

Alaska O&M Challenges

John Nichols, MS, PE
ARUC Manager,
ANTHC



My perspective

- Engineer
- Public Works Director, Dillingham AK
- Western Alaska design/build, ANTHC
- Idaho tribal water/sewer
- Focus on O&M
 - Maximize benefit per dollar spent
 - Health benefits
 - Infrastructure investment

Current ARUC Focus

- 24 villages in ARUC
 - Full management & Operations
- 11 villages in Billing Assistance
 - Billing services only
 - Possible ARUC precursor
- ARUC is a priority of ANTHC
 - Preventative healthcare to hospital
 - ANTHC long term vision



Foundations of O&M



#1: Enough Revenue

- Most fundamental need
 - Cannot operate without it!
 - Lack of revenue causes:
 - Deferred maintenance (short system life)
 - Operator turnover
 - Emergencies
 - Must disconnect politics from management!

#2: Long-term Employees

- Complicated systems are reality
- Years to develop operators & managers
 - Experience prevents emergencies and decreases costs
 - Continual basic training = no progress
- Required to progress beyond emergency avoidance

#3: Management & Operating Coordination

- True costs need to be known
- Operators influence costs & rates
- Managers – know operations
- Operators – know budgets
- Cannot progress to improved efficiency without this!

Current Practice

- Technical resources focus on emergency prevention/repair
- Cannot focus on high efficiency until:
 - Adequate revenue
 - Disconnect management from politics!
 - Stable staffing
 - Managers and operators
 - Coordinated management & operations

Climates are different,



© Justin Stay

systems are different,



but issues are the same.



Discussion

