

10th Annual Water and Sanitation Innovations for the Arctic Workshop **Friday, January 24, 2020**

PRIORITIZING WATER AND SANITATION CAPACITY NEEDS

A Workshop Cosponsored by:

U.S. Arctic Research Commission, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Friday, January 24 – The Endeavor Room at the Hotel Captain Cook (939 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK)

ALPHA Alaska Health Summit-associated session of interest: **“Use Practice and Patterns in Water and Sanitation: their connection to public health”** – **January 23 from 1:45 - 3:00 PM.** Link to ALPHA Alaska Public Health Summit Schedule can be found at: <https://www.alaskapublichealth.org/health-summit/>

Workshop objectives:

During this workshop we will discuss historic, current, and future capacity development activities and identify program gaps and needs. Deliverables will include recommendations on: strategic plan improvements; methods for development of a capacity development prioritization list for both near and long-term timeframes; strategies for asset management; and research that could aid in capacity development.

- 8:00 A.M.** **Room is open for participants, coffee will be served**
- 8:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.**
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|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30-8:45 | Introductions/introductory remarks/workshop goals (<i>C. Rosa, USARC</i>) |
| 8:45-9:00 | Overview: History of Capacity Development Efforts and Strategic Planning in Alaska (<i>C. Bohan, ADEC</i>) |
| 9:00-9:15 | Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative (<i>F. Moreno, ANTHC</i>) |
| 9:15-9:30 | Rural Utilities Business Advisor Program (<i>tba</i>) |
| 9:30-9:45 | Remote Maintenance Worker Program (<i>T. Helms, ADEC</i>) |
| 9:45-10:00 | Group Discussion |
- 10:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.** **Break**
- 10:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.**
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|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:30-10:45 | Tribal Utility Support (<i>B. Menghini, ANTHC</i>) |
| 10:45-11:00 | Alaska Rural Water Association (<i>R. Dombroski, ARWA</i>) |
| 11:00-11:15 | Rural Community Assistance Corporation (<i>K. K'eit, RCAC</i>) |
| 11:15-11:30 | Community Capacity Rural Development Grant Project (<i>S. Williams, City of Sitka</i>) |
| 11:30-12:00 | Group discussion |
- Noon - 1:00 P.M.** **Box lunch on site**
- Breakout group assessment activity**
- 1:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.** Pre-breakout Group Discussion/Goals of Breakout Session/Review of Survey Results
- 1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.** **Breakout Groups Meet**
- Group 1: Financial capacity focus*
 - Group 2: Managerial capacity focus*
 - Group 3: Technical capacity focus*
 - Group 4: Asset Management focus*

3:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

Break

3:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Group Report Presentations and Wrap Up

Packet Contents:

- Agenda
- Participant list
- Suggested reading list
 - Alaska Capacity Development Interim Strategy (Jan 2020)
 - Citizen Advisory Board Report of Findings on Improving the Technical, Managerial and Financial Capacity of Alaska’s Public Water Systems (Aug 2000)
 - Annual Reports from RMW, ARUC, and ARWA
- USARC Goals Report and Alaska Rural Water and Sanitation Working Group links/materials (thumb drive)

Breakout Group Questions:

Questions for ALL Groups

1. What current programs or practices are most successful in helping communities build and maintain capacity in this category?
2. What current programs or practices are least successful in helping communities build and maintain capacity in this category?
3. What are the most significant hindrances to success in this category?
4. If unlimited resources were available, other than direct subsidization of operations and maintenance, what could be done to help communities build and maintain capacity in this category?

Technical Capacity Group Scenario: Operator turnover has a huge impact on technical capacity. What can be done to increase retention of operators (excluding governmental subsidization of wages) OR Many operators who excel at their job are not able to pass the operator certification exams due to a variety of reasons (math skills, reading skills, test taking skills, English as a second language, etc.). What can be done to address this?

Financial Capacity Group Scenario: Clerks and accounting staff turnover frequently, taking with them critical knowledge that is not always passed on to those that follow. Issues with billing, debt and taxes can develop quickly without regular oversight. New staff are not always provided the resources they need to pick up where others left off. What can be done to improve this situation?

Managerial Capacity Group Scenario: Council members responsible for oversight of utilities are elected officials yet they may not be familiar with the management obligations of utilities, such as rate setting, enforcing collections, budgeting for not just operations and maintenance, but also repair and replacement. What can be done to better prepare council members for making wise management decisions?

Asset Management Capacity Group Scenario: When done correctly, Asset Management should help utilities identify and schedule routine maintenance activities, budget for repair and replacement needs, account for depreciation, and provide proper insurance for their facilities. Establishing the plan requires a significant investment of time and ongoing maintenance. How can small communities approach this daunting effort?