

SHOVEL-READY

By Jens Laipenieks CEO/General Manager



Summer is flying by and here at ASTAC we have been as busy as ever, expanding our networks and improving services. We are simultaneously working on two projects to transform the connectivity and services offered in both Atqasuk and Kaktovik. These are major, multi-year efforts that include network extensions to the villages as well as new fiber to the home local networks.

These projects were partially grant-funded but

ASTAC will invest close to \$5M of our funds to make these a reality.

Early this spring in Utqiagvik, we completed all aerial fiber cable work to extend fiber to the end of Gas Line Road. From there, the fiber will extend south down the gas line and over the tundra into Atqasuk. Our crew, led by ASTAC Project Manager Paul Fairbanks, spent the past week surveying the route and river crossings in preparation for placing the overland fiber this winter. Fiber to the home installations in Atqasuk have also been completed, making the local network ready to go when the connection to Utqiagvik is made this spring.

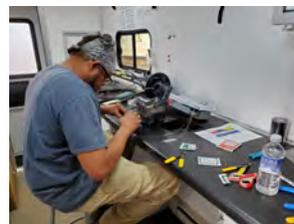
Our engineering and permitting efforts continue in our long-time goal to get Kaktovik off satellite and onto a terrestrial connection. The site survey and environmental assessments have taken longer than expected but we continue to make progress. Next summer we plan to complete both tower installations and the fiber to the home build-out. The microwave extensions from Deadhorse to Badami to Point Thompson are complete, leaving the Camden Bay and Kaktovik towers to complete the connection, which is projected for early 2023.

Upon completion of these two projects, we will have only two remaining North Slope villages connected via Satellite: Anaktuvuk Pass and Point Lay. As stated before, ASTAC's final objective is to connect ALL our markets to fiber backhaul, enabling modern and more affordable high-speed internet access to all our members. For the past few years, ASTAC has been engineering and studying the economics of these connections to develop the

very best shovel-ready projects. Our focus is on afford-ability and future proofing so we can continue to keep up with future demand and drive down the cost of our services to our members.

The bipartisan infrastructure bill passed by the Senate on August 10th, 2021 appears to have ample funding opportunity for remote broadband to continue our build-out and achieve our goal. A special thank you to Sen. Lisa Murkowski for her diligent fight to bring high-speed broadband to all Alaskans. We will continue to work with our tribal partners and regional corporations to do everything we can to take advantage of these tremendous support opportunities.

Our Team Hard at Work



Charles working at the Atqasuk Site



The team climbing the pole in Kaktovik

EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT

ASTAC is an approved participant in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB). The EBB Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that provides a temporary discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households.

If you reside in ASTAC's service area, you could be eligible to receive:

Up to a **\$75/month discount** on your Internet service
A one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a tablet

The benefit is limited to one monthly service discount per household. To check your eligibility and fill out an application, please visit astac.net/emergency-broadband-benefit/.

ASTAC CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

Forty years of hard work, dedication and transformation! Our employees were proud to celebrate the milestone in the sun. We've got our optics focused on the next four decades.



SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

ASTAC would like to wish the best of luck to all students who have started classes this fall, both in the classroom and virtually. The opportunity to pursue higher education is thrilling and we are excited for all those who continue to seek new and promising learning prospects. We are delighted to share the 2021 scholarship recipients who were selected for the start of the new school year. Each student shared their aspirations and inspirations that ignite a great deal of excitement for the future, all show great promise for their journeys that lie ahead.

- JohnCody Hopson – Culinary Arts Program at Navajo Technical University
- Rose Morris – Masters in Reading Education from University of Florida
- Kiana Ortila – Bachelor of Science in Psychology from University of Alaska Anchorage
- Repeka Sataua – Healthcare Field Degree from Ilisagvik College
- Haley Sielak – Bachelor of Arts Elementary Education from University of Alaska Fairbanks
- Esau Weiyouna – Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Bethany Lutheran College

2021 ANNUAL MEETINGS AND DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

VIRTUAL Annual Meetings - **November 1st-5th** – Please save the date and be sure to watch for updates coming through SmartHub and on our Facebook!

CAPITAL CREDITS REMINDER

ASTAC's Board of Directors approved a return of \$1 million to eligible current and former members, through a general retirement of patronage capital. This includes the balance of those funds assigned for the years 1993 and 1994, as well as a portion of the funds assigned in 1995. This action will provide funds to individuals and businesses who were members of the cooperative and received telecommunications service from ASTAC at any time during 1993, 1994 or 1995.

Because ASTAC is a not-for-profit telecommunications cooperative, each year its members receive an assignment of what is called "patronage capital" in the records of the Cooperative when the Cooperative has positive net tax margins. Patronage capital is defined in ASTAC's Bylaws as "[a]ll such amounts in excess of operating costs and expenses at the moment of receipt by the Cooperative". ASTAC's Board of Directors regularly considers the retirement of patronage capital to its members. The Board approves a retirement after it determines that doing so will not impair ASTAC's overall financial position.

Existing ASTAC members who received telecommunications service from ASTAC during this period will receive their patronage capital retirement in the form of a credit on their final 2021 telecommunications bill. Former members who no longer have an active account with ASTAC and have a valid forwarding address on file will be mailed a check to their last known address by the end of 2021. Any member or former member who has a bad debt amount due will have the patronage credit applied to that bad debt amount first, with any remaining funds being applied to their account or a check mailed.

Executors of the estates of deceased members who have not yet received their refund should contact ASTAC Customer Experience Team to find out if their family member's estate could potentially qualify for a voluntary early retirement of patronage capital.

Members should contact the Cooperative to ensure their address on file is up to date. We recommend members review the Unclaimed Patronage Amounts information on our website at ASTAC.NET/company/member-info/capital-credits/.

JOIN TEAM ASTAC

ASTAC is seeking to fill positions in various locations. If you are interested in any of the following openings, please visit ASTAC.NET/company/careers for more information on how to apply. We hope you will join our team!

Combination Technician – Deadhorse
PT Community Liaison – Utqiagvik
PT Customer Experience Specialist – Utqiagvik
Village Representative – Atkasuk
Village Representative (Alternate) – Anaktuvuk Pass, Kaktovik, and Nuiqsut
Business Account Specialist – Anchorage

HEARING AID COMPATIBLE DEVICES

Two measures are used to determine a handset's ability to be considered hearing aid compatible (HAC). Digital handsets have a specific rating based on their ability to reduce interference with hearing aids operating in acoustic mode; this is called the 'M rating' which is rated on a scale from M1-M4, M4 being the best. Handsets are also rated from T1 to T4 based on their ability to operate with hearing aids that contain a telecoil (a tightly wrapped piece of wire that converts sound into electromagnetic signals) and operate in inductive coupling mode. The FCC considers handsets to be HAC if they are rated a minimum of M3 for acoustic coupling and T3 for inductive coupling.

ASTAC's device lineup includes different capabilities, defined as follows:

Smartphone – A device/handset that allows you to connect with others by talk, text, and web
Standard Devices – A device/handset that enables communication through talk and text; basic voice and texting capabilities and limited web browsing which is device specific
Tablet – A device/handset with mostly web capabilities which with certain applications can excel ones experience though video, voice, or messaging applications
Data Only – A device/handset that can only access the internet, often enabling other connected devices to access the web

ASTAC's sales staff is trained to assist customers looking for HAC devices/handsets. When choosing a phone, it's important to try the different features thoroughly and in various locations using your hearing aid or cochlear implant to determine if you hear interfering noise. Refer to our website for more details regarding HAC phone ratings and price ranges.

BUSINESS INTERNET PLUS

Did you know we have expanded our business internet plans? We are growing and always working to meet the needs of all business, no matter the size. Please look at our updated plans on our website and be sure to review the new Business Internet Plus plans.

SAMSUNG RELEASE: FLIP & FOLD

Have you checked out the new Samsung Flip and Fold? We have them in stock! Come into the store and check out the newest phones on the market!



MANDATORY 10-DIGIT DIALING GOES INTO EFFECT

REMINDER: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has adopted 988 as a new three-digit number to be used nationwide to reach the National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline, starting July 16, 2022. For 988 to work in our area code, the way you dial local calls must change to 10-digit dialing (area code + telephone number). This goes into full effect on OCTOBER 24, 2021, and you must dial 10 digits for all local calls.

On and after this date, local calls dialed with only 7-digits may not be completed, and a recording will inform you that your call cannot be completed as dialed. We recommend that everyone take a moment to review your contacts, prior to this date, and add the 907-area code. This will ensure that your speed dial numbers will work when the change goes into effect.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please call ASTAC at 1-800-478-6409 or email us at info@astac.net. For more information, please visit the FCC website at www.fcc.gov/suicide-prevention-hotline.



NEWS YOU CAN USE: FOLLOW US!

Did you know ASTAC is active on social media? We share lots of great information including promotions, announcements, career opportunities, network information, and more. Follow us and stay up to date.



@GoASTAC

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