

MESSENGER

Spring 2022

CHANGING FOR THE BETTER

By Jens Laipenieks, CEO/General Manager



The remote, roadless areas of Alaska have a long history of being left behind in terms of evolving Information Communications Technology (ICT). ICTs include communication devices such as the radio, television, cell phones, personal computers, email, social media, and Internet services. Predicting the future is impossible, but with technology, all you have to do is look back to realize how fast things are moving. Technological evolution continues to accelerate as innovation is progressively layered upon itself, generating a multiplying effect that shows no signs of slowing.

ASTAC is committed to Digital Equity, which is the belief that all Americans, individuals and communities, have the fundamental rights to participate in a modern connected society, including all economic opportunities, advanced healthcare, and a 21st-century education. Narrowing the digital divide on the North Slope is what drove ASTAC's creation over 40 years ago and has been our driving force ever since.

For the past year, we have been preparing for the evolution of our wireless network. The recent upgrades moved us into a full 4G LTE landscape, with a pathway to 5G and all the benefits that come with it. The fundamental change is how voice services will traverse the network. Voice over LTE, or VoLTE, shifts voice to the data network. Previously, voice and text services used a parallel network to the data network. Now, all traffic utilizes the same data network making it more efficient and scalable. Voice quality and data speeds will improve as we repurpose the 3G frequencies and resources into the 100% 4G LTE network.

Digital equity will also be coming to the Village of Atqasuk early this summer. We are making significant progress on our fiber extension project and expect to be offering all our enhanced products there as soon as construction completes later this spring. ASTAC's strategic plan includes building terrestrial connections to all our remaining markets and finally ending the digital divide that separates us. We will be sharing more information on these projects in the coming months.



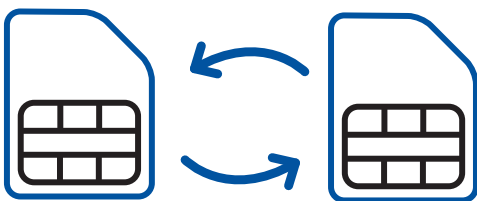


NATIONWIDE NETWORK UPGRADE

Did you know our wireless conversion is a part of the nationwide efforts to advance connectivity across all networks? This upgrade will improve wireless connectivity, allow for new enhancements and provide greater features for all customers.

The conversion has recently been extended, but ASTAC is working to prepare all customers by swapping out SIM cards and upgrading phones, often at no cost to our members. In 40 years our service area has gone from one phone line in a community to connection anywhere from the palm of your hand. We want to thank all our members for their patience and understanding as the team reaches out to everyone in preparation for the latest upgrade.

For more information on the nationwide conversion, please visit the Federal Communications Commission website at www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/plan-ahead-phase-out-3g-cellular-networks-and-service



ATQASUK FIBER PROJECT

This winter, ASTAC has endeavored to expand its horizons and stretch its capabilities as a project group. We have worked through the cold months of January and February to install fiber along the Walakpa gas line from the South gas field towards ATQ. Our techs have rose to the challenge and have made use of our ASTAC Pistenbully 100 as base operations while working through temperatures as cold as -30°F. Progress on the gas line has taken us 8 miles south of town through crane canal river crossing, 2 trail crossings working towards Central Pad. Partnering with UIC, our overland fiber project will be kicking off in March/April to lay 50 miles of Fiber. This project will be an industry first, with laying heavy armored cable across open tundra and across four river crossings. It is anticipated that ASTAC will complete the main fiber feed from Barrow to Atqasuk during this year's winter ice road season.



SIM CARD SWAP

If you're in Utqiagvik, have you swapped out your SIM card yet? Our team is working to get all customers' SIM cards swapped out for the upcoming wireless network migration. To avoid a lapse in service when the network upgrade is complete, customers will need to have a compatible SIM card and phone. For community visits outside of Utqiagvik, please check our social media and website for updates on when our team will be visiting your community to get all the SIM card and phone swaps completed. For more information on SIM card swaps and to check your devices compatibility, visit our website at astac.net/wirelessupgrade.

OPEN POSITIONS

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

CURRENT OPENINGS

Controller – Anchorage

Communications Specialist – Anchorage

Plant Accountant – Anchorage

Part-Time Community Liaison – Utqiaġvik

Customer Experience Specialist (Full Time) – Utqiaġvik

Combination Technician – Deadhorse

Village Representative – Atqasuk

Village Representative (Alternate) – Kaktovik



APPLY TODAY

Opportunities at new heights

astac.net/careers

SMART RURAL COMMUNITY PROVIDER



PROVIDER

ASTAC is excited to share that we are a Smart Rural Community (SRC) provider through NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association.

NTCA SRC program is a network of Smart Rural CommunitySM (SRC) providers working tirelessly to keep small-town America connected. They lead and collaborate on broadband-enabled projects that improve economic development, provide technology for advancing education and enhance state-of-the-art health care through telemedicine. These initiatives, among others, help to connect rural communities and keep them advancing towards a future-proof sustainable infrastructure.

We are a Smart. Rural. Community. Learn more: ntca.org/smart.

REFERRAL PROGRAM

Earn ASTAC cash telling friends and family about your great ASTAC service! Once your referral has signed up for new service and your eligibility has been verified, ASTAC will add a \$50 bill credit to your account for every new customer you refer.

SHIPS ON US!

Did you know ASTAC offers free shipping ALL YEAR long? Call our Customer Experience Department at 1-800-478-6409 to place an order today!

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