

Tara Jollie, Division of Community & Regional Affairs (DCRA) – State Co-Chair
Berney Richert, Economic Development Administration – Federal Co- Chair (presiding)

In attendance: Berney Richert,– U.S. Economic Development Administration; Brigitta Windisch-Cole– Division of Community & Regional Affairs; Tessa Rinner – Denali Commission; Janet Hall – RurAL CAP/Denali Commission; Mark Allred – ANCSA CEO's/Denali Commission; Jimmy Smith- Division of Community & Regional Affairs/Denali Commission; Christi Bell, UAA CED; Mike Catsi, Brett Welcher– Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC); Marie Lowe – Institute of Social and Economic Research; Tomas Jensen – Agnew::Beck Consulting; Bobby Jo Kramer – Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership; Gene Kane – USDA Rural Development; Donald Fancher, Judy Chapman - Department of Transportation/PF

Via teleconference: Nicole Grewe, Division of Community & Regional Affairs

Discussion: FY 10 Update on the Denali Commission

- Tessa Rinner, Director of Programs, Denali Commission, provided an update on the Denali Commission—George Canelos' four-year appointment from the Secretary of Commerce expired on October 3, 2009. A new Co-Chair will be confirmed by the Secretary of Commerce in the coming weeks. The Commission will see funding reductions in FY 10 and should hear more about funding levels in late November/early December. The Commissioners will hold a quarterly meeting in January 2010 to review a work plan for FY 10. The Commission and various statewide partners have applied for ARRA broadband and health training funds.

Population Changes in Rural Alaska: Brigitta Windisch-Cole, Research Analyst, DCRA/DCCED

Brigitta gave a presentation on the current population changes in rural Alaska. She presented information on rural Alaska boroughs and census areas with population losses, trends that show an increase in rural out-migration, growth of the 60+ population in rural regions, and how rural student population is declining faster than the total rural population. Following are a few highlights from her presentation:

- The total current population of Alaska is 679,720
- During the past four years there has been a 49% increase in out-migration
- The prime workforce (26-60 yrs) has decreased in the past eight years and there has been a significant loss in the male workforce
- There has been growth in the 60+population in rural Alaska—the rural interior region has grown by 43.9%
- Rural Alaska's older population is remaining in their communities

For more information on this report, please contact Brigitta Windisch-Cole, DCRA Research Section Manager, at Brigitta.windisch-cole@alaska.gov

Migration, Youth and Education in Youth: Dr. Marie Lowe, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, UAA/ISER

Marie presented an update on the 2008 migration study with the Anchorage School District. The request for this research came from former Mayor Mark Begich, Carol Comeau, Superintendent, Anchorage School District, and former Governor Sarah Palin in 2008. The purpose of the study was to determine what is causing the increase in student enrollment. The survey focused on three major issues:

- Where are Alaskan students moving from?
- Why are students and families moving?
- Who is moving from the rural areas?

349 respondents completed the survey for a response rate of 67%. Of the newly enrolled students, 56% came from road system districts and 44% came from off-road districts. Most of the off road respondents came from the Bethel and Nome census areas. Access to services was listed as a key issue as to why *families* are moving. More specifically, 36% are moving due to employment, 21% for educational opportunities and 14% are moving due to the rising cost of living.

Why are *students* moving?

- They are sent to Anchorage to live with family
- Custody issues
- To live with foster families
- Previously home-schooled
- Transferring between schools

The conclusions of the study include the following:

- There is a need for a regional focus
- The reasons for migrating are multiple and complex
- Youth are moving independently
- The increase in student mobility is correlated with poor educational outcomes
- Access is an issue
- Circular migration is a policy issue for the state
- Cultural transitions of rural-urban migration are difficult; particularly for older youth and Alaska native families
- Diminishing opportunities in rural areas but significant challenges in adjusting to urban life

For more information about this study, please contact Marie Lowe at marie.lowe@uaa.alaska.edu

A decision was made to suspend the meetings during the next few months until a new Denali Commission Federal Co-Chair is appointed. In the meantime, please contact Janet Hall at 271-4990 or jhall@denali.gov if you have any questions.