

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS
STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 20, 2004
9:06 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Carl Morgan, Chair
Representative Kelly Wolf, Vice Chair
Representative Pete Kott
Representative Ralph Samuels
Representative Sharon Cissna
Representative Albert Kookesh

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Tom Anderson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW OF DCED COMMUNITY SERVICE BLOCK GRANT

TAPE(S)

04-12, SIDE A

CHAIR CARL MORGAN called the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Representatives Morgan and Kott were present at the call to order. Representatives Cissna, Samuels, and Kookesh arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

CHAIR MORGAN announced that the order of business would be to have Jo Grove provide opening comments and a description of the Community Services Block Grants and the Community Food and Nutrition Grants Programs. David Hardenbergh, Executive Director, Rural CAP, Inc., will then provide a brief overview of the plan and be available to answer questions. A public comment period will follow.

JO GROVE, Grant Manager, Fairbanks Office, Division of Community Advocacy, Department of Commerce and Economic Development, explained that funding comes from the federal Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Community and

Economic Development (DCED). The funds can be used to fund community action agencies. In Alaska, the only community action agency is RurAL CAP. The exact amount that the state will receive this year is unknown, but is anticipated to be between \$2.3 and \$2.4 million. The purpose of these funds is to impact the causes and conditions of poverty. The plan before the committee identifies RurAL CAP's actions and measurement standards and has been approved by DCED. Mr. Grove further explained that RurAL CAP deals with administration, child development, community development, housing, tribal, and subsistence.

DAVID HARDENBERGH, Executive Director, RurAL CAP Inc., thanked the committee for holding this meeting and explained that he has only been director since March 2004. The focus of RurAL CAP is to reduce poverty, which leads to self-sufficiency. The Division of Community Advocacy within DCED receives the money from the federal government. Mr. Hardenbergh complimented the work of Mr. Grove and Ms. Jill Davis. Mr. Hardenbergh further explained that RurAL CAP is the only community action agency in the state; that it acts statewide and is a certified non-profit. RurAL CAP is governed by a 24-member board of directors who meet quarterly and set the agency's policy, which the executive director implements. RurAL CAP is able to leverage an additional \$15 to \$20 million annually and employs 300 people. He highlighted that RurAL CAP applies the majority of its resources to rural Alaska where there is more poverty, although it provides Head Start in Ketchikan, home weatherization programs in Juneau, affordable housing programs in Anchorage, and AmeriCorps partnerships in Fairbanks. In Anchorage, there is a program to integrate homeless alcoholics back into society. RurAL CAP and its partners support a 25-bed facility.

MR. HARDENBERGH related that the RurAL CAP program has detailed outcomes measures, which focus on implementing the program and producing measurable results. The program knows the number of kids that are better prepared to go to school, the number of home owners who have benefited from the weatherization programs, and the number of parents who have jobs because their kids have day care. The goal is to be responsible stewards of the public funds the organization receives.

CHAIR MORGAN inquired as to the subsistence and tribal issues on which RurAL CAP has been working.

MR. HARDENBERGH explained that RurAL CAP has cut back in recent years at the direction of the board. Currently, there is no

staff assigned to these issues. However, RurAL CAP does support a statewide newspaper "The Village Voice." Additionally, the board identifies priorities. Currently, work is occurring with a Native subsistence halibut group in regard to better management of subsistence halibut fishing. In further response to Chair Morgan, Mr. Hardenbergh listed the communities where RurAL CAP supports Head Start programs, and explained that other organizations such as Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Association of Village Councils Presidents provide Head Start programs as well. Mr. Hardenbergh said that RurAL CAP does not fund Head Start programs in urban Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA praised the outcome measures in the report, and asked what the earliest contact is with parents or parents to be as there are studies demonstrating that the earlier the intervention the better.

MR. HARDENBERGH explained that Head Start began with a focus on 3 and 4 year olds, but has now become involved in focusing on prenatal to 3 year olds. This is not a center-based program, but uses home visits to educate and provide counseling. He offered to provide Representative Cissna with a list of communities where such services are provided.

MR. HARDENBERGH, in response to Chair Morgan's inquiry regarding the location and number of employees, explained that there are about 100 folks in Anchorage, 70 of whom are in the central office. The other 30 are split between Mountain View and its childcare facility.

MR. GROVE thanked the committee and then introduced Dewey Skan a member of the board of directors.

DEWEY SKAN, Member, RurAL CAP Board of Directors, explained that he has been on the board for 15 years advocating for rural Alaska. Currently, he is working with Kake to obtain resources to redo its nearly 100-year-old building with a bad roof. He related that the plan is to name the new building after Shirely Jackson. He then thanked the committee for the opportunity to campaign for the money for this new building.

REPRESENTATIVE KOOKESH added that the state engineers just completed their report and found that the roof had serious problems.

There was a discussion between Mr. Skan and Representative Cissna as to whether the building in Kake would qualify for historical status.

MR. SKAN, in response to Representative Morgan, replied that this large board functions fairly well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:41 a.m.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded and handwritten log notes were taken. A copy of the tape(s) and log notes may be obtained by contacting the House Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2214, and after adjournment of the second session of the Twenty-Third Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.