

**SCOMM**

**157:12**

**Denise Liccioli**

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**From:** Dustin Solberg [dsolberg@alaskanewspapers.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 28, 2008 4:30 PM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Subject:** Alaska Newspapers

Hello Denise,  
Thanks for your help at the task force hearing today. Could you please forward those things we discussed:

Name of Y-K VPSO that came up in conversation  
The senator mentioned a letter from Teller, regarding a homicide beating. Could you please pass along a copy of that?

Thanks,  
Dustin

Dustin Solberg  
Alaska Newspapers  
301 Calista Ct., Suite B  
Anchorage, AK 99518

Tel: (907) 348-2480  
Tel: (800) 770-9830 x 480  
Fax: (907) 272-9512  
Fax: (800) 770-9512

**Radio stations**

KBRW Janelle Everetts 852-6397

KNOM Jacob Buckenmeier 443-5221

KOTZ 442-3434

KICY 443-2213

**Newspapers**

Dan Braus KUAC FBKs

Report of findings due 2/15/08

Somewhere to house  
prisoners - also  
need blankets & pillows  
for them

communication  
& response  
for Troopers

Support -

Money + benefits

CISM debriefing

+ counseling

Uniforms for the seasons

Want regional control & input into hires from villages, even if not from same village, but a diff village

equity issue - rural deserves protection as much as urban  
Also disparity in # miles covered & law enforcement - not just population  
Recruit Several from larger villages to go to other villages

Need backup somehow - 2nd one or traveling backup

Also need \$ to prevention - education, ~~street~~ street lights, teen center

Tribal courts? or some kind of Elders pgm

perhaps have a way of <sup>pardoning</sup> forgiving past crimes since  
Many do things when young - & then it  
narrows the pool of who can qualify

use \$ from forfeitures to pay for public safety

people  
has change

✓

need to be able to confiscate drugs & alcohol,  
including home brew

Report of Committee on  
5/12/08

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# ALASKA STATE SENATE VPSO TASK FORCE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON  
CHAIR

EMAIL:  
Senator\_Donny\_Olson@legis.state.ak.us

(907)465-3707  
(907)465-4821, FAX



ALASKA  
STATE CAPITOL  
ROOM 514  
JUNEAU, ALASKA  
99801-1182

**MEMBERS:** SENATOR FRENCH, SENATOR DYSON, COMMISSIONER MONEGAN, ATTORNEY  
GENERAL COLBERG, LORETTA BULLARD, MYRON NANENG

**Sent via email**

January 21, 2008

To VPSO Task Force Members:

The Senate VPSO Task Force will hold its final meeting to finalize their report to the Legislature (due in February), as follows:

+ Monday, January 28, 2008, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm – Anchorage, Room 210 of the LIO

Testimony is by invitation only. It will be teleconferenced.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff, Denise Liccioli, at 465-3707.

Sincerely,

Senator Donald C. Olson

CC: Senator Lyda Green  
Senate Secretary  
Jeff Turner, Majority Press Office  
Russ Kelly, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Governor  
Jodi Jacques, Anchorage LIO Staff

**Denise Liccioli**

---

**From:** Jack Omelak  
**Sent:** Friday, January 18, 2008 10:24 AM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Subject:** FW: Trooper needs in Western Alaska

---

**From:** Jack Omelak  
**Sent:** Friday, January 18, 2008 10:22 AM  
**To:** 'denise\_liccolli@legis.state.ak.us'  
**Cc:** 'ginny\_austerman@legis.ak.state.us'  
**Subject:** FW: Trooper needs in Western Alaska

Copy of constituent email and my reply.

Senator Donny Olson  
Room 514  
State Capitol Bldg.  
Juneau, AK. 99801-1182  
(907) 465-3707  
Fax:(907) 465-4821

---

**From:** Sen. Donny Olson  
**Sent:** Friday, January 18, 2008 10:16 AM  
**To:** 'Michelle Krier'  
**Subject:** RE: Trooper needs in Western Alaska

Michelle,  
Thank you for taking the time to write and inform me about some of the issues our region is facing. I know that providing more protection and law enforcement for our region is a primary concern and I am working to address such issues. I have just finished at Task Force meeting in which we are finding ways to solve such problems, and I can say without a doubt that the problems you face are some of our most concerning issues. Thanks again for your input.

Senator Donny Olson  
Room 514  
State Capitol Bldg.  
Juneau, AK. 99801-1182  
(907) 465-3707  
Fax:(907) 465-4821

---

**From:** Michelle Krier [mailto:MKrier@kawerak.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 18, 2008 9:19 AM  
**To:** Sen. Donny Olson  
**Cc:** Michelle Krier  
**Subject:** Trooper needs in Western Alaska

Dear Senator Olson,

1/18/2008

# ALASKA STATE SENATE VPSO TASK FORCE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON  
CHAIR

EMAIL:  
Senator\_Donny\_Olson@legis.state.ak.us

(907)465-3707  
(907)465-4821, FAX



ALASKA  
STATE CAPITOL  
ROOM 514  
JUNEAU, ALASKA  
99801-1182

**MEMBERS:** SENATOR FRENCH, SENATOR DYSON, COMMISSIONER MONEGAN, ATTORNEY  
GENERAL COLBERG, LORETTA BULLARD, MYRON NANENG

January 2, 2008

To VPSO Task Force Members:

The Senate VPSO Task Force meeting scheduled for this Friday, January 4, is cancelled and rescheduled for Friday, January 18, in Juneau, Beltz room.

Testimony is by invitation only. It will not be teleconferenced.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff, Denise Liccioli, at 465-3707.

Sincerely,

Senator Donald C. Olson

CC: Senator Lyda Green  
Senate Secretary  
Jeff Turner, Majority Press Office  
Russ Kelly, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Governor  
Jodi Jacques, Anchorage LIO Staff  
Peg Warren, Juneau LIO Staff

# ALASKA STATE SENATE VPSO TASK FORCE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON  
CHAIR

EMAIL:

Senator\_Donny\_Olson@legis.state.ak.us

(907)465-3707

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ALASKA  
STATE CAPITOL  
ROOM 514  
JUNEAU, ALASKA  
99801-1182

**MEMBERS:** SENATOR FRENCH, SENATOR DYSON, COMMISSIONER MONEGAN, ATTORNEY  
GENERAL COLBERG, LORETTA BULLARD, MYRON NANENG

December 5, 2007

To VPSO Task Force Members:

The Senate VPSO Task Force will hold another meeting to discuss and decide on the findings and recommendations for their report to the Legislature (due in February), as follows:

Friday, January 4, 2008, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm – Anchorage, Room 220 of the LIO

Testimony is by invitation only. It will not be teleconferenced.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff, Denise Liccioli, at 465-3707.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donald C. Olson".

Senator Donald C. Olson

CC: Senator Lyda Green  
Senate Secretary  
Jeff Turner, Majority Press Office  
Russ Kelly, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Governor  
Jodi Jacques, Anchorage LIO Staff

**Denise Liccioli**

---

**From:** Myron P. Naneng [mnaneng@avcp.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2007 2:21 PM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Subject:** Re: Need another meeting

Our Housing Improvement Program coordinator and Alvin Jimmie, VPSO coordinator are travelling starting next week to make assessments on buildings. In our meeting with Major Glick and Capt. Steve Arlow this morning, I mentioned that in the past one of the State agencies had energy efficiency loan programs to help make homes energy efficient. I am wondering if the program can be expanded to include public safety buildings. I know Rural Cap did energy efficiency work on homes in many villages. It would also be good to contact them to find out if they have any funds for public safety building energy efficiency projects that we can use to leverage with some of the VPSO construction budgets. Once Alvin is done with the assessments, he will provide you with copies.

**Denise Liccioli <[Denise\\_Liccioli@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Denise_Liccioli@legis.state.ak.us)> writes:**  
Hi Myron,

Thanks for the response on the availability.

Also, I'm guessing that one of the recommendations will revolve around improving the public safety facilities as well as VPSO housing, the cost to implement them will be an important consideration. As such, do you have any kind of facility study that could be used to determine how many villages would need to either have a building built or repaired and upgraded in order to have them be adequate? And do you have anything on which villages would need to get or improve housing for the VPSO?

I just put a form on the fax to you. Let me know if it comes through ok.

~Denise

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**From:** Myron P. Naneng [<mailto:mnaneng@avcp.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2007 11:33 AM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Subject:** Re: Need another meeting

Can you please send me a per diem claim form for the last meeting so that I can submit my last trip report for reimbursement. Also, maybe, after the new year before the session begins, it might be better for me to attend the next meeting.

**Denise Liccioli**

---

**From:** Loretta Bullard [president@kawerak.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 30, 2007 10:25 AM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Cc:** gappolloni@kawerak.org  
**Subject:** RE: information

Dear Denise - If a community has a unit available for the VPSO to rent, then they don't have a need. The problem is many communities do not have **any** housing available to rent. By way of cc, I've asked the VPSO coordinators to identify communities that have no housing available whatsoever.

You're asking me to estimate costs for an undefined situation. I don't know what villages in the AVCP region for example, have no housing available at all. Some villages may have units that can be renovated, some may be able to dedicate a HUD house for use/rent by the VPSO, some may have to construct a combo facility. . . . Perhaps the solution is to survey the villages and find out the extent of the need, share it with the various agencies that can do something about the problem and develop an action plan to address. Costs could be estimated as part of that process.

It will be an expensive initiative . . . but using health clinics as an example, over the last six years or so, the majority of our Bering Straits Region villages have applied for and been successful in accessing funds to construct new state of the art health clinics. If total costs were estimated up front, I think it likely that folks would have concurred it was too expensive to undertake. Right now, the villages are having problems with trying to find funds to keep up the O & M on the new facilities - since they are larger and more expensive to operate.

If there are homes that can be renovated for exclusive use by the VPSO, that would probably be the least expensive option. Perhaps the state/Denali Commission/HUD could establish a fund whereby the cities or tribes could apply for funds to renovate existing units for exclusive use of the VPSO. If it were funded at \$1-2 million a year with a \$50,000 max award, over a couple of years, a great deal of housing stock could be fixed up for use by the VPSO. Food for thought.

LB

At 09:37 AM 11/30/2007 -0900, you wrote:

Hi Loretta,

I understand what you are saying. But the money is still a consideration. If building a house dedicated to VPSO use is not what's needed, and renting something that is already there is the better solution, then what kind of money are we talking about needing to give to the community to do that?

Thanks,  
Denise

---

**From:** Loretta Bullard [mailto:president@kawerak.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2007 4:10 PM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli; richardk@api.ai.org; randers@bbna.com; zbrink@avcp.org; astemp@avcp.org; mnang@avcp.org; gappolloni@kawerak.org; jknopke@tanachiefs.org;

11/30/2007

jerry.isaac@tananachiefs.org; jan@chugachmiut.org; lauren\_berdow@avcp.org;  
anita.bailor@kanaweb.org; james\_wyckoff@avcp.org; iroehl@bbna.com; dick@sonoskyjuneau.com;  
margaretg@apiai.org; csd.vp@kawerak.org; margaret.matthew@tananachiefs.org;  
val.maxwell@kanaweb.org; hbolen@maniilaq.org; patrick@chugachmiut.org; cdaniel@alaska.net;  
vdauidson@anthc.org; andy.teuber@kanaweb.org; cakelkok@bbna.com

**Subject:** RE: information

Dear Denise - well, I can ask the VPSO coordinators to take a stab at putting a list together of those villages in their regions which need VPSO housing. . . . but it varies tremendously from place to place. If, for example, an outside Physician Assistant leaves the village and a house opens up . . . then conceivably a VPSO could be housed in the unit. . . . if there is a qualified applicant available. It's an availability of housing, quality of housing, qualified applicant and timing issue. . . . which is why I think providing funds to cities to renovate and dedicate a unit for rental by the VPSO and other public safety personnel is a good idea.

By way of cc - I am asking VPSO Coordinators to put together a list of the villages within their service area that need housing for a possible VPSO. Please forward the information to Denise Liccioli, who is aide to Senator Olson, Chair of the Senate VPSO Task Force.

I will not be available to meet January 2-4, 2008. I'll be traveling out of state over the Christmas holidays and won't be back in the office until January 7, 2008.

Thx.

LB

At 03:52 PM 11/29/2007 -0900, you wrote:

Hi Loretta,

Thanks for the prompt response.

On the VPSO housing, do you know which locations currently do not have acceptable housing but needs it? I also know that I will not have time to make a lot of contacts on this one issue in the time we have, so if there is anyone who can pull something together that will give a very general ball park idea of what it would cost if one of the recommendations is to provide acceptable housing to each VPSO, that will help. In order to make the cut list, there is going to have to be some level of understanding of what it would cost.

It looks like the first few days of the year are coming up most often as available. Would you be able to meet in Anchorage sometime between Jan 2 and 4th?

Thanks Loretta,  
~Denise

---

**From:** Loretta Bullard [mailto:president@kawerak.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2007 3:41 PM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Cc:** dand@aleutian-housing.com  
**Subject:** Re: information

11/30/2007

At 02:11 PM 11/29/2007 -0900, you wrote:

Hi Loretta,

Have you had a chance yet to see what dates you will be available for the next meeting of the VPSO Task Force? It's looking like it may have to be after Christmas, but the sooner the better.

Also, I'm guessing that one of the recommendations will revolve around improving the public safety facilities as well as VPSO housing. The cost to implement them will be an important consideration. As such, do you have anything on which villages would need to get or improve housing for their VPSO? And do you have any cost associated with doing so? I have your facility study but confess to not having had a chance yet to actually read it. I'm assuming that it will give me some idea of cost once I take the time to do that, though.

Thanks, Loretta.

~Denise

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Dear Denise - the report I provided to you summarizes what needs to be done to bring the public safety offices and holding cells up to code in the Bering Straits Region. I don't know what the renovation expense for these facilities would be in the other areas of the state.

The VPSO Task Force could make recommendations:

- that similar studies be funded around the state - so we know what the costs are to bring **existing** facilities up to code. State DPS contracted with Kawerak to compile the report that you have a copy of. It cost \$14-16,000 to do the study - which is very inexpensive when you consider the end product. Previously, State DPS wanted us to put the information together at no cost - but we pointed out we didn't have individuals on staff who had expertise in building codes and developing renovation estimates. Plus there was expense associated with traveling to each of the villages to do an on-site assessment. A person needs expertise in the field to do the work contained in the study. We put the work out to bid and were fortunate to have Cliff Gray submit a bid to do the work.
- that DPS undertake a study to identify those communities who are without and **need** a public safety office/ holding cell;
- that prototype plans and materials lists be developed for combo public safety office/holding cell/VPSO housing facilities for use by cities who do not have facilities or for use by cities that want to replace existing facilities rather than repair them. If they had the prototype plans/materials lists, cities could then apply for funding to various federal and state funding sources, to access the funds to construct the facilities (Denali Commission, HUD, ICDBG, State

Cities Block Grant, etc)

Kawerak had an A/E contract to develop 4 prototype plans for tribal multipurpose facilities in our villages. (7 of our villages were approved to construct). We worked with the tribal councils and the architect to develop the four prototype plans and materials lists. The villages picked out the plan they wanted to use and amended the plans to reflect current site conditions. It cost much less in A/E costs to do it this way - as opposed to every tribe doing A/E independently. NSHC did something similar with the health clinics. There have been huge numbers of new health clinics constructed in the villages - using this approach. I think the powers that be need to make up their mind that this is a priority and lay the stage to make it happen.

In terms of VPSO housing - it is **extremely expensive** to construct housing in rural Alaska. The regional housing authorities could provide good estimates of cost to construct around the state. I am cc'ing this email to Dan Duame, who is the Chair of the regional housing authorities group - he can provide the contact list for the 12 regional housing authorities.

Housing needs could be partially addressed by

- tribal councils passing a resolution dedicating a HUD house for exclusive use of a VPSO;
- providing for VPSO housing in a larger teacher/public health professional housing unit;
- providing prototype plans so cities can build their own combo unit;
- providing renovation grants to cities that commit to setting aside a renovated unit for the exclusive use of law enforcement;
- village corporations or private businessmen or women constructing/renting out units in the villages. It is extremely expensive to construct new housing - which is why I think renovation grants/dedicated units might be the way to go.
- pulling together a meeting of all the entities that can help address the need for VPSO housing - to communicate/collaborate/ and cooperate on how they might work together to solve the problem.

In terms of the follow-up meeting - I'm available the week of January 7 or January 14th - except for January 15, 2008.

Hope this helps. LB

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**Denise Liccioli**

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**From:** Valent Maxwell [Valent.Maxwell@kanaweb.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2007 4:19 PM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Subject:** FW: information

Larsen Bay  
Old Harbor  
Ouzinkie  
Port Lions  
Karluk  
Akhiok

VLM

*Valent L. Maxwell  
VPSO Coordinator / Marine Safety Specialist  
Kodiak Area Native Association  
3449 Rezanof Dr. East Kodiak, Alaska 99615  
Ofc. (907) 486-3750 Fax (907) 486-3498*

---

**From:** Loretta Bullard [mailto:president@kawerak.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2007 4:10 PM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli; richardk@apiai.org; randers@bbna.com; zbrink@avcp.org; astemp@avcp.org; mnang@avcp.org; gappolloni@kawerak.org; jknopke@tanachiefs.org; jerry.isaac@tanachiefs.org; jan@chugachmiut.org; lauren\_berdow@avcp.org; Anita Bailor; james\_wyckoff@avcp.org; iroehl@bbna.com; dick@sonoskyjuneau.com; margaretg@apiai.org; csd.vp@kawerak.org; margaret.matthew@tanachiefs.org; Valent Maxwell; hbolan@maniilaq.org; patrick@chugachmiut.org; cdaniel@alaska.net; vdauidson@anthc.org; Andy Teuber; cakelkok@bbna.com  
**Subject:** RE: information

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**To:** Denise Liccioli

**Cc:** dand@aleutian-housing.com

**Subject:** Re: information

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Thanks, Loretta.  
~Denise

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Hope this helps. LB

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**Denise Liccioli**

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**From:** Dan Duame [dand@aleutian-housing.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 30, 2007 1:02 PM  
**To:** Denise\_Liccioli@legis.state.ak.us  
**Cc:** Loretta Bullard  
**Subject:** FW: information  
**Attachments:** AAHA Contact List.pdf

Sorry about that. Here is the list.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Dan Duame  
**Sent:** Friday, November 30, 2007 12:55 PM  
**To:** 'Denise\_Liccioli@legis.state.ak.us'  
**Cc:** 'Loretta Bullard'  
**Subject:** RE: information

Hi Denise,

Loretta makes some very good suggestions. We of course have some of the same VPSO housing issues in our region we are working on with our non-profit to address. As requested by Loretta, attached is the Association of Alaska Housing Authority (AAHA) contact list. We are happy to help any way we can. One correction on the list. Our current AAHA Administrator is Vickie Petersen. Feel free to contact her for any further information you may need.

Dan Duame

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Loretta Bullard [mailto:president@kawerak.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 29, 2007 3:41 PM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Cc:** Dan Duame  
**Subject:** Re: information

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Thanks, Loretta.

~Denise

---

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Dear Denise - the report I provided to you summarizes what needs to be done to bring the public safety offices and holding cells up to code in the Bering Straits Region. I don't know what the renovation expense for these facilities would be in the other areas of the state.

The VPSO Task Force could make recommendations:

- that similar studies be funded around the state - so we know what the costs are to bring **existing** facilities up to code. State DPS contracted with Kawerak to compile the report that you have a copy of. It cost \$14-16,000 to do the study - which is very inexpensive when you consider the end product. Previously, State DPS wanted us to put the information together at no cost - but we pointed out we didn't have individuals on staff who had expertise in building codes and developing renovation estimates. Plus there was expense associated with traveling to each of the villages to do an on-site assessment. A person needs expertise in the field to do the work contained in the study. We put the work out to bid and were fortunate to have Cliff Gray submit a bid to do the work.

- that DPS undertake a study to identify those communities who are without and **need** a public safety office/ holding cell;

- that prototype plans and materials lists be developed for combo public safety office/holding cell/VPSO housing facilities for use by cities who do not have facilities or for use by cities that want to replace existing facilities rather than repair them. If they had the prototype plans/materials lists, cities could then apply for funding to various federal and state funding sources, to access the funds to construct the facilities (Denali Commission, HUD, ICDBG, State Cities Block Grant, etc)

Kawerak had an A/E contract to develop 4 prototype plans for tribal multipurpose facilities in our villages. (7 of our villages were approved to construct). We worked with the tribal councils and the architect to develop the four prototype plans and materials lists. The villages picked out the plan they wanted to use and amended the plans to reflect current site conditions. It cost much less in A/E costs to do it this way - as opposed to every tribe doing A/E independently. NSHC did something similar with the health clinics. There have been huge numbers of new health clinics constructed in the villages - using this approach. I think the powers that be need to make up their mind that this is a priority and lay the stage to make it happen.

In terms of VPSO housing - it is **extremely expensive** to construct housing in rural Alaska. The regional housing authorities could provide good estimates of cost to construct around the state. I am cc'ing this email to Dan Duame, who is the Chair of the regional housing authorities group - he can provide the contact list for the 12 regional housing authorities.

Housing needs could be partially addressed by

- tribal councils passing a resolution dedicating a HUD house for exclusive use of a VPSO;
- providing for VPSO housing in a larger teacher/public health professional housing unit;
- providing prototype plans so cities can build their own combo unit;
- providing renovation grants to cities that commit to setting aside a renovated unit for the exclusive use of law enforcement;
- village corporations or private businessmen or women constructing/renting out units in the villages. It is extremely expensive to construct new housing - which is why I think renovation grants/dedicated units might be the way to go.

- pulling together a meeting of all the entities that can help address the need for VPSO housing
- to communicate/collaborate/ and cooperate on how they might work together to solve the problem.

In terms of the follow-up meeting - I'm available the week of January 7 or January 14th - except for January 15, 2008.

Hope this helps. LB

## Association of Alaska Housing Authorities

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[Training](#)

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[Back to Main](#)

### AAHA Members

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**For Further Information  
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Dr. Blake Kazama, Pres.  
Steve Ginnis, Vice Pres.  
Olen Harris, Sec/Treasurer

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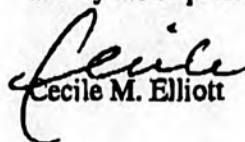
Designed by WebWeavers Technology Group LLC™

November 1, 2007

Hello Denise,

If I remember correctly there are 16 hours of taped meetings to be transcribed. It takes about 3 hours to transcribe, edit and complete 1hr of committee meeting minutes. The length of time can vary due to complexity of the subject and clarity of the speakers. I would estimate this project would require a minimum of 2 hours and maximum of 3 hours per taped hour.

The 16 hours of tape would equal approximately 40-60 hours of transcription @ \$25.00 an hour (the going contract rate for these services) totaling \$1000.00 - 1200.00. It is my intention, should you use my services, to complete the project as soon as possible and by the requested deadline of November 16<sup>th</sup>.

  
Cecile M. Elliott

OK to pay  
transcription services  
for the UPSO Task Force.  
account 7703  
VSG/aisdell  
3 Nov 07

# ALASKA STATE SENATE VPSO TASK FORCE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON  
CHAIR

EMAIL:

Senator\_Donny\_Olson@legis.state.ak.us

(907)465-3707

(907)465-4821, FAX



ALASKA  
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99801-1182

**MEMBERS:** SENATOR FRENCH, SENATOR DYSON, COMMISSIONER MONEGAN, ATTORNEY GENERAL COLBERG, LORETTA BULLARD, MYRON NANENG

**For Immediate Release: October 9, 2007**

## **VPSO Task Force Making Progress**

(ANCHORAGE) – The VPSO Task Force is nearing the end of its series of hearings in rural Alaska and continues to gather information on how to improve public safety in the state's most remote communities. The Task Force is chaired by Sen. Donny Olson (D – Nome).

"We have heard the importance of the VPSO program in protecting rural Alaskans because of the deterioration in the program, a number of suggestions have come forth, including some to help with recruitment and retention. The Task Force is taking them under advisement and careful consideration now, and will generate recommendations to the senate next session. I and other members of the Task Force appreciate all of the people who took the time to come out, or who submitted written testimony on this important subject," said Senator Olson.

A total of 92 people have testified in person or in writing at six different VPSO Task Force meetings in Nome, Savoonga, Gambell, Bethel, Emmonak and Mountain Village.

Sen. Hollis French (D – Anchorage), Sen. Fred Dyson (R – Eagle River), Commissioner of Public Safety Walt Monegan, Attorney General Talis Colberg, Loretta Bullard, President of Kawerak Inc., and Myron Naneng,

President of the Association of Village Council Presidents are also members of the Task Force.

One more hearing is scheduled for November 5<sup>th</sup> in Kodiak. That meeting is subject to change due to the upcoming legislative special session. If that meeting is held, village safety officers will testify at that meeting.

The VPSO Task Force will issue a report to the Alaska Senate outlining its findings and recommendations by February 15, 2008.

For more information, contact Senator Olson at (907) 269-xxxx.

###

## **Denise Liccioli**

---

**From:** Denise Liccioli  
**Sent:** Friday, August 10, 2007 3:43 PM  
**To:** Loretta Bullard; Myron P. Naneng; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Fred Dyson ; Walt Monegan; Talis J Colberg  
**Cc:** Alvin Jimmie ; Cindy Smith ; Allison Biastock ; Cathy Hoffman; Gina Appolloni ; Lucky Shultz; Lauren Rice; Svobodny, Richard (LAW); Glick, John; Valent Maxwell  
**Subject:** Non-public meetings

Good afternoon everyone,

Yesterday I sent out the memo regarding the public meetings so I thought I should remind everyone that in addition to those public meetings, we will meet with the VPSOs in Kodiak on 11/5 and also meet in Anchorage on 11/19 and 11/20 to wrap everything up and generate the recommendations and report.

I also wanted to share some travel information since I will be making the arrangements for Senator Olson, Loretta Bullard and Myron Naneng; but the rest of you will have your staff make the arrangements. From the rest of this email, this is really information intended to be helpful for those who will be making the travel arrangements for you.

Nome - intend to fly into Nome out of Anchorage on flight 152 at 9:26 AM on 9/25; returning to Anchorage from Nome on flight 153 at 10:09 PM on 9/26. Staying at the Aurora Inn, 800-354-4606, on 9/25. I believe we will need to taxi to and from airport and hotel, and the charter. We will charter to Savoonga and Gambell on Hageland. As I understand it, the meeting places in both locations are a short walk from where we will land when we come in on the charter.

Bethel - intend to fly into Bethel out of Anchorage on flight 43 at 12:00 PM on 10/4; returning to Anchorage from Bethel on flight 46 at 8:36 PM on 10/5. Staying at Bentley's Porter House Bed & Breakfast, 543-3552, on 10/4. I believe we will need to taxi to and from airport and hotel, and the charter. We will charter to Emmonak and Mountain Village on Grant Air. I am still working on how we will get from the charter to the meeting place in Emmonak; but in Mountain Village, they will send a shuttle and it will cost \$5 per person (each way, I assume).

Kodiak - You could fly in the day before and stay the night, or you could fly into Kodiak in the morning. If you fly in to Kodiak in the morning, the flight leaves Anchorage at 6 AM and it is not a jet. I have made reservations for those for whom I am responsible to come in the night before on 11/4 and stay at the Kodiak Inn, 800-563-4254, since that is where the public meeting will be in the morning. We will be done in time to make the afternoon jet out of Kodiak on 11/5, flight #33 leaves at 4:58 pm. The Kodiak Inn provides a courtesy shuttle from the airport to the hotel.

The meeting with the VPSOs is being coordinated with Val Maxwell. He is going to arrange transportation for all of us from the Kodiak Inn to the Coast Guard Facility where the training will be held. We will probably want to have lunch before the training, but again, Val is still working out the details and we may be able to lunch at the training. (I'll let you know the details later when they have been finalized and it is closer.) He will also arrange shuttles to take all of us to the airport.

Anchorage - those coming from out of town will fly in the night before on 11/18 so that we can meet essentially all day Monday and Tuesday if needed, leaving Anchorage after work on Tuesday 11/20. Our meeting place is at the LIO, room 220, for 11/19 and 11/20. I'm assuming that two days will be enough, but please speak up if anyone thinks it will take longer; if it takes less, no harm done.

Let me know if you have any other questions and I hope this is helpful information for the travel arrangers!

-Denise  
x3707

# ALASKA STATE SENATE VPSO TASK FORCE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON,  
CHAIR

EMAIL:

Senator\_Donny\_Olson@legis.state.ak.us

(907)465-3707

(907)465-4821, FAX



ALASKA  
STATE CAPITOL  
ROOM 514  
JUNEAU, ALASKA  
99801-1182

**MEMBERS:** SENATOR FRENCH, SENATOR DYSON, COMMISSIONER MONEGAN, ATTORNEY GENERAL COLBERG, LORETTA BULLARD, MYRON NANENG

August 9, 2007

To Distribution List:

In May 2007, the Senate passed SR7, "A resolution creating and relating to the Senate VPSO Task Force". This resolution created a Task Force to find ways to strengthen and improve public safety in rural Alaska by identifying problems with the Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program, and ways those problems might be addressed.

The Senate VPSO Task Force will hold public meetings as follows:

Tuesday, September 25, 3:15-5:15 pm - **Nome** - Rec Center

Wednesday, September 26, 9:30-11:30 am - **Savoonga** - City Hall, downstairs

Wednesday, September 26, 1:30-3:30 pm - **Gambell** - City Hall, downstairs

Thursday, October 4, 3:00-5:00 pm - **Bethel** - Cultural Center

Friday, October 5, 9:30-11:30 am - **Mountain Village** - Community Hall

Friday, October 5, 1:30-3:30 pm - **Emmonak** - City Complex

Monday, November 5, 9:00-11:00 am - **Kodiak** - Kodiak Inn

Monday, November 5, after the public meeting, the Task Force will also attend the VPSO Training being held in Kodiak.

The agenda for the public meetings is attached. If a person wishes to testify but cannot make it to a meeting, written testimony can be submitted to the Task Force. If a person does so, their name and mailing address must be included with their testimony. It is preferable to use email for sending the testimony -- at least 2 work days prior to the meeting -- to the above

email address. However, it can also be sent via USPO mail -- provided it is *received* at least 7 work days prior to the meeting -- to the above mailing address.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff, Denise Liccioli, at 465-3707.

Sincerely,

  
Senator Donald C. Olson

Attachment: "VPSO Task Force Meeting Agenda"

CC: Senator Lyda Green  
Senate Secretary  
Jeff Turner, Majority Press Office  
Christopher Clark, Acting Legislative Liaison, Office of the Governor

Distribution List:

Task Force Members

Mayors of Nome, Bethel, Savoonga, Gambell, Emmonak, Mountain Village, City of Kodiak, Kodiak Island Borough

Presidents of Gambell IRA Council, Savoonga IRA Council, Orutsaramiut Native Council, Emmonak Tribal Council, and Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council

Aleutian Pribilof Island Association  
Association of Village Council Presidents  
Bristol Bay Native Association  
Kodiak Area Native Association  
Kawerak, Inc.  
Tanana Chiefs Conference  
Tlingit-Haida Central Council  
Arctic Sounder  
Nome Nugget  
Delta Discovery  
Tundra Drums  
Kodiak Daily Mirror  
Val Maxwell, ~~Department of Public Safety~~

KANA

## **VPSO Task Force Public Meetings Agenda**

In May 2007, the Senate passed SR7, "A resolution creating and relating to the Senate VPSO Task Force". This resolution created a Task Force to find ways to strengthen and improve public safety in rural Alaska by identifying problems with the Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program, and ways those problems might be addressed.

Senator Donald C. Olson was appointed Chair of the Task Force. Other members are Senator Hollis French, Senator Fred Dyson, Commissioner Walt Monegan, Attorney General Talis Colberg, Loretta Bullard (President, Kawerak, Inc), and Myron Naneng (President, AVCP).

The agenda for the public meetings to be held by the Task Force follows. If you wish to testify but cannot make it to the meeting, you can submit written testimony to the Task Force. If you do so, your name and address must be included with your testimony. It is preferable to use email for sending your testimony -- at least 2 work days prior to the meeting -- to Senator Donny Olson@legis.state.ak.us. However, you can also send it via USPO mail -- provided it is received at least 7 work days prior to the meeting -- to Senator Donald Olson, State Capitol Room 514, Juneau, AK 99801.

- Opening remarks – Senator Olson
  - Purpose of the Task Force
  - What we hope to accomplish
  - Process we are using
- Overview of the current VPSO program – Commissioner Monegan
  - Problems we're aware of, such as recruitment and retention, salary, etc.
  - Things that have already been tried, or are in the works
  - Introduction of tiered approach to public safety officers throughout Alaska
- Public input and discussion – please:
  - State your name for the record
  - State the problem or concern you have or have noticed, and
  - Concentrate on your recommendation and ideas for restructuring and improvements that would make the program effective.
- Closing – Senator Olson and other members of the Task Force

**Denise Liccioli**

---

**From:** Sue Gullufsen  
**Sent:** Monday, September 10, 2007 11:35 AM  
**To:** 'nome.lio@legis.state.ak.us'; LIO Bethel; LIO Kodiak; Denise Liccioli  
**Cc:** Peg Warren  
**Subject:** VPSO meetings

Hi, Sen. Olson will hold several meetings in the state regarding the status of VPSO's. His staff is asking for our assistance and the use of polycoms. The logistics are complicated so we need to help in any way we can. First I have offered you 3 as back ups to the meetings and the use of your polycoms both for the meetings taking place in your communities and outside of your community. I will fax you the tentative agendas that includes the dates, locations and point of contact in your community of these meetings.

Please call the contact and schedule a time to take the polycom to the location to test. After that your duties will be to attend the meetings, set up the polycoms and receive faxes from the bridge operator in Juneau with the names of those calling in to listen and testify. Just like a moderator would do here in Juneau. We will capture the audio from the bridge and she will also tape the meeting on site. They expect at a couple of these meetings there might be a big show of people on site. Please ask the contact if they have amplifying equipment (mics) that the audience can use. if they do it needs to be tested with the polycom in use to see if feedback will be a problem. if they don't then anyone that wishes to testify on site will have to join the cmte at the table and speak in to the polycom.

After the meetings in your community they are going to transport the cmte to villages outside for a day. She needs to take your polycoms for these meetings and will return them the next day when they get back. it may be after normal business hours but you and she can arrange that.

Her name is Denise Liccioli. I am copying her with this email. let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks, Sue

9/10/2007

**Denise Liccioli**

---

**From:** Denise Liccioli  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 19, 2007 10:28 AM  
**To:** 'Korting, Nancy A (LAW)'  
**Cc:** Cindy Smith ; Allison Blastock; Lucky Shultz; Gina Appolloni ; Cathy Hoffman; 'Rice, Lauren (DPS)'  
**Subject:** RE: Binders for next week's meeting

Hi Nancy,

Sorry for the misunderstanding. When I first started sending info out to members, I suggested all the provided info be put into a binder so they would have it all in one place, and that's the "binder" I was referring to. Here is what should be in the "binder" or whatever other way the information is being kept together:

- the schedule and agenda
- written testimony provided thus far: Linae Sanger, Nellie Wesley, Joseph Strongheart, Carin Finch, and Howard Amos
- informal notes called "Comments and ideas expressed regarding VPSOs"
- email from Tom Okleasik regarding idea for potential funding of VPSOs
- fax from Charlene Tickett
- news articles: Rural policing gets a hard look", "Northwest arctic residents, leaders rally to end violence", "Ruling rejects race-based law enforcement claims", "Policing the bush", "Forum highlights shortage of rural police, judicial service", "Plea for funding VPSO program preceded officer's suicide", "VPSOs walk a fine line in villages", "Tough job in the bush", and "Small town cop: keeping the peace in Mountain Village"
- the Dittman report prepared for AFN
- all the worksheets from the file provided by Dept of Public Safety with various program information (my paper count is actually 31 pages, although they are only numbered to 28 plus one unnumbered page)
- the Report and Recommendations of the Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

Everything was sent via email except for the news articles and the last report listed. Let me know if you are missing anything. I am also cc'ing the other folks on my email in case they had similar questions. Again, I'm sorry for any confusion or misunderstanding.

~Denise

---

**From:** Korting, Nancy A (LAW) [mailto:nancy.korting@alaska.gov]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 19, 2007 10:03 AM  
**To:** Denise Liccioli  
**Subject:** RE: Binders for next week's meeting

Good Morning Denise: Was there a "formal binder" that went out to everyone? AG Colberg (who is in Anchorage & I am in Juneau) states he has background info - (believe that was from you by email), various emails re testimony, and a Dittman April 2005 poll document; is there anyway to know if he has everything? Thanks.

## Denise Liccioli

---

**From:** Tom Okleasik [okleasik@gci.net]  
**ent:** Friday, June 08, 2007 11:06 AM  
**o:** Sen. Donny Olson; Rep. Richard Foster; Rep. Reggie Joule; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Albert Kookesh; Kim Elton; Rep. Beth Kerttula  
**Cc:** Mike Coumbe  
**Subject:** Fw: seattletimes.com: Beer-tax increase pitched to pay for more state patrol

Kia ora all,

FYI on a tax in OR - great potential to help fund VPSOs statewide that are so greatly needed particularly with alcohol abuse as the main cause.

Tom Okleasik

> This message was sent to as a service of The Seattle Times  
> (<http://www.seattletimes.com>).

> -----  
>  
> Beer-tax increase pitched to pay for more state patrol Full story:  
> [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2003739411\\_beertax08e.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2003739411_beertax08e.html)  
> html

> By Brad Cain  
> The Associated Press

> SALEM, Ore. -- Several lawmakers formally pitched a nickel-a-bottle  
> increase in Oregon's beer tax Thursday to help pay for more Oregon  
> State Police troopers, but the idea seemed to go flat almost immediately.

> At a news conference, the lawmakers said the Legislature's recent  
> approval of a budget allowing the Oregon State Police to hire 100 more  
> troopers to patrol roads and freeways was a step in the right direction.

> But they said that is 39 troopers short of what's needed to restore  
> around-the-clock coverage on the state's major highways, and far below  
> the trooper numbers of the early 1980s.

> "We're in a crisis in this state, and it's getting worse," Sen. Rod  
> Monroe, D-Portland, said at a news conference with Rep. Sal Esquivel,  
> R-Medford, and Sen. Rick Metsger, D-Welches.

> To create a permanent, dedicated source of money to put more troopers  
> out on the roads, the three lawmakers proposed the nickel-a-bottle  
> beer-tax increase.

> Esquivel said it would reverse the "bipartisan erosion of this  
> organization" over the years.

> However, the idea met with opposition from House Minority Leader Wayne  
> Scott, whose caucus would have to provide at least some Republican votes.  
> Approval would require at least 36 of the 60 House members, and the  
> majority Democrats number just 31.

> Scott said House Republicans are opposing tax increases in general,  
> even if it's for a good cause like putting more troopers on the road.

> "It's a regressive tax. It puts the burden on the wrong people," the  
> Canby lawmaker said, adding that he worries the increase might hurt

> Oregon's microbrew beer industry as well.

>

> On the Democratic side, House Speaker Jeff Merkley said Wednesday that

> while there might be an argument for using a beer tax increase to help

> pay for increased patrols, it's not an issue that's at the top of the

> agenda as the 2007 Legislature enters its final weeks.

>

> "I think there's a lot more conversations about a tobacco-tax increase,"

> Merkley said, referring to the behind-the-scenes talks about boosting

> cigarette taxes to help pay for children's health insurance.

>

> Esquivel said the state needs to act now to protect public safety by

> creating a permanent funding source for state police. The Medford

> lawmaker said he wasn't fazed by Scott's comment that his fellow House

> Republicans won't support a beer-tax increase.

>

> "What's popular isn't always right," he said.

>

> The proposal by Esquivel and the others would put 70 percent of the

> revenue into a special fund that could be tapped only to pay for

> Oregon State Police. The rest would go to cities and counties, which

> could use it for public safety, or alcohol- and drug-treatment programs.

>

> A spokeswoman for Gov. Ted Kulongoski, Anna Richter Taylor, said the

> governor believes lawmakers need to come up with a permanent,

> dedicated funding source for state police, so the agency doesn't have

> to compete with other interests in budget deliberations.

>

> Richter Taylor said that while the governor is glad to see efforts to

> find a dedicated funding source for state police, the beer-tax

> proposal advanced by the lawmakers is lacking because "it doesn't

> specifically dedicate money to alcohol and drug treatment."

>

> Monroe said lawmakers need to raise the beer tax this session, because

> the 100 new trooper positions recently approved by the Legislature

> could be at risk in future tough times.

>

> "Once the economy goes down again, the state police will end up losing,"

> the Portland senator said.

> =====

>

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Native Village of Shungnak  
P.O. Box 64  
Shungnak, Alaska 99773

Phone: (907)437-2163  
Fax: (907)437-2183

### Fax Transmittal Form

Honorable Mayor Whiting  
Honorable Pres. Greene  
To: Honorable Pres. Bolan  
Rep. Jule  
FAX #: Rep. Olsen

From Tickett

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442-7827✓  
268-4123

465-4586✓  
465-4821

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Fax: (907)437-2183

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### Message:

This letter is for the protection, health  
and safe well being for our community  
our people need to step up and  
do something now before something  
happens and is too late to help.

Thank you

Crystal Tickett

for Charlene Tickett

Please help us get a VPSO to our village!!

June 21, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in regards to all the alcohol related incidents we have had here in Shungnak. Being a health care provider, I have seen a lot. I am very concerned about people drinking as well as underage drinking. I think that alcohol importation and home brew making in the villages should be stopped.

Shungnak is a dry community. Everyone traveling to Shungnak should have baggage checked. No matter who the person is. Recently a house burned down because of a brew party and a near death incident which involved weapons, also hidden domestic violence. We have our children looking up to us and we should be giving a good example, and by writing this letter of concern to you. I hope to see something done with this ongoing importation and home brew making.

*Charlene Tickett*  
Charlene Tickett  
CHP Shungnak

**adn.com**

Anchorage Daily News

[Print Page](#)[Close Window](#)**Rural policing gets hard look****KOTZEBUE: Kinship, lack of resources are challenges.**

By TAMAR BEN-YOSEF

The Arctic Sounder

*(Published: September 4, 2007)*

BARROW -- When the Northwest Arctic Borough, along with the state Department of Public Safety, scheduled a law enforcement conference in Kotzebue, it had no idea what to expect.

Neither did the Alaska State Troopers, who to an extent expected to arrive and temporarily serve as the community's punching bag for complaints and allegations.

But that was about as far from the truth as anyone could have predicted.

People who came to the conference last month at the National Guard Armory in Kotzebue meant business. And they were fully ready to work with the troopers to get it done.

They even came bearing awards of recognition and a song of prayer for those who work hard to protect their lives.

The Northwest Arctic Region struggles daily with some of the highest rates in Alaska for suicide and alcoholism, which inevitably leads to high rates of criminal charges for domestic violence and assault.

Fed up with the endless cycles of violence and the inability to control it, the region's leaders, law enforcement officials, Village Public Safety Officers program operators and interested residents worked for solutions.

The problems were evident from the welcoming remarks of borough Mayor Sikauraq Martha Whiting.

Currently, only one state trooper is assigned to the entire region, with one more arriving next month. Of 10 villages in the borough's jurisdiction, only two have VPSOs -- one for both Shungnak and Kobuk and another for Selawik.

With low pay, limited housing and often awkward family connections to the offenders, the VPSO job generally is not a sought-after position.

And even if there were to be VPSOs in every village, most do not have adequate holding cells, halfway homes or the personnel available to supervise anyone until troopers arrive.

For instance, when juveniles or inebriates are to be watched or removed from homes, the hospital or jail becomes the detox or holding facility. For lack of better facilities and staff, those individuals often are treated much like criminals instead of people who would benefit from counseling.

With commitments to fight the war on drugs and alcohol, borough residents now appear ready to take matters into their own hands.

"We need to take ownership of the plans," said Walter Sampson, president of the Leaders Assembly in Kotzebue. "That way if we make a mistake we can look at our plan and see what we did wrong."

Among the speakers and presenters were state Sen. Donald Olson, D-Nome, and state Rep. Reggie Joule, himself a resident of Kotzebue. Both joined Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan for an afternoon live interview on KOTZ radio with Suzie Erlich.

The three spoke of their vision for the region with regard to law enforcement and more specifically, the VPSO program.

Monegan said he strongly supports the VPSO program but was not pleased with its tendency to ebb and flow. His vision includes making the VPSOs state employees.

"I would like to codify the program and make it so that it is a permanent part of the public safety horizon," Monegan said.

Putting VPSOs all across the state, in the communities, is something long overdue, he said.

#### IMPROVING CULTURAL AWARENESS

They also commented on previous frictions between the community and the local troopers and the necessity for cultural cross-training and orientation for law enforcement personnel stationed in the villages.

"It would be beneficial for the community to form an elders' advisory group, so that when a new trooper comes in, the group would meet him and they could give the cultural orientation, and then the trooper would fly out to the villages and do a meet and greet, see what the town is about," Monegan said.

Leaving the conference with pages of suggestions on possible solutions, improvements and goals, residents remain aware of the work ahead for all those involved.

Most knew the conference was just the beginning.

But all seemed to agree, according to voiced opinions, that it was a beginning in the right direction.

And that, many said, already is better than what was there before.

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**Denise Liccioli**

---

**From:** Ginny Austerman  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 30, 2007 12:56 PM  
**To:** Denise Morris  
**Cc:** Denise Liccioli  
**Subject:** RE: Emailing: Alaska Newspapers, Inc.

Thank you, Denise. I'm forwarding this on to Sen. Olson's staff person, Denise Liccioli. Denise is the Committee Aide for the VPSO Task Force. I'm sure she will appreciate the coverage.

---

**From:** Denise Morris [mailto:DMorris@anjc.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 30, 2007 12:49 PM  
**To:** Ginny Austerman  
**Subject:** FW: Emailing: Alaska Newspapers, Inc.

This may be helpful as well.

Denise Morris  
President/CEO  
Alaska Native Justice Center  
3600 San Jeronimo Drive, Suite 264  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
907-793-3550 phone  
907-793-3570 fax



## **Northwest Arctic residents, leaders rally to end violence**

### **Law enforcement meeting develops "new beginnings"**

TAMAR BEN-YOSEF  
tbenyosef@alaskanewspapers.com

When the Northwest Arctic Borough initiated, along with the state Department of Public Safety, a law enforcement conference in the Kotzebue they had no idea what to expect.

Neither did the Alaska State Troopers, who somewhat expected to arrive and temporarily serve as the community's punching bag for complaints and allegations.

But that was about as far from the truth as anyone could have predicted. People who came to the Aug. 15-16 conference at the National Guard Armory in Kotzebue meant business. And they were fully ready to work with the troopers to get it done.

They even came bearing awards of recognition and a song of prayer for those who work hard to protect their lives.

The Northwest Arctic Region struggles daily with some of the highest rates in Alaska for suicide and alcoholism, which inevitably leads to high rates of criminal charges for domestic violence and assault.

On the surface, the scenic region surrounded by a rich sea and a busy subsistence lifestyle is a calm and neighborly community - home to families connected to each other with ties deeper than the ocean's floor.

Yet underneath there are challenges that leave these quiet-spoken people seemingly helpless in the face of these modern-day truths.

Fed up with the endless cycles of violence and the inability to control it, the region's leaders, law enforcement officials, Village Public Safety Officers program operators and interested residents worked for solutions.

The problems were evident from the first welcoming remarks of borough Mayor Sikauraq Martha Whiting.

Currently, only one state trooper is assigned to the entire region, with one more arriving next month. Of 10 villages in the borough's jurisdiction, only two have VPSOs - one for both Shungnak and Kobuk and another for Selawik.

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And even if there were to be VPSOs in every village, most do not have adequate holding cells, half-way homes or the personnel available to supervise anyone until troopers arrive.

For instance, when juveniles or inebriates are to be watched or removed from homes, the hospital or jail becomes the detox or holding facility. For lack of better facilities and staff, those individuals often are treated much like criminals instead of people who would benefit from counseling.

With commitments to fight the war on drugs and alcohol, borough residents now appear ready to take matters into their own hands.

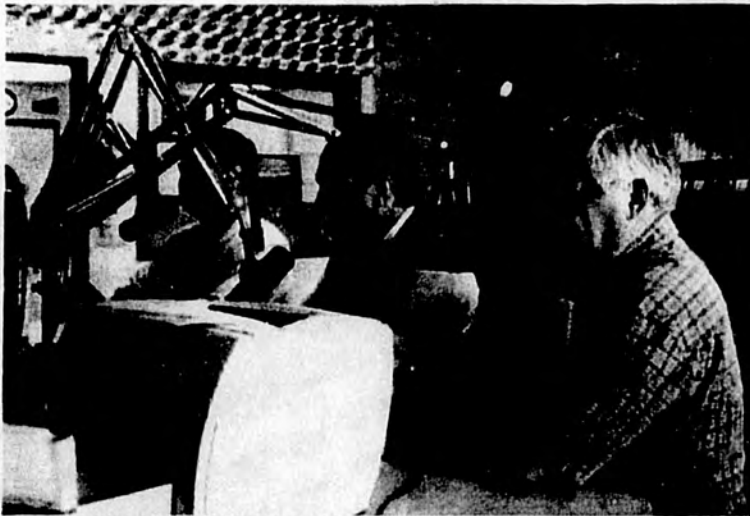
"We need to take ownership of the plans," said Walter Sampson, president of the Leaders Assembly in Kotzebue. "That way if we make a mistake we can look at our plan and see what WE did wrong."

Among the speakers and presenters were state Sen. Donny Olson and state Rep. Reggie Joule, himself a resident of Kotzebue. Both joined Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan, for an afternoon live interview on KOTZ radio with Suzie Erlich.

The three spoke of their vision for the region with regard to law enforcement and more specifically the VPSO program. They also commented on previous contention between the community and the local troopers and the necessity for cultural cross training and orientation for law enforcement personnel stationed in the villages.

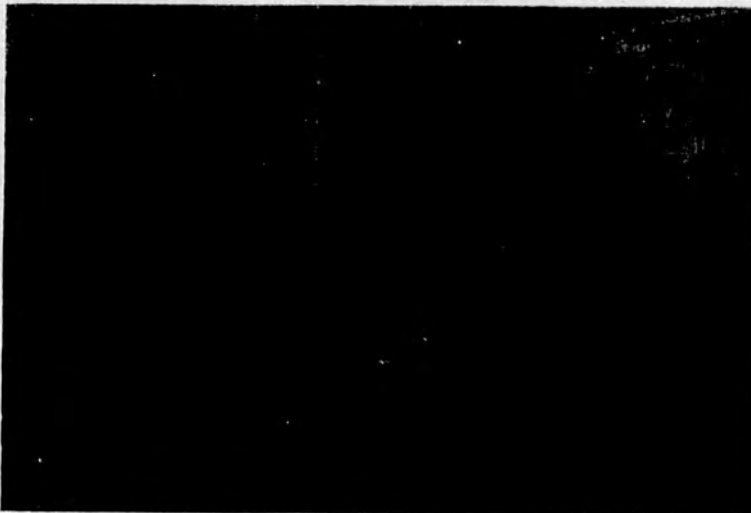
Leaving the conference with pages of suggestions on possible solutions, improvements and goals, residents remain aware of the work ahead for all those involved.

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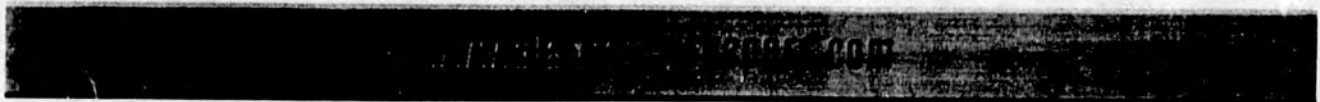
Tamar Ben-Yosef/Alaska Newspapers

Alaska state Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan, state Sen. Donny Olson and state Rep. Reggie Joule speak about the future of rural law enforcement at a KOTZ Radio show in Kotzebue, Aug. 15.



Tamar Ben-Yosef/Alaska Newspapers

Alaska state Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan hands an award of recognition to Shungnak and Kobuk's village public safety officer. Otis Rolls, as Miss Arctic Circle, presents the framed Native Art award.



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## **Ruling rejects race-based law enforcement claims (April 16, 2005)**

**PUBLIC SAFETY: Village system based on reasonable criteria, state court finds.**

By SHEILA TOOMEY and JOEL GAY

Anchorage Daily News

(Published: April 16, 2005)

The state of Alaska did not deliberately create a race-based law enforcement system in the Bush and does not now allocate police resources to discriminate against predominantly Native communities, the Alaska Supreme Court ruled Friday.

The differences in the availability and quality of law enforcement between rural and urban Alaska are reasonably based on the problems encountered in serving communities on the road system and those off the road system, the court concluded in a unanimous decision.

The court rejected claims by the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, the Alaska Native Justice Center and 10 rural villages that a segregated system "for providing law enforcement services has existed in Alaska since the 1800s." The villages argued that the current Village Public Safety Officer program is a direct descendant of territorial race-based systems and is used to achieve a continuing objective of denying equal protection to Native villages.

VPSOs are unarmed peace officers who are supervised by the Alaska State Troopers, but are employees of regional nonprofits. Most are Native and work in off-road villages where no regular troopers are assigned. They are less rigorously trained and paid less than sworn troopers. The challenging villages claimed they constitute a "dual system" used to substitute for real troopers, which the state would have to assign if VPSOs were not available.

The court disagreed.

VPSOs are a "supplemental" service, the court said. "That VPSO services were mainly available in off-road communities that were predominantly Alaska Native does not establish that the allocation of trooper services was racially motivated," wrote Justice Robert Eastaugh for the court. "It simply reflects demographic reality in Alaska."

A press release from Attorney General David Marquez's office welcomed the decision, but Natalie Landreth, a staff attorney for Native American Rights Fund in Anchorage and one of two attorneys who argued against the state, said her side was "profoundly disappointed."

The people in Alaska's villages "do live under a separate and unequal rural public safety system, and I guess this decision means that system is going to continue," she said.

But the issue was not whether villagers get as much police protection as urban Alaskans, or even if all villages get the same protection. Those are legislative and administrative questions, the courts have said. The issue was whether the state was using race as a basis for allocating police resources among "similarly situated" communities.

They are not, the court concluded.

"Instead, the evidence permits a logical conclusion that the state developed its system of rural law enforcement based on financial and geographical constraints, and an evaluation of crime rates in those locations," the court said.

Mike Williams, a lifelong resident of the Kuskokwim River village of Akiak and one of the plaintiffs, suggested the outcome might have been different "if those justices would take some time off and live in Akiak or in a place where there's no police. Then they would realize what we live with."

The state should be required to provide better protection than is currently available, Williams said. Only a portion of rural communities have VPSOs, and those are underpaid, he said.

The suicide last week of the VPSO in Russian Mission illustrated the depth of the funding issue, Williams added. "He was paying for his own heat and phones. How can police officers live like that? They won't do it in Anchorage."

Friday's decision, which upheld a lower court decision, may be the end of this case, but it is not the end of the issue. A commission of rural residents, mandated by federal law, has been meeting over the past year and is expected to make recommendations soon to Congress and the Alaska Legislature on improving village public safety.

In the meantime, the plaintiffs are considering their legal options, Landreth said. They include seeking another state Supreme Court review, or asking the U.S. Supreme Court to hear it.

Daily News reporter Sheila Toomey can be reached at [stoomey@adn.com](mailto:stoomey@adn.com). Reporter Joel Gay can be reached at [jgay@adn.com](mailto:jgay@adn.com).

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**Policing the Bush (April 19, 2005 )****State Supreme Court makes right call in discrimination case***(Published: July 28, 2007)*

When a drunk or angry resident in a small Alaska village goes on a rampage, it is a terrifying experience for the entire community. Residents have to hunker down and defend themselves while they wait for state troopers to fly in. Response time is measured in hours, not minutes. Bad weather can delay the trooper response even longer. The village may have a local public safety officer, but VPSOs are not trained to step into a violent situation.

This hybrid system of law enforcement -- a local safety officer with trooper backup -- isn't ideal. Some Bush communities would like more protection using highly trained troopers. They and some Native interests charged that the hybrid policing system reflected illegal discrimination against Alaska Natives, not the realities of life in the Bush, which include tough choices driven by limited resources.

Friday's ruling from the Alaska Supreme Court gave the right answer to those claims. The state's way of supplying police protection in the Bush is not discriminatory. It is a practical response to the difficulties of policing a vast, dispersed array of communities.

Yes, almost all the affected, arguably underserved communities are Alaska Native. But that is a coincidence of culture and geography, not proof of discrimination.

This case isn't like the separate-and-unequal school systems that were deliberately created by Southern states in the segregation era. Those states made no secret that they were delivering second-class services to what they considered second-class citizens.

In cases like that, it takes pressure from an independent judiciary to get legislators and governors to do the right thing. With law enforcement in the Bush, the driving force is a legitimate question of how best to use limited resources.

It's true, those limited resources make it easier for the Legislature and governor to shrug off the state's responsibilities and stint on the money for Bush law enforcement. And the increasingly urban-dominated Alaska Legislature is becoming less and less attuned to the needs of Alaska's predominantly Native Bush.

Unfortunately for rural Alaska, it has suffered a drastic erosion of political power since Alaska's oil boom began. Three reapportionments have shifted legislative seats from the Bush into faster-growing urban areas. Gone are the days when Bush political titans like Sens. John Sackett and Frank Ferguson or Rep. Al Adams controlled a Finance Committee. They played like a mini-Ted Stevens, steering abundant government cash to their constituents' needs.

With rural Native political power waning, it's understandable that some might turn to the courts for help. But the judiciary is reluctant to second-guess government spending priorities unless some law or constitutional standard is clearly violated. That wasn't the case here.

In a world of unlimited resources, Alaska could no doubt deliver much better law enforcement in rural Alaska. More troopers would help. Alaska's network of village public safety officers could be expanded. Their training could be better. Their pay could be improved.

Like many important public services these days, rural law enforcement is probably underfunded. That situation may be unwise and inequitable, but the Alaska Supreme Court is correct: It is not illegal.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Law enforcement in the Bush may be underfunded, but it is not because of illegal discrimination against Alaska Natives.

## **Ethics law**

### *Quit the partisan stalling*

Republican Attorney General Gregg Renkes got out of office without getting sanctioned under the state's executive branch ethics law. The ethical standards in the law are not terribly specific, and the lawyer that his fellow Republican Gov. Frank Murkowski hired to review the case gave Mr. Renkes the benefit of the legal doubt.

Come to find out, the lawyer for the state personnel board would not have been so kind to the departed Mr. Renkes. The board's independent attorney concluded that Mr. Renkes' investment of at least \$70,000 in a company whose interests he was promoting was in fact "significant." That commonsense finding would have triggered the public interest protections of the state ethics law.

Both lawyers who looked at Mr. Renkes' case agreed on an important recommendation for the future. They said the standards in the state ethics law should be more specific. Instead of using vague terminology like "significant interest," the law should set a bright line test for when the state's ethical protections kick in.

Setting that line should not be a partisan issue, but it's being treated like one. This case arises from a controversy inside Republican ranks, so nobody from the Legislature's Republican majority has stepped forward to fix this obvious problem. Nor has the governor offered lawmakers a proposed bill of his own.

Democratic lawmakers, in the minority and out of power, have jumped into the breach. Republican inaction has left them plenty of room to score partisan points by standing up for a stronger ethics law. Republican lawmakers have ignored the Democrats' bill.

That kind of knee-jerk, partisan stalling is a disservice to Alaskans. The governor's lawyer, Bob Bundy, offered lawmakers a detailed proposal for a tight, but not suffocating, ethical standard. Before the Legislature adjourns in May, Republicans should join ranks with Democrats to pass Mr. Bundy's recommendation or something very close to it.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The Legislature shouldn't go home next month without tightening up the state's executive ethics law.

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## **Forum highlights shortage of rural police, judicial service (October 4, 2004)**

The Associated Press

*(Published: July 28, 2007)*

ANCHORAGE (AP) - Rural villages lack adequate police and judicial service, according to speakers at a forum organized by the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council.

Village residents said police are underfunded, inadequately trained and sometimes culturally insensitive.

Dozens of speakers called for more officers, stronger support of tribal courts and quicker response from Alaska State Troopers when major crimes occur.

"We're no different than the urban areas, said Sharon Clark of Clark's Point, a Bristol Bay village of about 66. "We deserve justice in our smaller communities."

Panelists, including most members of the newly formed Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission, also heard some successes, highlights and advice for improvement during the meeting Wednesday.

But a common theme among about three dozen rural residents who testified at the summit, sponsored by the Alaska Federation of Natives and Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, was the need to beef up the village public safety officer program. In many communities, the VPSO acts as a deterrent to crime.

The state has never funded the program well enough to put an officer in every village. There are currently about 65.

As a health aide visiting villages near Nome, Jenny Lee said, the presence of a VPSO has made her job easier by making villages safer and more stable. Many who testified said the state should fully fund the program and hire officers in every community.

Several VPSOs said they are on the job 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which contributes to the community's well-being. Dan Harrelson of White Mountain said he also teaches boating safety and enforces helmet laws, resulting in fewer accidental injuries. Enforcing curfew can improve student test scores, he said.

Others said that in villages with no officer, small crimes such as vandalism and truancy increase. Abused wives may have no one to turn to for protection. School counselors and village officials might have to respond to suicides or sexual assaults, speakers said.

The new commission, which U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens created last January, has been asked to consider new ways of improving rural law enforcement and justice, including laws and forms of government.

State officials have said, however, that funding increases are unlikely.

The state's rural law enforcement program relies on troopers posted in hub communities such as Bethel and Dillingham to respond to serious crimes. Many complained that trooper response often is slowed by the troopers' stretched resources, weather or what some rural residents view as indifference.

The rural justice commission holds its first official meeting this week, at which it will set out a plan for the coming year, said federal co-chairman and U.S. Attorney Tim Burgess.

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## VPSOs walk a fine line in villages

By ALEX deMARBAN  
ademarban@adn.com

(Published: July 28, 2007)

Evan Wonhola faced the harsh reality of being a village public safety officer early one morning, when a man in New Stuyahok threatened to kill his family.

The man's wife crawled on the floor of the house, crying, "What are we going to do?"

Rural justice, and finding ways to improve it, was one of several Native issues that delegates discussed at the 41st annual Alaska Federation of Natives convention in Anchorage on Thursday.

After the usual round of speeches from politicians, an estimated 3,000 delegates attended seven work sessions with the goal of solving such problems as global warming, costly energy and subsistence rights.

In one session, members of the Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission, created by Congress in 2004, heard disturbing stories from villagers and local safety officers about the lack of village law enforcement.

That commission traveled around the state, gathering stories about rural justice and presenting recommendations in a draft report released last year. The final report is about to be released, members said.

The state Department of Public Safety has addressed some of the concerns, such as recently adding several new village public safety officer positions, Bill Tandeske, commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, said by phone Thursday evening.

There is now funding for 80 village officers, who augment troopers in rural Alaska. But only 49 of those positions are filled.

The VPSO program reached its peak in the 1980s with 124 officers, according to a media report. There were 65 officers in 2004.

A handful of village officers who spoke at Thursday's meeting said VPSO numbers are falling because officers are underpaid, overworked and stressed out. The possibility of enforcing laws in small villages against cousins and aunts discourages prospects and working lonely hours with little support doesn't help, they said.

They told stories about officers who use their own snowmachines to transport suspects and about officers' houses becoming holding cells. Village officers, who may not carry guns, sometimes spend days waiting for troopers to arrive to deal with dangerous criminals, they said. Some said support has worsened since the state cut general funding to villages, cutting off money that once helped pay for their equipment or gasoline.

David Charles, a village public safety officer in Akiachak, said he pays for his own gas and works overtime unpaid. VPSOs quit, he said, because of the tough treatment they sometimes face from other villagers.

"Some days it's miserable for a VPSO," he said. "Some days you sit in your office and start crying."

Pay has improved, said Loretta Bullard, president of Nome-based Kawerak, a Native regional nonprofit serving the Bering Strait region, from about \$11 an hour a few years ago to about \$19 today. The Department of Public Safety has also increased funding, Tandeske said.

It spent \$422,000 18 months ago, buying four-wheelers and other vehicles for every village public safety officer who asked, he said. Many of the complaints are outdated stories, he said.

"Some say there's not enough money, so you raise salaries," he said. "We instituted a retention bonus. People say they're paying for their own vehicles. I just don't buy it."

Dealing with other issues, such as housing of village officers, is a legislative issue, he said.

That's where Sen. Ralph Seekins, R-Fairbanks, may come in. Head of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Seekins created a six-person legislative task force on VPSOs this year that will travel across the state listening to villagers. It's due to make a report to the Legislature in January.

Seekins owns a Ford dealership and frequently travels to Northern Alaska villages with mechanics to fix vehicles.

"The stress is terrible," he said. "There's no trauma counselor. What do you do if you have to wipe blood off the walls after a murder? How do you handle that?"

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Daily News reporter Alex deMarban can be reached at [ademarban@adn.com](mailto:ademarban@adn.com).

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## Tough job in the Bush

Help wanted: village police

(Published: July 28, 2007)

Alaska is having a rough time recruiting Village Public Safety Officers. Little wonder, when you consider the conditions:

Remote villages, family ties that can trump the law, unforgiving wilderness at the doorstep, high rates of alcohol abuse with all the violence and misery it causes, Alaskastate troopers sometimes a day or more away.

Think of Anchorage patrolled only by unarmed officers.

Think of trying to be the law in a small village where you're the outsider.

Think of how many people you know who could handle police work, diplomacy, firefighting, safety education, search and rescue, snowmachine mechanics and the right response to both perpetrator and victim of a violent crime, both of whom may be relatives.

What's amazing isn't that the state struggles to fill the ranks or the high turnover rate (40 percent, according to an Alaska Justice Center study published in 2000). What's amazing is the degree of success. Right now 48 of 51 positions are filled in Alaska villages. But as Maj. John Glick, deputy director of the Department of Public Safety, pointed out, that can change any time.

The state's 2008 capital budget includes two hopeful appropriations from federal funds. It has \$2 million to train and equip VPSOs and another \$2 million for VPSOs to fight bootlegging.

The key word, though, is "hopeful."

A lot has to happen before Bush residents will see more law enforcement.

In passing the state budget, Alaska lawmakers merely agreed to accept federal money that hasn't arrived yet. Ted Stevens is working on the \$2 million for training and equipment. Alaska has to fill those last three state-funded VPSO slots before it can qualify for the other \$2 million of federal money to fight bootlegging. With the federal money, the state could afford 80 VPSOs.

If the state could find them. That, as Maj. Glick said, is the "crux of the problem."

The problem is getting some attention.

Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan will go to Kotzebue next month to discuss improving the VPSO program. Among his ideas: creating uniform standards and a career advancement track for



It's hard to be a cop in a small town, especially one you grew up in, said Alvin Brown, with son Wallace, 4, and daughter Alexis, 10, mid-June in Mountain Village. Brown, currently the Village Public Safety Officer, has worked in law enforcement 18 years.  
(ERIK HILL / Anchorage Daily News)

all three types of Bush law enforcement officers. It would allow VPSOs, tribal police officers and village police officers hired by local communities a way to upgrade their skills and eventually earn full trooper or police status.

State Sen. Donnie Olson will chair a VPSO task force, which will hold fact-finding meetings in Western Alaska and Kodiak this fall.

For all the difficulties -- or maybe because of all the difficulties -- the state's VPSO program needs state, federal and community support. When the program works, it puts respected, trusted officers on the ground in Alaska villages, officers who know the people and are comfortable in the culture. They can respond to emergencies -- or, better, prevent them.

Two years ago, some rural advocates lost a lawsuit that tried to force the state to put more troopers into small Bush communities. The suit contended VPSOs were a second-class, discriminatory substitute for real police officers.

The courts said it was not their job to second-guess the type or level of public safety protection.

However, the suit did make a good case for better law enforcement in the Bush. The \$4 million for VPSOs could go a long way to help.

**BOTTOM LINE:** VPSO program needs support and reorganization -- but, most of all, a steady stream of good recruits.

#### **Who's up? Who's Down?**

**EVEN** Lisa Murkowski: Gives up her sweet deal with Bob Penney for Kenai riverfront property, but still insists she paid the going price. S-u-r-e. Bob didn't get rich by cutting ordinary suckers a break like that.

**DOWN** Don Young: Prostate surgery goes well, but feds start looking into criminal charges. He may get bit by a mink that's wearing a lawman's badge.

**DOWN** Ted Stevens: Offers hair-splitting defense of Veco help on Girdwood house: We paid all the bills we got. Unanswered question: Did Bill Allen hold on to some?

**UP** Alaska seniors: The check is on its way. Gov. Sarah signs senior benefits bill, after she had to call the Legislature into a special session to pass it. Take that, John Coghill.

**DOWN** Conoco Phillips: Second-quarter profits plunge because it won't play ball with strongman Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. Alaska's tax regime looks pretty good in comparison.

**EVEN** Marc Marlow: Well-connected developer seeks Anchorage tax break for another long-shot rehab project downtown. Maybe he can hire Vic Kohring again to help him get it.

**UP** Alaska National Guard: Most popular governor in the country visits unit in Kuwait. Former Miss Wasilla delivers a real morale boost.

**EVEN** Mat-Su: Valley crackdown makes headway against meth labs, but heroin use spikes upward. Pick your poison.

**DOWN** Alaska dieters: Even one diet soda a day is bad for you. Arghhh! Pass the spring water, please.

**DOWN** Reona Kobayashi: Japanese student gets robbed three different times during summer visit to Mat-Su. Three strikes like that, and we'd be outta there.

**EVEN** Maggie: Controversial local elephant still in the headlines, still in Anchorage. Isn't her 15 minutes of fame up yet?

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## **Plea for funding VPSO program preceded officer's suicide (April 24, 2005)**

By SIMEON ASKOAK

*(Published: July 28, 2007)*

My name is Simeon Askoak, and I'm the VPSO in Russian Mission. I've been the Village Public Safety Officer in Russian Mission for 13 years now and of my 13 years that I've been a VPSO, we've been struggling every year to get our VPSO funding from the state to be continued on to another new year.

VPSO funding is very limited. Our fiscal year '05 operating budget from the state was not approved until November '04 of last year, and the program was about to be closed, shut down, until fiscal year 2005 and was finally approved by the governor.

At this time the village of Russian Mission, the City Council of Russian Mission, has no funding. The small communities like the Village of Russian Mission are broke right now and because of that, starting in the month of November of 2004, I began purchasing my own heating fuel for the public safety office, fuel for the vehicle that I use. Also, I pay for the fax and phone bill that I use.

I'm still paying for all these expenses. I pay for certified mail of my reports to the Alaska State Troopers, to the district attorneys, out of my own pocket.

When I was asked why I was doing that, I told them that the city government can no longer afford to pay for these expenses.

And, last month sometime, on the 23rd of March, I could no longer afford to pay for those expenses, so the city and the police department ran out of heating fuel. The water line froze and then the water utilities company came by and said, "We're shutting down your water and sewer because you haven't been paying for them in the last few months."

And that's my dilemma at this time.

We need adequate, full funding for the VPSO program and we need to have it guaranteed that we'll always get the funding yearly from the state.

We're constantly facing this dilemma that the VPSO program will no longer be here. Last year we were almost shut down, and the VPSO fiscal year contract was extended through September 2005 of this year. And after 2005 I do not know what is going to be happening.

The VPSO program's motto is, "First Responders; Last Frontier."

We are the first responders, we are the only law enforcement out in most of the villages that we have and there are only 24 VPSO positions funded at this time by the state.

In the rural communities, we are the only law enforcement agencies available. We enforce state

laws, for instance drug and alcohol importation cases. We secure and investigate burglaries. Sometime last month, in the course of two days, I did the same exact thing when our store was burglarized in the village.

What I did was, I secured the scene, I gathered evidence and I investigated, until I found the suspect. This is called doing the "legwork" for the state troopers.

And that "legwork" that I do and other VPSOs do, that is the backbone of the investigation. Without that, without that crucial intervention in the first few hours of the investigation, all the evidence would be destroyed and there would not be, we would not be able to apprehend the perpetrator later on.

We have been constantly seeking to obtain our basic police certification from the Alaska Police Standards Council for years, but we still haven't obtained that. I know we are unarmed. We still respond to "gun" calls, we still conduct "legwork investigations," for the troopers, and why haven't we been certified, even the basic police certifications?

Also, when a veteran VPSO retires, he has to go out and find another job in order to continue supporting his family. We are not in the state retirement system. The PERS (Public Employee Retirement System), we are not receiving that. If we do have to, we will have to buy into the PERS program, we would have to buy so many years and it's expensive to get it started.

And we'd buy that out of our own pockets.

The Russian Mission Public Safety Police Department has been closed as of March 23, 2005. That's due to lack of funding for heating fuel, water and sewer. The water and sewer bill has not been paid, and also I'm afraid that the light and power will be shut down pretty soon.

The idea of fund raising to help the Russian Mission Public Safety came up, and I think this is pathetic to our program. It's degrading me as a VPSO. There should always be funding available from somewhere, like from the state, to keep it going.

And we just don't have the options or any other source of funding right now for the village of Russian Mission.

Simeon Askoak's Bethel speech was transcribed by The Tundra Drums.

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## **Small-town cop: Keeping the peace in Mountain Village (August 2, 2005)**

**I Lifelong resident knows heartache of arresting friends and relatives**

By JOEL GAY

Anchorage Daily News

Tenth in a series

*(Published: July 28, 2007)*

MOUNTAIN VILLAGE -- Alvin Brown hates calls early in the morning.

As the village public safety officer in one of the biggest villages in Western Alaska and an 18-year veteran of rural law enforcement, he knows that early calls typically mean bad news -- assaults, rapes, fights and accidents, often alcohol-induced and usually difficult.

He has been slugged, kicked, shot and hit in the head with an ax so hard it still hurts.

But one call stands out that ended better. No one was injured, Brown tracked down \$55,000 in stolen cash and he got a public commendation from a personal hero.

It wasn't a typical experience for a village cop, but then again, Brown, who weighs 305 pounds, cuts his hair in a high flat-top and wears owlsh glasses, doesn't seem like a typical cop.

Around 3 one August morning in 1999, Brown was watching a video at the home he shared with his parents and children when his VHF radio picked up a short, mysterious call.

"Store," a voice said.

Brown, a native of Mountain Village, knew the voice. It was the village police officer on duty that night, but whose radio battery was almost dead.

"There was just enough power to say one word. Then he'd turn it off, and turn it on again and say another word," Brown recalled recently while sitting in his cramped office in the Mountain Village City Hall.

"Which store," Brown asked back. "Yup'ik," came the reply.

Officer Brown was on it.

The other cop had found the Yup'ik Store's lock broken, its back door open and the safe missing. Together the two officers found fresh shoe prints and ATV tracks nearby. Brown quickly recognized a clue that an urban detective might not, and took photos of the tire tracks.

"These tracks were not like any other ATV," he said. "These tires were a different tread," and at first light the two Bush detectives traced the machine six miles out of town. The tracks suggested the perpetrators had gone into the brush, so Brown and his partner followed.

Stumbling around in brown bear country at 6 a.m. was spooky.

"All we had was OC (pepper) spray, batons and handcuffs," Brown said. "We were just about to give up when we found the safe." Empty.

But it was enough to get a search warrant and keep looking, he said. The officers then went door to door in the village. They soon found their ATV outside a home, along with shoe prints matching those at the store.

The juvenile driver admitted his involvement, which led the officers to another suspect's home. Behind the second house, they saw a section of tundra that appeared disturbed. Suspicious, they dug and dug and dug, without success, Brown said. All the while, their suspect smiled cockily, he said.

"Then we tried one more time," and struck pay dirt -- a black plastic bag with neatly wrapped stacks of bills inside, Brown said.

"The guy's face dropped," he said.

In two days, Brown and his partner found the \$52,000 lost in the store robbery, plus another \$3,000 they believed was stolen but weren't sure from where. The store got back its money. The state kept the three grand, Brown said.

The big payoff for Brown came later, when he received what he considered the ultimate compliment. Col. Glenn Godfrey, the first Alaska Native to command the Alaska State Troopers and who later went on to become the commissioner of public safety, asked to meet Brown at a village police graduation ceremony in Kotzebue.

"He walked right towards me," trailing a small crowd of curious officers, Brown recalled. "He shook my hand and thanked us for our investigation. And during graduation, he told everyone about it."

Brown named his son Wallace Glenn Brown after his law enforcement hero, he said. Godfrey's official commendation still hangs on his office wall, along with maps, drawings by his son and daughter and a photo of his graduation from the troopers academy, which provides the required training for VPSOs.

Such are the rewards of a law enforcement career in rural Alaska. In 18 years, he worked for either the Mountain Village tribe, the city or the agency that administers the VPSO program on the lower Yukon. For several of those years, he drove a taxi during days and was an officer at night.

"I was young back then," said Brown, now 39.

He isn't in law enforcement for the money. He earns \$17.63 an hour, plus a bonus for acting as probation officer for Mountain Village's 17 convicted felons.

He doesn't do it to carry a gun. VPSOs aren't allowed to anywhere in the state, even though they occasionally face down people with firearms. Brown was unarmed when he got shot one New Year's Eve. A drunk who had been shooting into the air lowered his rifle, then accidentally fired a .223-caliber bullet that ricocheted off the frozen ground and hit Brown in the thigh. It's still there and sets off airport security every time, he said.

He isn't a cop because of the family prestige. He's arrested brothers, sisters, cousins and other relatives for bootlegging, domestic violence and assault. Until he got his own home, his parents

cringed whenever the phone rang early.

"They worry that I may not be coming back," he said.

Brown is a cop because he likes it, he's good at it and because Mountain Village needs it, he said.

"I know how these people are, and they know how I am," he said. "Even the alcohol and drug dealers respect me, because I treat everyone with respect."

It's hard to be a cop in a small town, especially one you grew up in, Brown said.

"It doesn't bother me at work. But when I go home, it hits me, 'What's Dad going to think' " when his son arrests a relative or friend? "It turns out he's thanking me for arresting the guy."

Job satisfaction comes in small doses too, he said. After troopers in Bethel acted on a tip he had passed on, they prevented a shipment of booze from reaching Mountain Village during the school's graduation in late May.

"This was the first time in the history of high school graduation here we got no calls on alcohol," Brown said. Usually they start coming in at 3 or 4 in the morning.

He brightened up while telling about a marijuana sale gone bad. Village sources told him someone had come to Mountain Village with \$500 to spend on pot. A runner took the stranger's money and said he would return in five minutes with the dope, "but he never came back," Brown said, smiling.

Another time, a Mountain Village bootlegger came back from the Last Chance liquor store near Nulato with 10 cases of booze, which he hid several miles outside of town. With a bottle selling for \$120 to \$150, it's easy money, Brown said.

But this bootlegger made a strategic error: he told one of his runners where he hid the liquor. By the time he checked his stash, it was gone, Brown said.

As VPSO, Brown is usually involved in fire calls, emergency medical work and search and rescue. One of his scariest days, he said, was when a snowmachine driver got stuck in the Yukon River slush one spring. Brown heaved a grappling hook with all his might and landed it perfectly on the machine's ski. He pulled the man to safety.

Brown would like to spend another 15 years in law enforcement, he said, then possibly be a magistrate.

He may not make it after an episode in May. Brown and another officer responded to an early morning domestic violence call. According to charges filed later, a man whacked Brown in the temple with the back of a single-bit ax.

Brown had fierce headaches for weeks, and when we passed through the village earlier this summer he still suffered memory loss and daily headaches, he said. His knee jumped steadily the whole time he spoke.

"It's pretty tough on me," he said.

Though he returned to work, the longtime cop said he was throttling back a bit.

"I'm starting to learn more about taking time off from work," he said. "It helps a lot."

As we spoke, Brown had a steady stream of calls, including several about a dispute at someone's house. Finally he excused himself, saying he had business. He put on his brown VPSO hat, climbed on his four-wheeler and drove off to keep the peace in Mountain Village.

TOMORROW: A schizophrenic jukebox in Emmonak.

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#### ABOUT THIS SERIES

Reporter Joel Gay and photographer Erik Hill spent two weeks this summer traveling down Alaska's biggest river, visiting villages and people along the way.

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