Northwest Arctic Borough

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Forward .........................................................................................................................3

II. Summary ......................................................................................................................4
III. Organization and Management

IV. The Area and Its Economy

1. Ambler
2. Buckland
3. Deering
4. Kiana
5. Kivalina
6. Kobuk
7. Kotzebue
8. Noatak
9. Noorvik
10. Selawik
11. Shungnak

A. Geography

1. Cultural/Historic Site
2. Land Ownership and Management

B. Population, Urban Centers and Employment

1. Labor Force

C. Natural Resources

1. Minerals
2. Fishing

V. Evaluation

A. Job Opportunities at Red Dog
B. Seafood Harvesting and Processing
C. Meat Processing
D. Arts and Crafts Development
E. Guest Accommodations
F. Tourism
G. Sewing of Traditional Clothing
Forward

The mission statement for economic development, as stated by the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly, is to promote development that is consistent, whenever possible, with the traditional culture and values of the region. Despite the fact that traditional culture is based on a subsistence, non-cash culture, we believe that preservation of many of the values of that life-style are conducive to the economic well-being of the present and future residents of the Borough. Beyond that, our plan is focused on assisting local residents in filling a greater number of existing jobs, expanding the number of job opportunities, preparing our work force to take full advantage of those new opportunities, and reducing the cost of living within the region.

In the ten villages outside of Kotzebue (Kivalina, Noatak, Kiana, Noorvik, Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, Selawik, Buckland and Deering), 65% of the working age population does not have full-time employment at this time. These villages currently have between 15 and 45 full-time jobs available, mostly with the school, city and village governments, and local stores. Kotzebue, on the other hand, has an abundance of jobs, and there are generally from 40 to 60 vacant positions. The Red Dog Mine employs about 100 residents of the region, which represent about 20% of the mine’s workforce. Commercial fishing, which has traditionally provided seasonal employment for fifty or more residents, has been dormant for the past three years due to the low market value of the region’s salmon and lack of local processing. Arts and crafts provide a full-time equivalent income for less than 10 residents of the region and a supplemental income for at least 100 others. Construction jobs on a variety of projects including schools, housing, roads, and other facilities provide temporary jobs that fluctuate in number from year to year. The number of tourism-related visits to the region has declined over the last decade. In June of 2003, there were 155 open temporary assistance cases in the region and at least twice that number of food stamp recipients.
SUMMARY

Background
The Northwest Arctic Borough is the second-largest borough in Alaska, comprising approximately 39,000 square miles (roughly the size of the state of Indiana) and eleven villages along the Kotzebue Sound, Wulli, Noatak, Kobuk, Selawik, Buckland and Kugruk Rivers. It lies at approximately 66.9° North Latitude and -162.58333° West Longitude. The area encompasses 35,898.3 sq. miles of land and 4,863.7 sq. miles of water. The area experiences a transitional climate, characterized by long, cold winters and cool summers. Temperatures range from -52 to 85. Snowfall averages 47 inches, with total precipitation of 9 inches per year.

The current population of the Borough is about 7,300, of which 85.8% are Inupiaq Eskimo. The highest concentration of residents is in the City of Kotzebue (3,107), which serves as the “hub” a region consisting of the villages of Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik and Shungnak. The Borough population is primarily Inupiat Eskimo, and subsistence activities are a vital part of the lifestyle. Residents rely on caribou, reindeer, beluga whale, birds, four species of seals, berries, greens, and fish.

Economy
Activities related to government, mining, health care, transportation, services and construction contribute to the economy. The Red Dog Mine, 90 miles north of Kotzebue, is the world's largest zinc and lead
mine, and provides 370 direct year-round jobs and over a quarter of the borough's wage and salary payroll. The ore is owned by NANA Regional Corporation and leased to Cominco, which owns and operates the mine and shipping facilities.

Maniilaq Association, the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, Teck-Cominco, NANA Corporation, Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corp (KIC) and the traditional village and city governments are the borough's largest employers. The smaller communities, in particular, rely on subsistence food-gathering and Native craft-making. 162 borough residents hold commercial fishing permits.

Teck-Cominco is the operator of the Red Dog Mine, 90 miles to the north of Kotzebue. The entire Red Dog operation employs over 500 people working on shifts such as two weeks on and one week off. While over 250 positions are filled by NANA shareholders or spouses, less than 140 of those employees reside within the boundaries of the Northwest Arctic Borough. With sufficient income to pay for housing and living expenses, many mine employees have chosen the Anchorage area for residence, particularly since the mine provides free transportation between Anchorage and the mine.

Village life will always be sustainable for those who are self-reliant. However, as self-reliance skills continue to disappear, it will be more and more difficult for people to reside in villages without expanding welfare programs. At the same time, it will be very difficult for residents to successfully relocate to larger cities without a level of education that will allow them to find work.

The City of Kotzebue is the transfer point between ocean and inland shipping. It does not have a natural harbor, and is ice-free for only four months each year. Deep draft vessels must anchor 15 miles out, and cargo is lightered to the docking facility. Local barge services provide cargo to area communities. Ralph Wien Memorial Airport supports daily jet service and air taxis to Anchorage both directly and via Nome.

**Organization and Management**

The Northwest Arctic Borough has assembled an Economic Development Commission. The commission consists of nine members, all of whom are residents of the Northwest Arctic Borough.

**The Area and its Economy**

**Background Information**

*Historical Perspective of the Northwest Arctic Borough*
The Northwest Arctic Borough has been occupied by Inupiat Eskimos for at least 10,000 years. "Kikiktagruk", the indigenous name for Kotzebue, was the hub of ancient arctic trading routes. Kotzebue Sound was "discovered" in 1818 by the German Lt. Otto Von Kotzebue on behalf of Russia. In 1899 a post office was established in Kotzebue. Most cities in the borough developed as supply stations for Interior gold mining, and were settled around schools and churches. The Borough was incorporated as a First Class Borough in 1986 and became a Home Rule Borough in 1987.

Today, reliance on the land remains a traditional way of life many Inupiat people, especially in the villages. Just as their ancestors had for centuries before them, the Inupiat people of today depend heavily on subsistence hunting and fishing. While the development of a modern economy has opened many opportunities, subsistence continues to have a strong cultural and social significance.

Ambler

Ambler is named after Dr. James M. Ambler, U.S. Navy, surgeon on the U.S.S. Jeannette, who perished in 1881 in the Lena River delta while with the Arctic expedition under the command of Lt. Comdr. G.
W. DeLong (1879-1880) Ambler was permanently settled in 1958 when people from Shungnak and Kobuk moved upstream because of the variety of fish, wild game and spruce trees in the area. An archaeological site is located nearby at Onion Portage. A post office was established in 1963. The City was incorporated in 1971.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Ambler Traditional Council. 86.7% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.

Buckland

The residents have moved from one site to another along the river at least five times in recent memory, to places known as Elephant Point, Old Buckland and New Site. The presence of many fossil finds at Elephant Point indicate prehistoric occupation of the area. The Inupiaq Eskimos depend on reindeer, beluga whale and seal for survival. The City government was incorporated in 1966.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Native Village of Buckland. 96.8% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.

Deering
The village was established in 1901 as a supply station for Interior gold mining near the historic Malemiut Eskimo village of "Inmachukmiut." The name Deering was probably taken from the 90-ton schooner "Abbey Deering," which was in nearby waters around 1900. The City was incorporated in 1970.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Native Village of Deering. 94.1% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.

Kiana
Kiana means "a place where three rivers meet." It was established long ago as the central village of the Kobuk River Kowagmiut Inupiat Eskimos. In 1909, it became a supply center for the Squirrel River placer mines. A post office was established in 1915. The City government was incorporated in 1964. Prior to the formation of the Northwest Arctic Borough in 1976, the BIA high school taught students from Noatak, Shungnak and Ambler, who boarded with local residents.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Kiana Traditional Council. 92.8% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.

Kivalina
Kivalina has long been a stopping-off place for seasonal travelers between arctic coastal areas and Kotzebue Sound communities. It is the only village in the region where people hunt the bowhead whale. At one time, the village was located at the north end of the Kivalina Lagoon. It was reported as "Kivualinagmut" in 1847 by Lt. Zagoskin of the Russian Navy. Lt. G.M. Stoney of the U.S. Navy reported the village as "Kuveleek" in 1885. A post office was established in 1940. An airstrip was built in 1960. Kivalina incorporated as a City in 1969. During the 1970s, new houses, a new school and an electric system were constructed in the village. Prior to 1976, high school students from Noatak would attend school in Kivalina, and board with local families. Due to severe erosion and wind-driven ice damage, the City intends to relocate to a new site 7.5 miles away. Relocation alternatives have been studied and a new site has been designed and engineered. The relocation is estimated to cost $102 million.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Native Village of Kivalina. 96.6% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.
Kobuk was founded in 1899 as a supply point for mining activities in the Cosmos Hills to the north, and was then called Shungnak. A trading post, school, and Friends Mission drew area residents to the settlement. Due to river erosion and flooding, the village was relocated in the 1920s to a new site 10 miles downstream, which was called "Kochuk," now Shungnak. The few who remained at the village renamed it Kobuk. Ice jams on the River cause high water each year. In May 1973, a flood covered the entire village. In October 1973, the City was incorporated.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community -- the Native Village of Kobuk. 93.6% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.
This site has been occupied by Inupiat Eskimos for at least 600 years. "Kikiktagruk" was the hub of ancient arctic trading routes long before European contact, due to its coastal location near a number of rivers. The German Lt. Otto Von Kotzebue "discovered" Kotzebue Sound in 1818 for Russia. The community was named after the Kotzebue Sound in 1899 when a post office was established. Since the turn of the century, expansion of economic activities and services in the area have enabled Kotzebue to develop relatively rapidly. The City was formed in 1958. An Air Force Base and White Alice Communications System were later constructed.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Kotzebue IRA Council. 76.7% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.

Noatak
It was established as a fishing and hunting camp in the 19th century. The rich resources of this region enabled the camp to develop into a permanent settlement. The 1880 census listed the site as Noatagamut, which means "inland river people." A post office was established in 1940.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Noatak Village Council. 96% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.
Noorvik means "a place that is moved to." The village was established by Kowagmuit Inupiat Eskimo fishermen and hunters from Deering in the early 1900s. The village was also settled by people from Oksik, a few miles upriver. A post office was established in 1937. The City government was incorporated in 1964.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Noorvik Native Community. 95% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.

Selawik
Lt. L.A. Zagoskin of the Imperial Russian Navy first reported the village in the 1840s as "Chilivik." Ivan Petroff counted 100 "Selawigamute" people in his 1880 census. Selawik is an Eskimo name for a species of fish. Around 1908, the site had a small wooden schoolhouse and church. The village has continued to grow and has expanded across the Selawik River onto three banks, linked by bridges. Selawik incorporated as a First Class City in 1974, but in 1977, changed to a Second Class City government.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Native Village of Selawik. 95.3% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.
Northwest Arctic Borough

Founded in 1899 as a supply point for mining activities in the Cosmos Hills, this Inupiat Eskimo village was forced to move in the 1920s because of river erosion and flooding. The old site, 10 miles upstream, was renamed Kobuk by those who remained there. The new village was named "Kochuk," but later reverted to Shungnak. This name is derived from the Eskimo word "Issingnak," which means jade, a stone found extensively throughout the surrounding hills. The City government was incorporated in 1967.

A federally recognized tribe is located in the community, the Native Village of Shungnak. 94.5% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native.

**Geography**

The northwest Arctic Borough is located in Northwest Alaska thirty-three miles north of the Arctic Circle. The Northwest Arctic Borough covers approximately 36,000 square miles in Northwest Alaska, with 3,156 miles of shoreline and 22,444 miles of coastal zone. It is the second largest Borough in Alaska and is roughly the size of the state of Indiana. Its current population is about 7,300. Its
landmass encompasses the drainages of five major rivers: Wulik, Noatak, Kobuk, Selawik, and Buckland. The area boasts some of the most pristine, undisturbed wilderness in the world.

Cultural/Historic Sites

*Cape Krusenstern National Monument* is a long band of coastal plain favored by marine mammals and by migratory birds from around the world. Inland are rolling limestone hills that are home to bears, caribou, sheep, and smaller land mammals.

The monument's bluffs and 114 beach ridges record the changing shorelines of the Chukchi Sea over thousands of years, according to the National Park Service. The rows of ridges contain detailed evidence of 9,000 years of human use. Inupiaq Eskimos still hunt on the windswept cape, just as their ancestors did.

Cape Krusenstern was set aside by the Park Service to protect a series of archeological sites depicting every known cultural period in Arctic Alaska. As a national monument, it also protects the habitat of the birds, seals and other marine mammals.

*The Noatak National Preserve* is located north of Kotzebue, east of Noatak along the Noatak River. The preserve is comprised of 6.5 million acres and contains over 250 miles of the 330-mile-long Noatak River and protects the largest untouched mountain-ringed river basin in the US.

Wildlife at the preserve includes nesting waterfowl, black and brown bears, moose, foxes, wolves and the Western Arctic caribou herd. The terrain is mostly gentle hills and mountains covered with tundra, although the “Grand Canyon of the Noatak” is located in the middle part of the preserve.

*Kobuk Valley National Park*, east of Kotzebue, encompasses 1.7 million acres and is the site of the great Kobuk Sand Dunes. The Dunes, 25 square miles of shifting sand, is the largest active dune flat in the arctic latitudes. In the summer, temperatures can exceed 90° F.

Archaeologists have found artifacts 12,000 years old at Onion Portage in the Kobuk Valley, which escaped glaciation in the last ice age.

The land is flat and boggy near the river, with a low point of 50 feet above sea level. Mountains to the north rise to 4,760 feet. Fishing and firearms are permitted, but there is no hunting for sport. The park is located at the junction of the North American and Asiatic flyways, so good birding is possible. Kobuk Valley also has black and brown bears, the Arctic caribou herd, Dall sheep, wolves and lynx.
Selawik National Wildlife Refuge is located east of Kotzebue, across Hotham Inlet from the Baldwin Peninsula.

This Connecticut-size refuge is home to the Western Arctic caribou herd and migrating waterfowl. The estuaries and lakes are summer homes to birds from six continents. All four species of North American loons nest in the refuge. Black and brown bears, moose and small mammals stay year-round.

Long ago, the area was a crossroads for Eskimos and Indians, and it is close to the ancient Bering Land Bridge, straddling the Arctic Circle.

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve is located on the northern part of the Seward Peninsula, between Nome and Kotzebue.

The remote Bering Land Bridge National Preserve covers hunting grounds traditionally used by Eskimos and their ancestors, who arrived from Asia 13,000 years ago over a broad and now-submerged land bridge from what is now Russia.

The preserve's western boundary reaches almost to the western tip of the continent, a little over 40 miles from the International Date Line and the Russian border.

The 2.6-million-acre preserve is home to raptors, waterfowl and some Asiatic species.

The landscape of the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve includes barrier islands, low dunes and mountains. Plant life includes both wet and alpine tundra and brushy plants.

The preserve has old lava flows and craters caused by ash and steam explosions; the craters now contain lakes called maars. Further evidence of the geothermal history of the preserve is found at Serpentine Hot Springs, where the water temperature ranges between 140 and 170 degrees. Inupiat Eskimos call the place iyat, meaning "cooking pot" or "a site for cooking."

There are remains of the gold rush, which reached the preserve around 1900. Abandoned gold dredges hand-dug by miners to transport water to the gold mines.

The area experiences a transitional climate, characterized by long winters and mild summers. Temperature ranges are some of the most extreme on earth, from -82 to 90 degrees. However, both of these extremes are very rare; lows in February average about -10 degrees and highs in July about 60 degrees. Snowfall averages 47 inches, with total precipitation of 9 inches per year. From June 2
through July 9 every year, the sun does not set, basking the entire region in perpetual sunlight.

**Land Ownership and Management**

**Federal Lands**
The Northwest Arctic Borough has a land ownership pattern characterized by large blocks of land managed by a small number of organizations. The majority of land in the Borough is under federal ownership and management. The federal areas include lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Defense and the Federal Aeronautics Administration. By far the largest holdings are those administered by the Park Service and Fish and Wildlife. These areas were established by congress and the President under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). They include a National Park, a National Monument, two National Preserves and two National Wildlife Refuges.

**State Lands**
The State of Alaska is a major land owner in the region, having selected and received title to federal lands as a result of statehood. State lands are located in four major areas of the Borough; north and east of Kivalina; north and east of Ambler and Shungnak; along the Baldwin Peninsula south of Kotzebue and south of Deering and Buckland. The state also has title to all the tide and submerged lands within three miles of the ocean shore and title to all land under navigable waters. State statue (AS 38.04.060) requires that the Department of Natural Resources inventory state water and land and the resources and values associated with the areas. The inventory operates as a general plan to guide the use of state land. The inventory is designed to give priority to areas of potential settlement, economic development and critical environmental concern. The state is beginning a final round of major land selection from federal (BLM) lands. This selection may add additional areas of state land within the Borough.

**Native Lands**
The two native corporations, Northwest Alaskan Native Association (NANA) and Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation (KIC), own the majority of private land in the region. NANA and KIC received their lands as a provision of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. NANA Corporation holds title and rights to both surface and subsurface, while KIC received only the surface rights. The KIC surface rights do include gravel and material sources. KIC lands are located around or near the City of Kotzebue. NANA corporation lands are spread throughout the Borough and include lands near the villages because of the merger of the regional and village corporations. Management of these lands is by the respective corporations who have staff and permit systems that regulate some activities. The use of corporate lands are guided by a list of policies adopted by the respective corporate boards.
The policies are updated as required and generally allow non-shareholder temporary use or access through a permit system. Most major development activities require approval by the respective corporate board. Because of the merger of the village corporations with the regional NANA corporation, the areas around the villages is now controlled by the regional corporation.

Municipal Lands
The cities in the Borough are in the process of receiving land from the regional corporation under terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) section 14 C. They are also receiving excess land from the townsite trustee program of the federal government. These land transfers are very important because the land is located within and immediately adjacent to the developed areas in the Borough. The need for land for residential development is acute in all the villages. Additional land is desperately needed for municipal services, schools, airports and roads. Many of the residents of the Borough were born after the adoption of ANCSA. These people are now young adults who need their own lands and property. These transfers to the cities are the first chance many have had to acquire property. Several cities are planning sales of lands to provide their residents places to live and raise families.

Population, Urban Centers & Employment
The total population of the Northwest Arctic Borough is 7,266. The following are descriptions of the major population areas in descending order:

Kotzebue is on the Baldwin Peninsula in Kotzebue Sound, a 3-mile-long spit, which ranges in width from 1,100 to 3,600 feet. It is located near the discharges of the Kobuk, Noatak and Selawik Rivers, 549 air miles northwest of Anchorage and 26 miles above the Arctic Circle. It lies at approximately 66.89828° North Latitude and -162.59585° West Longitude. (Sec. 03, T017N, R018W, Kateel River Meridian.) Kotzebue is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 27.0 sq. miles of land and 1.7 sq. miles of water. The population of Kotzebue is 3,107. During the 2000 U. S. Census, there were 1,007 total housing units, and 118 were vacant. 47 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 1,255 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 9.8%, although 36.78% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $57,163, per capita income was $18,289, and 13.14% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Kotzebue is the service and transportation center for all villages in the northwest region. It has a healthy cash economy, a growing private sector, and a stable public sector. Due to its location at the confluence of three river drainages, Kotzebue is the transfer point between ocean and inland shipping. It is also the air transport center for the region. Activities related to oil and minerals exploration
and development have contributed to the economy. The majority of income is directly or indirectly related to government employment, such as the School District, Maniilaq Association, the City and Borough. The Cominco Alaska Red Dog Mine is a significant regional employer. Commercial fishing for chum salmon provides some seasonal employment. 128 residents hold commercial fishing permits. Most residents rely on subsistence to supplement income.

Air is the primary means of transportation year-round. The State-owned Ralph Wien Memorial Airport supports daily jet service to Anchorage and several air taxis to the region's villages. It has a 5,900' main paved runway and 3,900' crosswind gravel runway. A seaplane base is also operated by the State. The shipping season lasts 100 days, from early July to early October, when the Sound is ice-free. Due to river sediments deposited by the Noatak River 4 miles above Kotzebue, the harbor is shallow. Deep draft vessels must anchor 15 miles out, and cargo is lightered to shore and warehoused. Crowley Marine Services operates shallow draft barges to deliver cargo to area communities. The City wants to examine the feasibility of developing a deep water port, since the cost of cargo delivery is high with the existing transportation systems. There are 26 miles of local gravel roads, used by cars, trucks and motorcycles during the summer. Snowmachines are preferred in winter for local transportation.

*Selawik* is located at the mouth of the Selawik River where it empties into Selawik Lake, about 90 miles east of Kotzebue. It lies 670 miles northwest of Anchorage. The City is near the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge, a key breeding and resting spot for migratory waterfowl. It lies at approximately 66.60389° North Latitude and -160.00694° West Longitude. (Sec. 20, T014N, R006W, Kateel River Meridian.) Selawik is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 2.5 sq. miles of land and 0.9 sq. miles of water. The population of Selawik is 778. During the 2000 U. S. Census, there were 188 total housing units, and 16 were vacant. 1 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 130 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 34.34%, although 70.85% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $25,625, per capita income was $8,170, and 34.38% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Inhabitants of Selawik subsist mainly on whitefish, sheefish, caribou, moose, ducks, ptarmigan and berries. Occasionally, bartered seal and beluga whale supplement the diet. The primary employers in the community include the school, the City, the IRA, Maniilaq and three grocery stores. Fulltime jobs include 22 with the IRA, 12 with the City, 11 with local stores, eight airline agents and one each AVEC, OTZ Telephone and the airport. 10 residents commute to the Red Dog Mine. Handicrafts are made and sold locally and at gift shops in larger cities. Seasonal work is also found outside of Selawik at the Red Dog Mine, BLM firefighting or in lighterage operations. Three residents hold commercial fishing permits.
Selawik is accessible by plane and barge. The Roland Norton Memorial Airport provides a 3,000' gravel runway owned by the City. The State also owns a 3,000' gravel airstrip with a 2,670' crosswind strip. Scheduled flights are available to Kotzebue and area villages. Docking facilities and a barge landing area exist; freight is shipped upriver from Kotzebue each summer by Crowley Marine Services. Boardwalks have been constructed within the village. Boats, ATVs and snowmachines are prevalent forms of local travel.

Noorvik is located on the right bank of the Nazuruk Channel of the Kobuk River, 33 miles northwest of Selawik and 45 miles east of Kotzebue. The village is downriver from the 1.7-million acre Kobuk Valley National Park. It lies at approximately 66.83833° North Latitude and -161.03278° West Longitude. (Sec. 27, T017N, R011W, Kateel River Meridian.) Noorvik is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 1.0 sq. miles of land and 0.4 sq. miles of water. Noorvik is home to 677 residents. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 157 total housing units, and 21 were vacant. 6 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 181 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 19.56%, although 58.29% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $51,964, per capita income was $12,020, and 7.57% of residents were living below the poverty level.

The primary local employers are the school district, the City, the Maniilaq health clinic, Red Dog Mine and two stores. There are 88 fulltime jobs in Noorvik including 34 with the school district, 11 with Maniilaq, eight with the IRA, eight with the City, seven with the stores and one with the United States Post Office. In addition, 17 residents work for Teck Cominco and commute to the Red Dog Mine. Part time work including agents for regional airlines and seasonal employment at the Red Dog Mine, BLM fire fighting, or work in Kotzebue is also available. Seven residents hold commercial fishing permits. Caribou, fish, moose, waterfowl and berries are utilized.

Noorvik is accessible by plane and by shallow-draft vessels. There are no roads linking the village to other areas of the state. The State-owned Robert (Bob) Curtis Memorial Airport has a 3,200' lighted gravel runway and a 2,600' gravel crosswind runway. The airport is the second-largest in the borough. A new $5 million airport is under construction. Several regional air taxis provide service to Kotzebue and surrounding cities. Crowley Marine Services barges fuel and supplies during the summer. Boats, ATVs and snowmachines are common means of transportation locally.

Noatak is located on the west bank of the Noatak River, 55 miles north of Kotzebue and 70 miles north of the Arctic Circle. This is the only settlement on the 396 mile-long Noatak River, just west of the 66-million acre Noatak National Preserve. It lies at approximately 67.57111° North Latitude and -
Noatak is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 11.6 sq. miles of land and 0.7 sq. miles of water. The population of Noatak is 455. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 106 total housing units, and 6 were vacant. 106 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 25.35%, although 58.91% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $30,833, per capita income was $9,659, and 22.04% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Noatak's economy is principally based on subsistence, although the available employment is diverse. The school district, City, Maniilaq and retail stores are the primary employers. In June of 2003, Noatak had 54 fulltime jobs excluding Maniilaq. The school district employed 25, another 10 work for the IRA, nine airline agents, six at the local store and one each at OTZ Telephone, Post Office, Department of Transportation and GCI Cable. Another 23 residents work at the Red Dog Mine. Seven residents hold commercial fishing permits. During the summer, many families travel to seasonal fish camps at Sheshalik, and others find seasonal work in Kotzebue or fire-fighting. Chum salmon, whitefish, caribou, moose and waterfowl are harvested. Noatak is primarily accessed by air. The State-owned lighted gravel runway is 4,000'. Six regional air services provide cargo, mail and passenger services. There are currently no barge services to Noatak. Small boats, ATVs and snowmachines are used extensively for local transportation. Many historic trails along the Noatak River are important today for inter-village travel and subsistence uses.

Buckland is located on the west bank of the Buckland River, about 75 miles southeast of Kotzebue. It lies at approximately 65.97972° North Latitude and -161.12306° West Longitude. The population of Buckland is 426. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 89 total housing units, and 5 were vacant. 94 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 33.8%, although 57.27% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $38,333, per capita income was $9,624, and 11.92% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Residents depend on a subsistence lifestyle for most food sources. A herd of more than 2,000 reindeer are managed; workers are paid in meat. Employment is primarily with the school, City, health clinic and stores. There are 65 fulltime jobs including 27 with the school district, 12 with Maniilaq, 12 with the City, seven with the IRA, five at the general store, two with OTZ Telephone and one each with NANA & the U.S. Postal Service. Another 15 residents are employed by Teck-Cominco and commute to the Red Dog mine. Some mining also occurs. One resident holds a commercial fishing permit. The community is interested in developing a Native food products and crafts manufacturing facility to produce reindeer sausage, berry products, labrador tea and ivory and wood carving.
Buckland's major means of transportation are plane, small boat, barge and snowmachine; there are no roads outside of the village. Buckland has a State-owned 2,580' gravel airstrip which serves a number of scheduled and chartered flights. Crowley Marine barges in fuel, and various lighterage companies deliver cargo and supplies each summer.

**Kiana** is located on the north bank of the Kobuk River, 57 air miles east of Kotzebue. It lies at approximately 66.975° North Latitude and -160.42278° West Longitude. (Sec. 09, T018N, R008W, Kateel River Meridian.) Kiana is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 0.2 sq. miles of land and 0.0 sq. miles of water. The population of Kiana is 399. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 133 total housing units, and 36 were vacant. 3 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 99 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 11.61%, although 51.23% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $39,688, per capita income was $11,534, and 11.24% of residents were living below the poverty level.

The economy depends on traditional subsistence activities, augmented by a cash economy. Chum salmon, freshwater fish, moose, caribou, waterfowl and berries are harvested. As of June, 2003, there are 49 fulltime jobs including 24 with the school district, 10 with Maniilaq, six with the City, five with the IRA, three at the local stores, three airline agents and one postal worker. The Red Dog Mine also employs 12 fulltime commuters at Teck Cominco, four for NANA Management and one for NANA-Lynden. Kiana is one of the more modern villages in the Borough, and has three general stores. Two residents hold commercial fishing permits; seasonal employment also includes work on river barges, BLM fire-fighting and jade mining. There is local interest in constructing a whitefish and turbot value-added processing plant. The City is also interested in developing eco-tourism, primarily guided river trips to the Great Kobuk Sand Dunes.

The major means of transportation are plane, small boat and snowmachine. The State-owned Bob Baker Memorial Airport has a 3,400' lighted gravel runway. Daily scheduled flights and charter flights are provided. Crowley Marine Services barges fuel and supplies each summer, and local store owners have large boats to bring supplies upriver. Boats, ATVs and snowmachines are used extensively for local travel, and there are many trucks. A road extends along the river to Kobuk Camp, and a network of old trading trails exists.

**Kivalina** is at the tip of an 8-mile barrier reef located between the Chukchi Sea and Kivalina River. It lies 80 air miles northwest of Kotzebue. It lies at approximately 67.72694° North Latitude and -164.53333° West Longitude. (Sec. 21, T027N, R026W, Kateel River Meridian.) Kivalina is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 1.9 sq. miles of land and 2.0 sq. miles of water.
The population of Kivalina is 383. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 80 total housing units, and 2 were vacant. 82 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 25.45%, although 65.11% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $30,833, per capita income was $8,360, and 26.4% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Kivalina's economy depends on subsistence practices. Seal, walrus, whale, salmon, whitefish and caribou are utilized. The school, City, Maniilaq Association, village council, airlines and local stores provide year-round jobs. As of June 2003, there are 39 fulltime jobs in Kivalina including 20 with the school district, six airline agents, five with Maniilaq, three with the IRA, three with the store, two with the city and one with the Post Office. 10 residents commute to work for Teck Cominco at the Red Dog Mine. Six residents hold commercial fishing permits. Native carvings and jewelry are produced from ivory and caribou hooves. The community is interested in developing an Arts and Crafts Center that could be readily moved to the new city site. The major means of transportation into the community are plane and barge. The community needs a road to the proposed new City site, 7.5 miles away. A State-owned 3,000' gravel airstrip serves daily flights from Kotzebue. Crowley Marine Services barges goods from Kotzebue during July and August. Small boats, ATVs and snowmachines are used for local travel. Two main hunting trails follow the Kivalina and Wulik Rivers.

Ambler is located on the north bank of the Kobuk River, near the confluence of the Ambler and the Kobuk Rivers. It lies 45 miles north of the Arctic Circle. It is 138 miles northeast of Kotzebue, 30 miles northwest of Kobuk and 30 miles downriver from Shungnak. It lies at approximately 67.08611° North Latitude and -157.85139° West Longitude. (Sec. 31, T020N, R005E, Kateel River Meridian.) Ambler is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 9.5 sq. miles of land and 1.3 sq. miles of water. The population of Ambler is 295. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 98 total housing units, and 19 were vacant. 2 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 75 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 27.88%, although 46.81% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $43,500, per capita income was $13,712, and 14.29% of residents were living below the poverty level.

In June of 2003, there were 58 fulltime jobs including 24 with the school district, nine with Maniilaq, nine with the IRA, six with the City, eight for the local stores, one postal worker and one village public safety officer. Another eight residents commute to the Red Dog Mine. Ambler Air provides charter & scheduled flights. Five residents hold commercial fishing permits. Subsistence is a major part of the local economy. Chum salmon and caribou are the most important food sources. Freshwater fish, moose, bear, and berries are also harvested. Birch baskets, fur pelts, and jade, quartz, bone and ivory carvings are sold in gift shops throughout the state. The community is interested in developing a lapidary facility for local artisans. Ambler's major means of transportation are by barge, plane, small
boat and snowmachine. There are no roads linking the City to other parts of the state. A State-owned 3,000’ lighted gravel airstrip, with a 2,400’ gravel crosswind airstrip, is located one and a half miles from the City. Daily scheduled services are provided out of Kotzebue, and air taxis provide charter flights. The airstrip has recently undergone major improvements. Crowley Marine Services barges fuel and supplies to Ambler each summer. Boats are used for inter-village travel and subsistence activities. ATVs and snowmachines are commonly used in winter.

Shungnak is located on the west bank of the Kobuk River about 150 miles east of Kotzebue. The original settlement was 10 miles further upstream at Kobuk. It lies at approximately 66.88806° North Latitude and -157.13639° West Longitude. (Sec. 09, T017N, R008E, Kateel River Meridian.) Shungnak is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 8.4 sq. miles of land and 1.3 sq. miles of water. The population of Shungnak is 249. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 64 total housing units, and 8 were vacant. 1 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 79 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 27.52%, although 52.12% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $44,375, per capita income was $10,377, and 35.79% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Shungnak subsists mainly on fishing, seasonal employment, hunting and trapping. Subsistence food sources include sheefish, whitefish, caribou, moose, ducks and berries. Most full-time employment is with the school district, City, Maniilaq Association, two stores and a lodge. Eight residents commute to the Red Dog Mine. BLM provides seasonal employment in fire fighting, hiring over 30 residents each year. Shungnak also has a strong arts and crafts industry; residents make and sell finely-crafted baskets, masks, mukluks, parkas, hats and mittens. The community wants to develop a visitor center, mini-mall, post office and clinic complex at Dahl Creek. Shungnak is accessible by plane, barge or small boat. The State-owned lighted gravel runway is 3,160’, and has scheduled regional air services. Major airport improvements are under construction. Fuel and supplies are barged in each summer by Crowley Marine Services of Kotzebue. Small boats, ATVs, snowmachines and dog sleds are used for local travel and subsistence activities. Trails along the river are still used for inter-village travel.

Deering is located on Kotzebue Sound at the mouth of the Inmachuk River, 57 miles southwest of Kotzebue. It is built on a flat sand and gravel spit 300 feet wide and a half-mile long. It lies at approximately 66.07497° North Latitude and -162.71274° West Longitude. (Sec. 20, T008N, R019W, Kateel River Meridian.) Deering is located in the Cape Nome Recording District. The area encompasses 5.1 sq. miles of land and 0.1 sq. miles of water. Deering is home to 129 residents. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 61 total housing units, and 19 were vacant. 9 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 44 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 16.98%, although 51.65% of all adults were not in the work force. The
Northwest Arctic Borough

median household income was $33,333, per capita income was $11,000, and 5.76% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Deering's economy is a mix of cash and subsistence activities. Moose, seal and beluga whale provide most meat sources; pink salmon, tom cod, herring, ptarmigan, rabbit and waterfowl are also utilized. The Karmun-Moto reindeer herd of 1,400 animals provides some local employment. A number of residents earn income from handicrafts and trapping. The village is interested in developing a craft production facility and cultural center to train youth in Native crafts. The school, City, Maniilaq Assoc., stores, and an airline provide the only year-round jobs. As of June, 2003, there were 18 fulltime jobs in Deering, including five with the IRA, five airline agents, two each with Maniilaq, the City & store and one each with NANA & the Post Office. One resident commutes to the Red Dog Mine. Some mining occurs in the Seward Peninsula's interior. Three residents hold commercial fishing permits. The village wants to develop eco-tourism, including a 38-mile road to Inmachuk Springs for tourists.

Deering is accessible year-round by plane. A new State-owned 2,600' gravel airstrip, with a 2,080' crosswind strip, enables flights by several Kotzebue air services. Crowley Marine Services barges fuel and goods from Kotzebue each summer. Small boats, ATVs and snowmachines are used for local travel. Winter trails are available to Candle and Buckland.

Kobuk is located on the right bank of the Kobuk River, about 7 miles northeast of Shungnak and 128 air miles northeast of Kotzebue. It is the smallest village in the Northwest Arctic Borough. It lies at approximately 66.90857° North Latitude and -156.88102° West Longitude. (Sec. 03, T017N, R009E, Kateel River Meridian.) Kobuk is located in the Kotzebue Recording District. The area encompasses 16.1 sq. miles of land and 0.7 sq. miles of water. The population of Kobuk is 106. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 45 total housing units, and 19 were vacant. 11 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 29 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 0%, although 55.38% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was $30,750, per capita income was $9,845, and 28.57% of residents were living below the poverty level.

The economy of Kobuk is based on subsistence. Whitefish, caribou and moose provide the majority of meat sources. Cash employment is limited to the school, City and Maniilaq clinic. One resident works for NANA Management Services at the Red Dog Mine. Seasonal construction and BLM fire fighting provide some income. Kobuk's major means of transportation are barge, plane, small boat and snowmachine. A State-owned 2,360' lighted gravel airstrip is served by scheduled air carriers. Float planes land on the Kobuk River. Crowley Marine Services barges fuel and supplies during the spring and fall, when high water stages occur. There is a barge off-loading area. Boats, ATVs
Northwest Arctic Borough

and snowmachines are used for local travel. There are many trails along the river for year-round inter-village travel and subsistence activities, including a 7-mile road to Shungnak.

**Labor Force**

**Characteristics of the Northwest Arctic Borough Population – 2002**

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<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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Natural Resources

Minerals
The primary industrial development project in the Northwest Arctic Borough is the world's largest zinc and lead mine, the Red Dog Mine. The Red Dog Mine is operated by Teck Cominco and provides 370 direct year-round jobs and over a quarter of the borough's wage and salary payroll. The lands are owned by NANA Regional Corporation.

The Red Dog zinc/lead ore deposit is located in the DeLong Mountains of Alaska's Brooks Range. The remote site is approximately 90 miles north of Kotzebue and 55 miles from the Chukchi Sea, within a local government known as the Northwest Arctic Borough.

The mill expansion completed in 2001 resulted in record production of both zinc and lead concentrates. It also improved the overall quality of the zinc concentrate and increased the zinc recovery by 4.2%.

Major capital expenditures in 2002 included $7.5 million for fugitive dust control measures at the port and $4.5 million for hard-surfacing four miles of the port haul road.

Red Dog embarked on the development of a comprehensive Environmental Management System (EMS) in 2002. This should allow the mine to become certified under ISO 14001 in early 2004.

Red Dog was first discovered in 1953 when pilots and geologists noted mineral staining the area. The U. S. Geological Survey began formal documentation in 1970 and coined the name Red Dog Creek after long-time pilot and miner Bob Baker's company Red Dog. Baker's rusty dog frequently flew with him as he traveled the Northwest area.
In 1975, the US Bureau of Mines issued a press release announcing the significance of the Red Dog deposit, spurring a flurry of mining claims in the DeLong Mountains.

The Native regional corporation for the Northwest portion of Alaska, NANA, became interested in selecting the land at Red Dog in 1976, and with the 1980 passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Red Dog lands were chosen formally by NANA.

Shareholders in 1982 signed an agreement with Cominco American regarding development of the deposit and feasibility studies and environmental permitting began. Two major hurdles faced mine development at Red Dog — obtaining congressional approval for the road through Cape Krusenstern National Monument, and financing from the State of Alaska for the transportation system. Both objectives were achieved later that year and initial mine development began in 1986 with construction of a shallow water dock and staging area at the port site.

With these facilities in place, road and mine site construction began in July 1987 and by November 1989 was complete. Operations and production began in December 1989.

In 1998, Cominco Alaska completed the Production Rate Increase (PRI) project, which increased production to 1.2 million tons of concentrate.

Recently, several new deposits in the area have been discovered, which will both extend the mine life and dramatically increase the amount of available ore concentrate. This translates to long-term, stable jobs for the residents of the region, who under the NANA-Cominco agreement, are trained and hired to work at the mine site.

Teck Cominco has made many important contributions in the region, and the local communities. Agreements with NANA have established committees that review the impacts of mining on traditional hunting and fishing activities, and give the local people authority and input over these activities.

In addition, Teck Cominco has adopted a progressive training program that includes management training, a job shadow program, and aggressive shareholder hire goals. Currently about 55% of
the employees at the mine are NANA shareholders, with wages exceeding $15 million paid to these employees annually.

The future for Red Dog Operations is bright as production continues and development plans for the adjacent discoveries proceed.

Kiana District
The Kobuk River Valley and all it tributaries, a large region on the Ambler, Kiana and Shungnak quadrangles make up the Kiana District. All regional stream, sand and gravel bars have placer showings, but have had little prospecting performed on them. The gravel deposits of the Squirrel River, especially its Klery Creek tributary had numerous placer and are most profitable for today's gold hunter. Agnes, Klery, Homestake and Central Creeks produced placer gold real well. On Jade Creek you can find gold laced Nephrite Jade. The Ambler Mining District Is home to a vast deposit of jade, copper and other minerals.

Noatak District
This district encompasses the area drained by the coastal streams between and including the Wulik and Noatak rivers. Lucky Six Creek, is well known for its rich gold deposit.

Selawik District
This district includes the base of the Baldwin Peninsula and the drainage areas of streams flowing into Selawik Lake and Eschscholtz Bay, between the Kobuk and Kauk Rivers. Largely unexplored, this district in the southeastern portion of the Baldwin peninsula and the area draining into Lake Selawik, has only reported gold mining operation. On Shovel Creek, a tributary of the Selawik River, a very rich deposit was mined after the second War until the early 1960's.

Shungnak District
This district is located in the Kobuk River Valley, between latitude 66°50' and 67°10' N, longitude 156°50' and 157°25' W. It is on the Shungnak USGS quadrangle. The total production from 1898-1955 was 10,000-15,000 ounces. Almost all of the placer gold produced by this district came from the drainage area of the Cosmos Hills above the valley of the Kobuk River. Most of the gold production was from Dahl Creek Tremollite mine. Wesley Creek, 6 miles west of the Dahl Creek, near the head of the creek, contains some very rich placers. Ten miles north of Shungnak 10 miles is Aurora Mountain, Riley Creek and Ruby Creek lode gold mines. Forty miles Northeast of Shungnak, the Shishakshinovik Pass Mine, produced lode gold. 50 miles west of Shungnak, in the valley of Ambler River, there were very many rich placer workings. California and Lynx Creeks were also rich in placer gold.
Within the Chukchi Sea in the Hope basin area are huge deposits of natural gas and possibly oil. This Hope Basin as identified by Mineral Management Services includes the water bodies near Pt. Hope to the Kotzebue Sound.

**Fishing**

All five species of Pacific salmon are present in the region, with chum the most abundant. A fair harvest of pink salmon is taken on the Noatak River and a few king, silver, and red salmon may be taken incidentally. At Noatak, the pink salmon arrive in early to mid-July when they are the major species fished. Later in August, the chum run begins and reaches a peak during the second or third week of September, after which it continues to decline through freeze-up of the river. Fishermen also harvest Arctic char in the Noatak system or inconnu in the Hotham Inlet-Selawik Lake area during winter and early spring. Noatak residents may also fish the Wulik River for char. Other minor freshwater species caught are sheefish, smelt, Arctic grayling, burbot, and northern pike. Offshore fishing also includes herring, crab, and Arctic cod.

From 1914 to 1918 the Midnight Sun Packing Company operated a small cannery in the Kotzebue district and processed slightly over 100,000 fish. Between 1918 and 1961 no commercial fishing took place. The present commercial fishery began in 1962, primarily for chum salmon. The only area now open to commercial fishing is east of a line extending from Cape Blossom on the Baldwin Peninsula south of Kotzebue northwest to Aukoolak Lagoon on Sheshalik Spit northwest of Kotzebue. Most fishing takes place along and within the 10-mile-wide channel between the Baldwin Peninsula and Sheshalik Spit. Fishing is closely regulated during the early season when most of the fish passing through the district are bound for the Kobuk River. This run is not only smaller but is also more heavily utilized for subsistence at villages on the Kobuk. The commercial season is set later to harvest the large run of chum salmon to the Noatak River.

162 borough residents currently hold commercial fishing permits. Commercial catches vary from year to year due to changes in the migration patterns of chum salmon, different wind and tidal currents, shifting sand bars and channels, variable levels of the discharge of the Noatak River into the sound, drifting seaweed and debris, and frequent inclement weather. Fishing usually begins in mid-July when fishermen in small outboard skiffs fish set gill nets. Kotzebue chum salmon are of exceptionally high quality, having a bright color, firm flesh, and high oil content. These fish are in great demand either fresh or frozen. They are dressed with heads on, iced, and transported to offshore Japanese freezer ships or may be flown daily to Seattle or Anchorage markets. The commercial catch in this district has been increasing rapidly in recent years with over 600,000 chum salmon landed in 1974.

Commercial fisheries for Arctic char and inconnu also occur. Arctic char run later than salmon and
are fished following the salmon season. A special permit fishery is allowed for inconnu. In years past, inconnu have been frozen and shipped to Barrow, Fairbanks, and Anchorage for marketing.

Funding for the State-owned Sikusulialq Springs Fish Hatchery on the Noatak River was discontinued in 1983. The State had invested close to $20 million in capital improvement and operating costs of the hatchery.

**Evaluation**

The Economic Development Commission has identified several assets and liabilities of the area as they pertain to economic development. These are described below as they apply to specific areas of potential development:

**Job Opportunities at Red Dog Project**

**Assets and Opportunities.** The Red Dog Mine is operated by Teck-Cominco and has over 500 employees. Of that number, 373 are employed directly by Teck-Cominco, 56 by NANA/Lynden, which provides the transport of the ore from the mine to the port site, and 44 by NANA Management, which provides the meals and lodging for all mine employees. There are an additional 34 temporary positions. Of the 373 Teck-Cominco jobs, 193 (51.7%) are filled by NANA shareholders or spouses. Of that number, 119 reside in the villages of the Northwest Arctic Borough. While some of the jobs filled by non-residents are highly technical in nature, there are at least 100 positions currently filled by non-residents that could be filled by residents if they had the necessary training and could meet other job specifications. Just 29 of 56 NANA/Lynden positions are filled by NANA shareholders. As these positions are nearly all related to truck driving and vehicle maintenance, all of the 27 positions filled by non-residents represent potential jobs for residents. Finally, 33 or 44 NANA Management positions are filled by shareholders and spouses, with the balance of jobs seemingly available to qualifying residents.

Jobs at the mine, which is about 80 miles from Kotzebue, are typically performed on a two weeks on and one week off basis. Transportation is provided for both NANA residents and travelers from Anchorage. Annual wages for these jobs are typically from $45,000 to $85,000 per year plus benefits.

Given the small number of jobs in the villages, positions at the mine can make a huge difference to village economy and environment. Noatak has 25 residents with employment at the mine, ranking it at the top of the region with Kotzebue. It is no coincidence that a higher percentage of students at the high school in Noatak have plans for Red Dog employment after graduation.
**Liabilities and Constraints.** NANA shareholder and spouse employment at Red Dog has remained at around 53% for many years. Ongoing efforts have been made to provide training necessary for many of the job opportunities at the mine.

One of the liabilities of the local work force appears to be alcohol and drug abuse, which results in an inability to initially qualify for employment. All prospective employees are required to pass a urine analysis. Until remedial action can reduce the number of adult residents that are debilitated by alcohol and drug abuse, that will continue to be a major barrier to employment.

**Seafood Harvesting and Processing**

**Assets and Opportunities.** The Kotzebue District chum salmon run has historically provided income from commercial fishing for up to 267 area fishermen. The commercial catch topped out in 1981 at 677,239 fish that produced $3.2 million in income. In 2001, the last year that there was a significant fishery, 66 fishermen harvested 211,672 salmon that produced just $322,650 in income. Virtually no commercial fishing took place in 2002 or 2003 due to the lack of a local buyer and the very low price (.12-.15) per pound that was available to those who packed and sent out their own catch.

Given the size of the annual chum salmon run and the high quality of the “Arctic Salmon”, it is believed that local, value-added processing and special marketing of the fish could result in a renewed opportunity for permit holders. Such processing would also result in 12-15 seasonal positions during the months of July and August.

As a result of a cooperative effort with the Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association, a fish processing operation opened in the summer of 2004. The project utilized grant funds of $432,000 for equipment, $40,000 in matching funds from the Borough, a building owned by NANA Corporation, and another facility owned by the Kotzebue IRA. The processing was managed under the supervision of the Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association, which will continue management for one additional year. A local organization, the Kotzebue Sound Fisheries Association, was established in the past year and will be groomed to manage the fishery in the future.

While there are 162 Borough residents who are registered salmon fishing permit holders, approximately thirty permits were put to use in 2004. An additional 54 residents were licensed as crew members. The Borough provided small business loans to purchase nets and other equipment. The Borough also provided crew member licenses at no cost to the participants through the small business grant program.
The total salmon catch was about 440,000 pounds in 2004 and fishermen were paid prices ranging from .15 at the beginning of the season to .20 near the end of the season. The fish were transported to Anchorage where they were purchased by other processors or sold directly by Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association. Most weeks of the season were limited to 3-5 twelve-hour openings due to a lack of sufficient ice-making capability to preserve a higher number of fish. Fish were headed and gutted and sent to market, along with the roe. Salmon brought a price of about .95 per pound after landing in Anchorage.

One goal for the fishery is to produce value-added products including boneless fillets and patties in the coming year. An effort will also be made to sell as many pounds of product as possible to local markets, such as the Northwest Arctic School District and other districts. It is believed that this would not only maximize the profit of the fishery but insulate the local fishery from the fluctuation of outside market prices. The fish would also improve the diet of students.

It is also a goal to purchase additional equipment, including a large ice-maker, that will allow for the processing of up to one million pounds of fish.

Liabilities and Constraints. While the salmon run appears to have been healthy in recent years, it is difficult to predict the size of the salmon run from year to year. Also, while marketing efforts for local fish are ongoing by Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association, market conditions are variable and there are no assurances as to what prices may be in the short or long term. However, it appears that the region’s fishermen are capable of catching and caring for at least twice the size of the 2004 commercial catch. The main constraint at this time is funding for the improvements that are needed. $300-$400,000 will be needed for the additional equipment.

Meat Processing

Assets and Opportunities. The Northwest Arctic Borough is home to the largest caribou herd in the world as well as a healthy population of moose. In addition to serving the needs of local residents, the game population attracts many sport hunters from elsewhere in the state, country and world. Given state laws that mandate use of all the meat from game animals, the region has a unique opportunity to benefit from processing and packaging meat. There is a facility and equipment under the ownership of the Kotzebue IRA that could house a meat processing business that could attract revenue from the many sport hunters and local residents. The high cost of shipping unprocessed bulk meat from the region provides a special advantage to local processing.
Liabilities and Constraints. While there is a facility and equipment in place, there is no operator of such a business at this time. An individual or group that has an interest in developing such a business needs to be identified. That business entity would have to work out suitable arrangements with the Kotzebue IRA for lease of its facility and equipment.

Arts and Crafts Industry Development

Assets and Opportunities. The Borough has made major strides toward development of an arts and crafts industry in the region over the last three years. Small business grants and loans have helped existing and aspiring artists to obtain tools, supplies, and materials. Workshops have been sponsored in Kotzebue, Selawik, Noatak, Buckland, and Ambler. An arts and crafts purchase and marketing program has been put in place that allows artists to sell store-quality art to the Borough as it is made. The Borough, in turn, has marketed the products to replenish the Revolving Art Purchase account. Over $500,000 in art has been purchased over the last two years from 150 different artists – using a $100,000 purchasing account.

In conjunction with Chukchi Campus of the University of Alaska, the Borough was awarded a grant of $395,000 to build an art center in Kotzebue. Construction is scheduled for the fall and early winter of 2004. This art center will provide local artists with a well-equipped workplace and a location for workshops. It will also provide an opportunity for residents-in-treatment at the Maniilaq Association substance abuse program to learn and utilize skills in arts and crafts production as a part of their treatment.

An art center was opened in Buckland in November of 2003. A small business grant from the Borough and volunteer help from the village were utilized to upgrade and equip building that was donated for this use by the city. This center is managed cooperatively by local artists who established the rules and guidelines for its use. It has equipment that can be used by all who join the group. 38 residents signed the use agreement for the building. Sales of art and accompanying income have risen substantially as a result.

Similar efforts are taking place in Noorvik, Selawik, Kiana and Ambler. Utilizing facilities that were donated by the respective cities, IRAs, or private parties, the Borough has used the small business grant program to renovate and equip art centers in these villages. The Noorvik, Selawik and Kiana art centers are scheduled to open in the fall of 2004. The Ambler project is not quite so far along. The villages of Noatak, Kiavalina, and Deering have also expressed interest in having art centers and have offered facilities for that use.
Liabilities and Constraints. Unlike many areas of Alaska that are populated largely by Alaska Natives, arts and crafts are common in the region but are not a major source of income to large numbers of residents. There are only a few residents who rely on art as a sole means of livelihood at this time. Arts and crafts have traditionally been sold directly by artists to visitors or other residents by direct contact or at occasional bazaars or craft sales. In order to enjoy the benefit of an expanded market for arts and crafts, residents require education and understanding of retail vs. wholesale sales of artwork. A lack of understanding and/or appreciation of wholesale marketing is a major constraint to the development of artists.

Until art centers can be developed throughout the region, the lack of suitable workplaces is a major constraint for carvers. Most homes are inhabited by large families and are not suitable for carving because of the toxic dust that is generated.

An increase in art production will require broader markets for sale and distribution. Success in retail markets will require a higher quality of products than those typically made at this time.

Guest Accommodations in the Villages.

Assets and Opportunities. Most business travelers to the ten outlying villages of the borough overnight at the school or health clinic. Travelers include school district and government employees as well as a broad range of other service providers. While travelers routinely pay hotel costs in Kotzebue, therein contributing to the local economy, similar revenue is not provided to villages, which have an even greater need for it. At the same time, most city governments currently occupy cramped quarters in old and inefficient buildings and suffer from a lack of revenue to cover basic operations. New, energy efficient city office buildings that provide a couple of rooms to rent to overnight visitors would provide visitors with more comfortable accommodations and cities with revenue to support the operating costs of their facilities.

Liabilities and Constraints. The primary constraint to having new office buildings with rental rooms is obtaining the funding for construction. While grants are the most desirable form of funding, partial financing is also a possibility if it can be determined that rentals will produce a reliable cash flow. Another potential liability is the management of the rental rooms themselves. Existing city personnel would have to assume the responsibility of managing the room rentals and maintenance. Finally, success of the rental rooms would require support from the school district and other providers of free housing in the form of changing their policies regarding their facility use.

Tourism to Kotzebue and the Villages
Assets and Opportunities. The Northwest Arctic Borough is home to Inupiat Culture, countless square miles of pristine wilderness, major river systems, and abundant wildlife. Tourism to the region, however, is less than 25% of what it was just seven or eight years ago. While a sharp decline in the world economy over these years may be partially responsible for the falloff in tourist travel to the region, it has also resulted from reduced tourism marketing by NANA Development Corporation. However, the culture and the land will always represent a draw to tourists. Orchestrated rafting or canoe trips on the river systems, with planned stops at specific camp sites, would seem to be a method of involving a number of village families in tourist commerce. Kotzebue offers lodging and a new cultural heritage center, scheduled for construction by the U.S. Park Service in 2005, as amenities to encourage tourism. NANA Development Corporation has a small fleet of tour buses on location in Kotzebue as well.

Liabilities and Constraints. For the villages of the region, a lack of overnight lodging facilities is a clear constraint to visitor traffic. The village of Kiana offers the only commercial lodge for tourists and hunters, which is privately owned and operated. There is little private capital for development of this kind. A further liability is the attitude of village residents toward tourism development. A substantial number of village residents, if not a majority, are opposed to visitor traffic on the river systems on the basis that such traffic interferes with their own use of the rivers for subsistence activities. However, opposition seems most focused on hunters.

Sewing of Traditional Clothing

Assets and Opportunities. Around 85% of the regional population is of Inupiat origin, with a rich tradition of sewing and unique clothing styles. Sewing is a highly popular pastime for residents, especially the elders. A focused effort to increase use of traditional clothes would serve a variety of valuable purposes, the foremost of which would be increasing cultural pride and awareness and creating cottage industry. Given the movement toward school uniforms around the country and the social benefits that accrue from that, it would seem logical to encourage school dress codes that focus on the local, traditional culture. Atikluks as school dress for girls and boys would open a door of economic opportunity for those who sew in the villages. Many of the clothing dollars that currently flow to outside vendors would remain in the villages. The Borough will provide material and sewing machines to any village school that enacts a dress code requiring that traditional clothing be worn.

Liabilities and Constraints. Passage of school dress codes requires either the support of local school advisory councils or the student bodies themselves.
Goals and Objectives

Goal: Prepare residents to fill existing job opportunities

Objective: Reduce the amount of alcohol and other substance abuse by

Strategy: Assisting villages with enforcement of local option ordinances.

Passage of a city ordinance in Kotzebue to establish an alcohol distribution center.

Improving the success rate of our alcohol treatment program.

Developing an effective community “wellness” program.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, City of Kotzebue, Maniilaq Association, and village city and tribal governments

Objective: Increase the number of qualified tradesmen by

Strategy: Providing vocational education in the areas of carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, commercial driving, and heavy equipment operation and repair.

Increasing the number of high school graduates.

Principal sources of leadership: Alaska Technical Center/NWAB School District, State of Alaska, city and tribal governments within the region.

Objective: Increase the ability of village residents to fill job vacancies in Kotzebue by

Strategy: Increasing the number of affordable housing units in Kotzebue.

Recruitment within the villages.

Principal sources of leadership: Maniilaq Association, NIHA.

Objective: Increase the number of resident placements in Red Dog Mine positions by
Strategy: Identifying all specific jobs that are not filled by residents or non-resident NANA shareholders or spouses.

Determining job skills/training/certifications necessary to perform those jobs.

Establishing specific job training for those positions.

Recruiting residents for placement in those positions.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, NANA Regional Corporation, Teck Cominco, ATC/School District, Chukchi College, State of Alaska

Objective: Increase the number of residents who are certified as teachers, accountants, health care professionals and other professional occupations by

Strategy: Promoting college education.

Increasing the number of high school graduates.

Providing targeted post secondary education in Kotzebue.

Providing scholarships for residents who attend college.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and NWAB School District, NANA Regional Corporation, Maniilaq Association, Chukchi College and major employers throughout the region

Objective: Increase the quality of public education in the region by

Strategy: Increasing average daily attendance.

Improving parenting skills.

Increasing community involvement within the schools.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB School District, Maniilaq Association, city and tribal governments.
**Objective:** Fully utilize Welfare To Work program by

**Strategy:** Developing and promoting job opportunities for Temporary Assistance recipients in the villages.

**Principal sources of leadership:** Maniilaq Manpower, individual city and IRA governments, NWAB School District, individual businesses.

**Goal: Create new job opportunities**

**Objective:** Assist communities with development and implementation of comprehensive plans for local development by

**Strategy:** Providing technical assistance with local planning efforts.

Providing grant writing assistance.

Providing training and support for local city and tribal administrators.

**Principal sources of leadership:** NWAB, Maniilaq Association, State Division of Community and Economic Development, Chukchi College, ATC/School District.

**Objective:** Procure lands that provide maximum potential for future development in the Borough by

**Strategy:** Utilizing the municipal entitlement process for selection of an additional 300,000 acres of land within the region.

**Principal source of leadership:** NWAB

**Objective:** Increase the number of skilled artists in the region by

**Strategy:** Creating consistent and reliable markets for art.

Promoting high quality of art.
Providing workshops instructed by highly skilled artists.

Making tools and supplies accessible to residents.

Creating efficient and healthy workplaces in each village.

Promoting art as a source of cultural and regional pride.

Principal sources of leadership in meeting these goals:
NWAB, National Park Service, Chukchi College, School District.

Objective: Increase the number of small businesses, including small engine repair and maintenance, building maintenance, retail outlets, restaurants, lodging, and tourist assistance by

Strategy: Providing small business education.

Providing start up assistance in the form of grants and loans.

Providing adult basic education in the areas of accounting, computer science, customer service and small engine repair.

Principal sources of leadership in meeting these goals:
Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska Technical Center, NWAB School District and Chukchi College

Objective: Create seasonal jobs in the fishing industry by

Strategy: Establishing a fish processing facility in Kotzebue for salmon, sheefish, whitefish and other commercially viable species.

Principal sources of leadership: Northwest Arctic Borough and Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association.

Objective: Increase the number of tourists traveling to the region by

Strategy: Promoting traditional activities among the population in order to provide an environment
that will appeal to tourists.

Promoting the region through publications and the internet.

Providing adequate facilities and services for travelers.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and NANA Development Corporation.

Objective: Add new industries to the region by

Strategy: Researching and examining the feasibility of water bottling, berry products, and processing and packaging of traditional foods such as caribou and moose for consumption within the region and/or export from the region.

Identifying and securing grants and loans for capitalization.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB, NANA, KIC, local IRA's

Objective: Improve the region’s telecommunications by

Strategy: Developing a fiber optic network throughout the region.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and Maniilaq Association.

Objective: Encourage further mineral development by

Strategy: Developing additional transportation corridors within the region.


Objective: Utilize existing opportunities for government and non-government sponsored programs by

Strategy: Starting HEAD START programs in Kotzebue and other villages within the region that do
not offer the program.

Starting Boys and Girls Clubs in villages.

Increasing the number of licensed day care providers.

Principal source of leadership: Maniilaq Association, NWAB, local city and tribal governments.

Goal: Reduce the Cost of Living for residents

Objective: Promote at least a partial return to self-sufficiency by

Strategy: Encouraging increased use of wood for fuel.

Encouraging more use of gathered fish, game and berries for consumption.

Promoting use of traditional clothing that is made in the region through adoption of school dress codes.

Promoting walking as a means of transportation (and good health).

Discouraging consumption of commercial snack foods and drinks.

Principal sources of leadership: NWAB and School District, Maniilaq Association, city and village governments.

Objective: Reduce the cost of bulk fuel and other cargo by

Strategy: Forming partnerships to purchase fuel in large quantities.

Developing competition among fuel suppliers.

Developing larger storage facilities.
Increasing length of airport runways to accommodate larger cargo planes.

**Principal sources of leadership:** NWAB, State of Alaska, Federal Government.

**Objective:** *Promote energy conservation by*

**Strategy:** Promoting home and facility insulation/weatherization.

Developing alternative energy sources.

**Principal sources of leadership:** NWAB, NIHA, city and village governments, Maniilaq Association, KEA, State of Alaska, Federal government

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**Three Year Status Report**

Within the Economic Development Department of the Northwest Arctic Borough, our primary mission over the past three years has been to create new private sector job opportunities for residents of...
the region. Herein is an outline of the status of new programs and projects that have been undertaken by the Department.

**Small Business Grants**
The Borough has made a focused effort to provide residents with tools, equipment, supplies, licenses, and business knowledge that are needed to enter business. Over the last three years, approximately $150,000 in grants have been provided to over 200 residents of the region. These grants have included tools for artists, licenses, supplies and equipment for retailers and service providers, and transportation costs for attendance at small business or other vocational training. All grants are made as vendor payments, insuring that all public funds are expended for the purpose for which they are intended.

**Small Business Loans**
The Northwest Arctic Borough initiated its own unique Small Business Revolving Loan Program in 2001. Because many village residents do not have the credit and collateral required for conventional bank financing nor a background of business experience, our program utilizes the one asset that most residents do have, the Permanent Fund Dividend, as a means of extending credit to finance a business. Our interest-free loans are limited to adults with a business plan and are repaid by assignment of the loan amount from the recipient’s forthcoming PFD. The Revolving Loan Fund was established from three primary sources: NANA Regional Corporation; an $80,000 grant from USDA, and the Borough itself. Again, all loans are made as vendor payments, insuring that all public funds are expended for the purpose for which they are intended.

The Borough has issued over 200 loans during three years that we have operated the program. Loans have commonly been used for purchase of inventory for retail sales, equipment such as computers, and materials for production of arts and crafts or sleds.

**Success Stories from the Grant and Loan Programs**

*Arctic Blues Espresso and Gift Shop* startup was partially funded by a grant and loan from the Borough in 2001. The owner-operated business near the Kotzebue airport has thrived and employs two additional residents of the Borough.

*Kotzebue Catering* was capitalized by grants and loans over the last three years. The business provides food service for many of the major conferences and meetings in Kotzebue.

*Warren Douglas’ home store* in Shungnak was developed with a small business grant and loan and education received at the 2001 Arctic Business Gathering. The business has grown each year.
KYCO Coffee and Gift Shop in Kotzebue was established with small business grants from our program. That business has provided jobs and on-the-job training for over a dozen local youth over the past 16 months.

Walton’s Store in Selawik has utilized the program to expand inventory and enlarge the business.

The Gavin’s store in Buckland was started with a small business grant and loans for inventory in August of this year. In September alone, the store had sales of $14,700 resulting in a $5,000 profit.

The Big Dipper’s coffee bar and thrift shop were both started with small business grants from our program and continue to operate in Kotzebue.

Alvin Werneke’s Gifts business started in the past year with a small business grant and loan. It now occupies space within Hanson’s store as well as having catalog sales.

Montgomery Ferguson initiated a synthetic lubricant sales outlet in Kotzebue with inventory purchased with a loan.

Seth Kantner established his photography business with a small business grant in 2001.

Lowell Ward established his custom knifemaking business with equipment that was awarded from our grant program.

All survey, testing, and exploration activity for Amigaq Coppermine has been financed by loans from shareholders in that Squirrel River property.

Area artists purchased over $20,000 in walrus ivory through the loan program in 2001 and 2002 alone. That material, which comes largely from Savoonga, brings a return of between 3-1 and 20-1 for the artists after it has been crafted into jewelry or other crafts.

Other startup and expanding businesses include a Kotzebue locksmith, Noorvik and Kiana welders, snow machine repair and parts sales in Kiana, sled builders, other retail businesses in Kivalina, Noatak, Noorvik, and Deering, and artists throughout the region.

Arts Marketing Program
This unique program was initiated in 2001 for the purpose of providing a consistent cash market for
those who produce high quality arts and crafts. The program allows artists to sell their products directly to the Borough, which in turn sells the products. A Revolving Art Purchase Account of over $100,000 was created through donations from NANA Regional Corporation, Maniilaq Association and the Borough. Over the last two and a half years, over $400,000 in purchases have been made from over 150 individual artists. The program has even been extended beyond our own borough to serve artists in Point Hope, Shishmaref, Anaktuvuk Pass and Barrow. Among the services that the Borough provides to artists:

- Business card and advertising placard development
- Website exposure of arts and crafts
- Product enhancement through framing and shadow boxes
- Annual art competition
- Arts for Awards Program in the Schools
- Workshops for both adults and students to teach skills such as carving and scrimshaw
- Art marketing through direct sales and retail outlets

Our favorite success stories include Mabel Berry, an elder who makes caribou skin masks, Donald Ferguson, Beatrice Lisbourne, Lowell Ward, Kenneth Tikik, Paul Kignak, Emma Bodfish, Alvira Downey, Irene Farquar, Philip Stalker, Jack Frankson, Enoch Evak, Adolph Shagloak and all the birch bark basket makers of Ambler, Shungnak and Kobuk.

Art Center Development

To further encourage the development of artists in the region, we have made a goal of establishing art centers in each of the eleven villages of the region. Last year we cooperatively pursued a grant for construction of an art center in Kotzebue with Chukchi Campus. A $395,000 grant was approved by HUD Rural Development for that project, which will be completed in the summer of 2004. This grant was the result of a cooperative effort by Chukchi Campus, NANA, Maniilaq Association and the Borough, which wrote the proposal and will administer the construction. The key element of this project is that operating funds will come from the Maniilaq Alcohol and Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program. The Center will be utilized by residents in treatment to develop marketable skills, quality avocations, and subsequently higher self esteem. The center will also provide a workplace for local carvers, skin sewers, etc. and a site for workshops.

In cooperation with the City of Buckland, the Borough has just opened an art center in that village for use by all cooperating artists. Beyond providing a central location and all the tools that provide for efficient work, the art center will be a place where young people can learn carving skills from others.
An art center in Selawik has also been developed and will be opening this month. Utilizing a donated building, a Borough grant was utilized to refit the building and provide tools and equipment for cooperative use.

The Borough recently made application for $3,090,000 in funding to construct art centers in each of the ten villages of the region. The proposed facilities would be approximately 1,400 square feet in size and provide a base for all sewing, carving, and other crafts in the village. The facilities would also be an extension of the rehabilitative activities that are taking place at the Kotzebue Art Center. It is believed that for a program for recovering alcoholics to be effective, we need to change the environment in their home villages.

**Fisheries Development**
The Borough, in cooperation with the Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association, was awarded a $432,000 grant for equipment for value-added fish processing in Kotzebue. NANA Regional Corporation is an important partner in this project, as NANA provided the facility in which the processing will take place. The Borough will act as a facilitator on this project and a fishermen’s cooperative will be established locally. The Borough also committed $70,000 in matching funds over two years for this grant. This project will allow local fishermen to put their nets back in the water this summer, provide seasonal employment for 12-15 workers at the plant, and make use of the high quality chum salmon run to the area.

**Assisting Others**
The Northwest Arctic Borough has shown a commitment to assisting economic development in neighboring Chukotka by purchasing and marketing antler carvings and other crafts from that region. We have signed a contract for an initial order of carvings that should be supplied by the end of this year.

The Borough assisted with art workshops in Barrow and Anaktuvuk Pass in the past year and will be working with the Whaling Captains’ Wives Association to help them open an art shop in their beautiful cultural heritage center. The shop will help our borough by becoming an additional outlet for the arts and crafts of our region.

On an ongoing basis, our borough is active in working with the Northwest Arctic Borough School District on Career Days, Inupiaq Days and with the Junior Achievement Program, which teaches economics to young children.

Finally, we have been requested to provide information about our Revolving Loan Program and Arts Program on a regular basis. Information and/or presentations on these programs have been
Northwest Arctic Borough

shared with the North Slope Region, Nome Region, and AVCP.

As one of the 12 active ARDORs in Alaska, we routinely share information about our programs with the other Alaska Regional Development Organizations.