

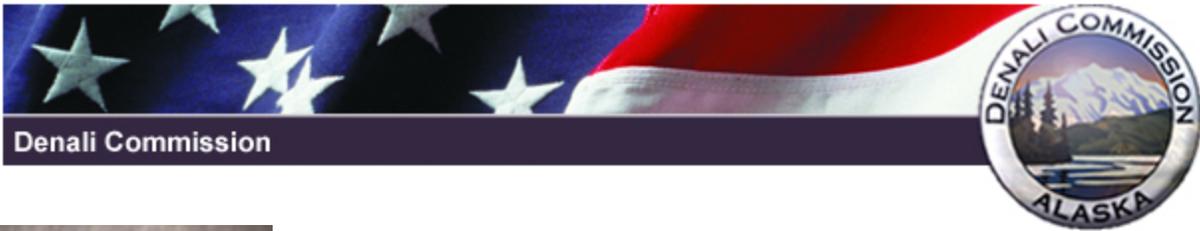
**2008 NADO Innovation Award Winner
Denali Commission
Alaska Works Partnership, Inc.**

*Working Together for Jobs in Rural Alaska.
The Denali Commission has partnered with Alaska Works Partnership since 2000.*



Mike Andrews (left) the Executive Director of Alaska Works Partnership and George J. Canelos (right) Federal Co-Chair at the Denali Commission receives award from Leanne Mazer from NADO.





George J. Canelos
Federal Co-Chair
Denali Commission

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The Denali Commission partners with Alaska Works Partnership, Inc. to provide training for individuals in rural Alaska.

Denali Commission:

The Denali Commission is an innovative, independent federal agency which provides critical utilities, infrastructure, training and support for economic development in rural Alaska in the most cost-effective manner possible. By creating the Commission in 1998, Congress mandated that this unique agency partner with state, local, tribal and private organizations to find new and innovative solutions to address the challenges of America's most remote communities.

Remote communities in rural Alaska face challenges that are unique to the 49th

state. No other state has the vast roadless distances, the harsh climate and terrain, and the broad expanses of permafrost. Those conditions sharply limit where people can live and make economic development difficult and expensive.

Today in Alaska, there are limited cash paying jobs in most rural communities. Those jobs that do exist are overwhelmingly supported by government funding. Unfortunately, when job opportunities in these rural areas do become available, rural residents often lack the skills necessary to compete with skilled people from outside the community. In over 100 rural Alaska communities, unemployment consistently exceeds 50%.

The Denali Commission has placed job training at the center of its comprehensive plan for economic growth in rural Alaska. In just a few short years, the Commission has made significant strides in assisting rural residents with their job training needs. As the Commission funds projects for construction, it also builds sustainability into projects by training local residents to operate and



Henry Smith, of Hooper Bay, and Nickefer Nick, of Bethel, work together to build a shed during the hands-on portion of their carpentry class.



maintain facilities. The Commission's commitment to training in these areas includes training for the many trades and building maintenance careers that are necessary for the operation and maintenance of various infrastructure.

Alaska Works Partnership, Inc.

For the past seven years, Alaska Works Partnership, Inc. (AWP), in partnership with the Denali Commission, has conducted vocational training to build and maintain community infrastructures in rural Alaska. AWP has assisted more than 2,000 job seekers living in 166 rural and remote communities.

AWP has developed outstanding partnerships with local and regional tribal entities, regional training centers, trade apprenticeship programs, educators and industry employers and has had great success placing trainees in construction jobs locally, regionally and statewide. AWP has developed innovative approaches for serving rural Alaska with mobile, flexible, and culturally sensitive training. Program case managers and job developers provide a holistic, comprehensive and effective set of support services. AWP's programs are helping move people out of poverty into high skill, high wage jobs and careers that bring health and prosperity to Alaska's communities.

AWP's Rural Apprenticeship Outreach program has helped more than 400 rural Alaskans become trade apprentices, giving them the opportunity to develop skills for lifelong careers as carpenters, plumbers and pipe fitters, operating engineers, electricians, laborers, and truck drivers. Working directly with rural tribal entities and village administrators, AWP works hard to inform people about apprenticeship opportunities and services available to help them compete for these highly sought after positions. Among

the services offered are travel and housing assistance, math and interview skills instruction, and assistance in obtaining drivers licenses.

AWP's Building Maintenance Repairer Apprenticeship and Step-UP program was developed by AWP in cooperation with the USDOL and USHUD to assist tribal designated housing entities develop a local workforce to build new affordable housing in remote villages, and to maintain Alaska Native public housing stock. It is the largest construction trade apprenticeship program serving rural Alaska with more than 225 apprentices registered in the past seven years. Apprentices have helped build over 400 affordable homes and maintain more than 5,000 units of village housing.

AWP Rural Youth Academies connect rural schools, employers, and young Alaskans, ages 16-24, in vocational training courses. These courses provide valuable education in leadership and math. The program also provides opportunities for construction career exploration activities that often result in summer employment and paid work experience.

Alaska is training a new generation of pipeline builders to help meet the energy needs of America. AWP and pipeline trade union apprenticeship programs offer the only course in the United States for building cross country oil and gas pipelines in Arctic conditions. Rural trainees learn the basics of pipe welding, how to operate heavy equipment, and drive construction trucks. AWP has trained recruits from 46 rural Alaskan communities for these high paying jobs.

The Denali Commission is proud to partner with state agencies like AWP to reach rural residents. This innovative partnership approach provides new avenues for program delivery and produces outstanding results.

