

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

Initial Report to the Alaska Legislature

House and Senate  
Judiciary Committees

April 5, 2006



# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Presentation Summary

- History
- Commission Membership
- Process
- Recommendation Highlights
- Recommendations Impacting State Law
- Commission's Future
- Question and Answer

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## History

- Created by Congress in 2004 (PL-108-199)
- Charged with studying 4 broad areas:
  1. Law Enforcement
  2. Judicial Services
  3. Alcohol Importation and Interdiction
  4. Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Commission Membership

- Appointed by U.S. Attorney General  
(Department of Justice)
- Federal and State Co-Chairs  
U.S. Attorney and Alaska Attorney General

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

***Federal Co-Chair (U.S. Attorney):*** Deborah Smith  
*(Tim Burgess also served in this position)*

***State Co-Chair (Attorney General):*** David Márquez  
*(Gregg Renkes & Edgar Blatchford also served in this position)*

***Commissioner of Public Safety:*** Bill Tandeske

***Alaska Municipal League:*** Bruce Botelho  
*(preferably a rural member)*

***An Organized Borough:*** Empty Seat  
*(Roswell "Ross" Schaeffer served in this position)*

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

*Alaska Federation of Natives:*

*(Ethan Schutt served in Buddy's seat)*

H. Buddy Brown

*Tribal Representative:*

Wilson Justin

*Non-Profit Native Corp:*

*(that operates a VPSO program)*

Loretta Bullard

*Alaska Native Justice Center:*

Gail Schubert

*Non-Voting Federal Court Rep.:*

James Torgerson

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Staff

- Alaska Native Justice Center - logistical support
- Various experts on a contract basis
- Special Assistant - technical support

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Process

- Commission Meetings  
October 2004 - Present
- Working Groups  
January - April 2005
- Public Hearings  
January - June 2005
- Finalization of Initial Report and  
Recommendations

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

- Working Groups - (50 members total)
  - Formed by topic area
  - Chaired by Commission members
  - 8 - 15 members
  - Charged with presenting options
  - Met January - April 2005
    - weekly by teleconference
    - face to face meetings

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

- Public Hearings
  - Held mostly in Rural Locations
  - Partnered with meetings of prominent organizations
  - Recorded and transcribed for review by Commissioners

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

- AFN Convention - Invited Testimony
- Alaska Municipal League - Invited Testimony
- Alaska Inter-Tribal Council Convention - Invited Testimony
- Sitka - Public Testimony
- Juneau - Public Testimony
- Anchorage - Public Testimony
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference - Invited Testimony
- Bristol Bay Native Association, Dillingham - Public Testimony

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

- Kawerak, Inc. - Public Testimony
- Native Village of Kotzebue - Public Testimony
- North Slope/NW Arctic Borough (Barrow) - Public Testimony
- Tanana Chiefs Conference - Fairbanks  
Invited Testimony
- Assoc. of Village Council Presidents - Bethel
- Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium
- Organized Village of Kake

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Recommendation Highlights

- Working Groups created over 100 options
- Commission adopted and organized options
- 9 general categories as follows:

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Recommendations

- Engage in More Partnering and Collaboration
- Make Systemic Changes to Improve Rural Law Enforcement
- Enlarge the Use of Community-based Solutions
- Broaden the Use of Prevention Approaches
- Broaden the Use of Therapeutic Approaches
- Increase Employment of Rural Residents in Law Enforcement and Judicial Services
- Build Additional Capacity
- Increase Access to Judicial Services
- Expand the Use of New Technologies

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

*Engage in More Partnering  
and Collaboration*

- Develop more effective communication and coordination, including cross training, among and between all governments and service agencies and organizations
- Develop agreements to better coordinate law enforcement and judicial services in rural AK

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

*Make Systemic Changes to Improve Rural Law Enforcement*

- Development of uniform statewide tiered system of certification and training
- Expansion of police and public safety training
- Further work for cooperation in alcohol interdiction

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *State Efforts to Improve Rural Law Enforcement*

- New Troopers and Prosecutors
- Rural Prosecution Team
- Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams
- Cold Case Prosecutor
- Village Safety Aides

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *State Efforts to Address Alcohol Importation and Interdiction*

- Postal Service cross designation authority
- Governor's Omnibus Crime Bill - SB 170 (2004)
- Significant Bootlegging Prosecutions

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *Enlarge the Use of Community-based Solutions*

- DJJ delegate authority to tribes in certain juvenile matters
- Expand funding for local prevention, intervention programs for DV and child abuse
- Develop community-based, restorative justice re-entry programs
- DOC seek alternatives to out-of-state prisons
- Explore alcohol distribution centers

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *Broaden the Use of Prevention Approaches*

- Insufficient prevention in rural Alaska
- Expand culturally appropriate programs
- Engage youth and adults in healthy activities
- Information in schools - early grades
  - DV, child abuse
  - Teaching respect-based values (Elders)
  - Interpersonal relationships
  - Alcohol/substance abuse

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *Broaden the Use of Therapeutic Approaches*

- Alcohol/drug abuse
  - Local, family-oriented and culturally based substance abuse treatment programs
  - Long term residential care in hubs - women/children
  - Network of aftercare services in village
- Therapeutic courts
- Foster care
  - Group homes for youth not eligible for foster care
  - Change regulations to allow close relatives to receive compensation for foster care

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

*Increase Employment of Rural Residents in Law Enforcement and Judicial Services*

- Overrepresentation of Alaska Natives in correctional systems
- Focused recruiting effort to employ Alaska Natives in systems
- Train and use VPSOs as Probation Officers

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *Build Additional Capacity*

- Lack of infrastructure to support rural Alaska public safety
  - Improve housing
  - Increase intra-community transportation
  - Provide adequate law enforcement offices and holding facilities
  - Improve equipment
  - Implement "sub-hub" concept
  - State-wide data base and reporting requirements to monitor investigations

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *Increase Access to Judicial Services*

- Enhanced funding to increase rural Alaskans' access to civil legal assistance
- Restore federal funding opportunities for tribal courts located within the boundaries of municipalities
- Increase use of tribal courts and video-conferencing capability
- Training and technical assistance for state & tribal judges

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *Expand the Use of New Technologies*

- Increase access to telecommunications
- Allow law enforcement to use telehealth system in rural Alaska
- Create system of regional 911 dispatch centers
- Open eligibility to Homeland Security programs and funding
- DOC explore electronic monitoring
- ABC Board develop statewide database

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## *Additional Recommendations Impacting State Law*

- Most recommendations have at least minor fiscal impacts
  - State and Federal funding should be sought
- Change definition of alcohol manufacture and expand forfeiture provisions
  - SB 210/HB 373
- Ban written order sales to dry towns
- Ban shipping plastic by air
- Change regulatory definition of a village from 1000 individuals to 1500 individuals

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Commission Future

- Request to Congress to extend life of the Commission
- Expand representation on Commission
  - State of Alaska, Commissioner of Health and Social Services
  - Representative of Alaska Native Health Care providers
  - Non-Voting State Court representative appointed by the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Commission Future

- Continue dialogue with stakeholders
- Monitor development and implementation of recommendations
- Conduct additional research
- Evaluate the impact of new and expanded activities into the future

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Commission Future

- Objectives to ensure implementation of Commission recommendations:
  - Advocate at State and Federal levels
  - Educate and obtain buy-in from stakeholders and public
  - Advocate for expansion of innovative prevention, early intervention and treatment programs
  - Increase interest in recruitment, training and hiring of qualified Alaska Natives in the law enforcement and justice fields
  - Further define the role of the Commission

# Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission

## Questions and Answers

