstart water & sewer project funding - Page 2

WHAT IS THE SCORE?

How the State prioritizes water & sewer capital projects - Page 6

MEET THE TEAM

Photos and bios of those who worked on pre-development of the CUAP - Page 7

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In an effort to tackle problematic water and sewer systems, regional organizations are teaming up with a pair of outside entities to find a path to solutions.

In the Bering Strait region, there are five communities that do not have a working water and sewer system. Approximately 370 homes do not have drinkable water. Roughly 450 homes lack water and sewer systems all together.

The 11 other communities in the region need repairs or upgrades to their water and sewer systems. City governments have struggled to maintain these systems for decades - mainly due to changes in permafrost, climate change, location, lack of funding, and availability of resources.

The WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) Project was created to help improve the sanitation deficiencies in rural Alaska, specifically

"I hope that this will bring awareness to these communities and what conditions they are in. I hope for this to be a catalyst for other companies to help out." - Walter Panzirel



What's in a Grant? Helmsley Charitable Trust Awards \$20M to Alaska Water & Sewer Projects



The Office of Environmental Health has been working to open a state certified drinking water lab for the region. In February, the hard work paid off with full certification from the State of Alaska to analyze drinking water samples from the region's 16 public water systems.

The drinking water lab is only certified to accept the bacteriological drinking water samples that water systems are required to take each month. This analysis detects the presence or absence of total coliform bacteria and E. Coli in drinking water. These regular monthly "bacti" samples are one of the most important ways to know water is safe to drink.

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What are Best Practice Scores?

Best Practice Scores are the metric of the State of Alaska's criteria for assessing operations and maintenance capacity of rural water and wastewater utilities. It is a significant component of the competitive Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding system, which funds a large part of public rural Alaska water and waste water infrastructure.



The scores are based off the overall financial, managerial, and technical aspects of an operating system.

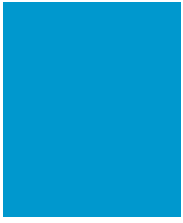
Financial scoring criteria: budget, revenue, worker's compensation insurance, and payroll liability compliance

Managerial scoring criteria: utility management training, meetings of governing body

Technical scoring criteria: operator certification, preventative maintenance plan, compliance

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆





CUAP PRE-DEVELOPMENT TEAM MEMBERS TRAVELED AROUND THE REGION IN JUNE TO MEET WITH TRI-ORGANIZATION MEMBERS IN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES AND TOUR THE WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE. THE REGIONAL TOUR WILL HELP EMI DESIGNATE WHERE SOME OF ITS GRANT FUNDING WILL GO FIRST.



“Some of our systems are failing. Other systems are aging, and this is an opportunity for us to be proactive. Five of our communities lack a piped water system all together. And so we look forward to sitting down at the table and mapping out what the path to service looks like for those communities and really strategizing how we’re going to accomplish that goal.”

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