

Bethel CEDS Community Forum, November 7, 2016

In attendance:

Clarence Daniels, AVCP

Brent Latham, AVCP and YKEDC

Jeremy Osborne, Yuut Elitnaurviat

Buddy Herron, Delta Western

Nili Sundown, Wells Fargo

George Guy, Village of Kwethluk

Natalie Hanson, Nuvista Light and Power

Goal 1: Business Retention and Development

Challenging business conditions:

- High cost of living
- Energy
- Groceries
- Amazon competition

Fisheries:

- Used to be able to make a living commercial fishing, no longer
- In 2016, no buyer for salmon so there was no fishery on Lower Kuskokwim. No active processors in region
- Promote direct catcher-seller, fishermen sell fish to Anchorage. Cooperative-type arrangement to share marketing, packaging, shipping

Opportunities:

- Harvesting and selling berries and natural botanicals (i.e. Nordic countries example)
- No market allowed for subsistence goods like moose, walrus. Permitted in other countries like Greenland.
- E-commerce for Alaska Native arts
- Integrated truss plant

Goal 2/3: Infrastructure and energy

Major need for broadband to improve internet.

Yukon-Kuskokwim Corridor:

- Energy and transportation link between the two rivers
- Interties, seasonal roads

Goal 4: Workforce

Shortages of teachers, health care workers

- Recruited from out of region
- 200-300 new residents in Bethel in coming years due to hospital expansion

Assets:

- Yuut Elitnaurviat (adult learning center)
- Kuskokwim Campus UAF

Subsistence:

- “Working in an office from 9-5 is not our way.” –Brent Latham
- Wealth is not measured in money, but in meat and berries, all shared throughout the community
- Jobs should accommodate subsistence rhythms.

Goal 5: Community Development

Need for affordable housing

Water, sewer, sanitation systems

Goal Tally:

Business Retention and Development: 3

Infrastructure: 5

Energy combined: 4

Workforce Development: 5

Community Development: 1