

Denali Training Fund
Quarterly Report of Project Activities

Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Employment Security Division
Alaska Workforce Investment Office

Progress Report

Name of Organization: Kawerak, Inc.
Name of Project: NCCER Core, Carpentry Level I and Level II (Little Diomed)
Report Period: January and February, 2003

Project Activities and Accomplishments:

The Budget Modification for our Denali Grant funds was designed to bring instruction and Vocational Training to the Island Village of Little Diomed. Little Diomed is scheduled for village wide construction and Rural Cap house-remodeling projects budgeted at nearly \$3 million, over the next two years. Due to the village's remote location, and the logistical difficulties with landing equipment or personnel on the island, the village of Little Diomed has never experienced an extended training program in the village such as our plan in their history. They were really honored and pleased to accept our invitation to be the target of these funds.

Planning, communications, logistics and coordination for this project took about 2 months (Nov. and Dec., 2002). Even then, we needed to revise everything in January, as the Little Diomed Airport can only be created when the sea ice outside the village freezes thick enough to be able to scrape out a safe, flat, useable, runway. In a fluke of this year's bizarre weather, the ocean ice hadn't even frozen over by beginning of January. As a makeshift approach, we routed everything we needed flown in by helicopter; equipment, tools, books, materials, and instructors. After we rescheduled everything to accommodate the helicopters, bad weather delayed us once again and forced a further shuffling. Even after our instructor landed, it was almost a week before the tools, and materials began to arrive.

After the organizational meetings with the students for paperwork and etc. in Diomed, we began with the Core and Safety curriculum on Jan 17th. We had nine students turn up for classes. The High School at Little Diomed rented us space for teacher housing in the school library, and provided him two meals a day. The National Guard made their Armory available for our classroom. Fortunately, we have at least one national Guardsman and one High School student in the program to help them justify their involvement.

Core classes ended Jan 31st. We started Carpentry I training the same day, as the teachers used the same helicopter for transportation. The helicopters only hold one passenger. There was still not enough ice to make a runway on the ocean at the beginning of Carpentry I. After more weather delays we got the extra supplies and tools for Carpentry I into Little Diomed. This was winter in Alaska and we had to modify our Carpentry I program to be done entirely inside the Armory. Instead of building a small building outside, the students built and took apart a floor, then a roof assembly and last made three walls with the limited lumber we could send. All our lumber had to be less than 8 foot long to fit into the helicopter and we couldn't send full sheets of plywood, so assembly presented a challenge. We completed Carpentry I February 14, with the same 9 students from the Core Class.

February 24, we started our second year carpentry program: a modified NCCER Carpentry II. We began with Site Preparation training and a second level of Blueprint Reading. Then we held two weeks of Basic Electrical Wiring for Houses, and will finish in March with Basic Plumbing for

Project Activities and Accomplishments: (continued)

Houses and Boiler Maintenance and Repair.

The Core and Carpentry I programs earn the students who successfully complete them 12 College Credits from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). The Carpentry II package also consists of 13 College Credits. All of our instructors are not only certified by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), but have been approved as adjunct teachers for UAF. The first week in March, we are teaching a certified CPR/First Aid course to our students as part of the course (worth 1 UAF credit). Fortunately, the ice airstrip is finally complete and approved for use (Feb. 24). It is about 3 miles off the coast of Little Diomedede, on the Arctic Ocean. Now we can ship out the heavier materials. After the Plumbing and Boiler Classes are over, we intend to ship out enough construction material and a final instructor for the class to build an 11'X14' storage building before the runway melts. The Rural Cap led House Remodeling Consortium will use this building during their summer construction. Then, we will take our tools off to another village training program. All our classes so far have been very well attended. We still have the original 9 students we started with for the program, and overall daily attendance is above 90%.

I will enclose a videotape taken by one of our instructors with this report as a demonstration of some of the Achievements and Challenges of this program.

Planned Activities for next reporting period:

We will have the CPR/First Aid course, the Plumbing Class, Boiler Repair and Maintenance Classes, and the construction of the 11'X 14' Storage shed, build as a class project. We also hope to get all our tools off the island before the ice runway melts. All of this is scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2003. If the runway melts first we will have to wait until fall before the tugs and barges can dock at the island to get our tools.

Problems, Delays or Concerns Experienced:

Our biggest problems, so far, have been: weather delays; limited ability to deliver freight or materials (The helicopter could only carry 750 pounds of freight at a time, nothing over 8 feet in length, no plywood, and had a contract that mandated the mail be given priority, before freight or even passengers); for safety, the helicopter only flew during daylight hours (between noon and 3 o'clock during January); poor communications (e-mail seldom worked, phones went down whenever it snowed or rained, and barely worked when the wind blew); our teachers had to live in the library of the High School, which is actually the open area between all the classrooms (Students work and play in the school until 10:30-11:00PM every night, and teachers come to school about 7 AM. There was no place to sit and think, let alone work for our instructors to prepare). Then, everything must be hand carried, around the village, and there is no storage space inside, or outside, any of the buildings.

Possible Problem Resolutions and Timeframes:

We have some of the most dedicated and adventurous teachers in the world. Some of them are actually trying to get back out there to teach again. Unless we have some real trouble we should have all our proposed training done by the end of April this year.

Certification: I certify that the above information is true and correct and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Lewis Tobin
Vocational Training Specialist

6 March 2003

Name and Title

Signature

Date