

Alaska Rural Communications Service ARCS

The Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS) is a State of Alaska (SOA) owned and operated rural television service.

- ARCS is a key component in Alaska's Emergency Alert System (EAS) plan and Emergency Relay Network feeding commercial and non-commercial broadcasters EAS systems. Emergency alerts from state and federal authorities are fed directly into the ARCS satellite signal and are carried directly into the homes of viewers.
- For many rural residents, ARCS is the only available over the air television signal.
- ARCS programming includes Alaska news and weather; a highly valued service in many rural communities.
- ARCS provides many hours of children's and educational programs, popular commercial broadcasts, and live coverage of unique Alaska events such as the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention and the Iditarod.
- ARCS communities supply the electrical power, time and labor, local support and equipment space for the ARCS equipment in their village.
- The ARCS Digital Conversion Project was funded to upgrade the transmitters at 185 sites from analog to digital. Digital Conversion = better service with improved video and audio, multichannel service, decreased electrical cost and repairs through vendor warranties.
- ARCS is a statewide satellite delivery platform for video, audio and data. Additional public service video and audio streams are embedded in the satellite signal that distributes ARCS at no additional cost to SOA.
- Built in 2007, the existing uplink infrastructure is now entering its thirteenth year of service. Maintenance is a major concern. The system requires replacement before catastrophic failure renders it inoperable.

Through the ARCS system, the SOA provides critical information services to many rural Alaskans as the only source of over the air television. Additionally, ARCS serves multiple non-profit broadcast entities around the State, and leverages the infrastructure to provide an important link in Alaska's emergency communications.

Prepared by Mollie Kabler, APBI Executive Director, February 10, 2020