

## Diversity on All Levels



By Jens Laipeniaks  
CEO & General Manager



Diversity is critical on all levels of our operations. A diverse workforce brings together individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. This diversity of thought and ideas can lead to more innovative and creative solutions to problems and a broader market understanding. When a team from diverse backgrounds collaborate, they are more likely to generate new and unique ideas, which can help understand and meet customer needs more effectively. At ASTAC, we strive for a diverse and inclusive workplace and embrace the full range of viewpoints and benefits that come with it.

Network diversity is equally important. As recent events have shown us, the single points of failure in a network, no matter how reliable they have been, will eventually require an upgrade or experience an outage. Imagine a highway that encircles a city. If that road is blocked or under construction, the traffic can go in the other direction to reach any

desired destination. The same notion holds true in data networks. If a ring of fiber optic cable is cut or a component within a route fails, the traffic can automatically re-route on the diverse path to the destination address. Following the road analogy, the more alternative routes within a highway/network, the more reliable, scalable, and adaptive they will be to ensure the trucks/packets make it to their destinations on time.

To ensure the most diverse and reliable network, ASTAC plans to build a new fiber optic connection from Nuiqsut to our existing fiber optic cable connecting Atqasuk and Utqiagvik. This project will lay an armored submarine fiber cable similar to our other network expansions. Once connected by this alternative path, ASTAC will eliminate the threat of an extended network outage due to a subsea cable cut. Nuiqsut will be connected to multiple network routes upon completion, ensuring reliable and robust services in the future. The new fiber route will also improve our overall economics and traffic capacity, significantly improving the products and services we bring to the membership.

We endeavor to bring improved diversity to ASTAC's operations, both within our workforce and our networks, to create a more resilient, reliable, and robust cooperative.

# Anaktuvuk Pass Fiber Extension Project

With support from the community of Anaktuvuk Pass, ASTAC applied and was awarded a USDA Rural Utility Services Grant in July of 2022. The application was submitted to allow the cooperative to complete a fiber network expansion into Anaktuvuk Pass. The goal is to provide reliable internet speeds of 100/30 Mbps to the community through a 90-mile terrestrial fiber crossing from the Dalton Highway into Anaktuvuk Pass.

The team has some significant project updates for what we have accomplished with the community this year. Our team recently joined in for a ride-along on the Community Winter Access Trail (CWAT) with Utqiaġvik Inupiat Corporation (UIC) in March. The data that was recorded on the terrain confirmed that 90% or more of the route can support a ground lay fiber installation, which would be completed during the winter months. During the fiber lay, slack is provided so that it is loose enough for the crew to go back over the trail during the summer and adjust as needed, which also includes tucking the fiber into the tundra or freeing it wherever it may be hung up on shrubs or other obstacles. The same method was used on our Atqasuk project where it has had great success and proved to be very low and, in most cases, no impact. The crew surveyed the trail to Atqasuk after construction and reported that the fiber is already around 80% engulfed in the tundra. After a few years, the fiber is expected to be indistinguishable without locators to track it.

In April, ASTAC's Project Managers Cindy Baldwin and Paul Fairbanks traveled to Anaktuvuk Pass to meet with the community. Charles "Sollie" Hugo gave a tour of The Simon Paneak Memorial Museum and shared the history of the region. An in-depth presentation was provided about the importance of locations in the region and on protection of the land. Sollie assisted the ASTAC staff in marking their own map for the project with areas that will need to be avoided for both cultural and geographical reasons. The team also met with Nunamiut Corporation and The Naqragmiut Tribal Council. Unfortunately, the community meeting was cut short due to an emergency and will be rescheduled to a later date. The community visit and information provided by the corporation and Tribal Council was incredibly valuable to the project, we look forward to continued collaboration.

In May, Sollie traveled with more of the ASTAC team on an aerial survey of the proposed route. They were able to take pictures and document GPS coordinates. The Naqragmiut Tribe confirmed a route June 2023, and the permitting process with the North Slope Borough (NSB) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is set to begin. Assuming no delays in this process, construction is projected to begin in 2024. We look forward to the upcoming community meeting and will include updated information so that the community can offer feedback to the cooperative.

We are so excited to be on the path to providing reliable, terrestrial internet service to the community of Anaktuvuk Pass and all the benefits it will bring to every household and business.



# WE HAVE A WINNER

## SWOOSH 2023

Earlier this year our team travelled to all our residential service communities to host our annual Swoosh free-throw competition, one of our favorite events. This was our fourteenth year and it was a great time! We enjoy being in and with our communities, doing something that brings us together and having fun. We had fun turnouts in all communities and especially enjoyed watching the little dribblers competition!

The 2023 Grand Prize Winner for 2023 is Eli Booth from Point Hope! Quyanaqpuk to everyone who came out to join us for another fun year! We already can't wait for 2024.

First Place Winners and Entered for the Grand Prize: Eli Booth, Jay Aguvluk, Jacqueline Ahkivgak, Justice Mulcahy, Jim Killbear, Vanessa Napageak, Roderick Miguel, and Kavasha Upickson.



# 2023 Scholarships

## Awarded



The Cooperative's mission to provide to the North Slope goes beyond our services, we also work to give back to the communities and the families we are proud to serve through donations, scholarships, and sponsorships. Supporting students who are furthering their education in post-secondary education is vital to our mission. This year the board approved four scholarships to new and one returning student. We wish all students a wonderful school year and the absolute best in future endeavors.

2023 Scholarship Recipients:  
Bailey O'Reilly  
Braylon Battle  
Brooke Singson  
Joerenz Nobleza  
Sean De Guzman



# Kaktovik Fiber to the Home

There are exciting updates on the progress for the Kaktovik Project, along with some critical milestones and upcoming activities.

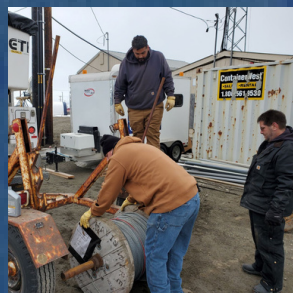
We are pleased to announce that the copper punch list has been completed, marking a significant milestone in the project after the recent pole upgrade in Kaktovik. This accomplishment showcases our dedication to delivering industry-standard infrastructure to the community. The successful completion of the punch list means that all identified issues have been resolved, ensuring that the project meets the highest quality standards.

The Strand Maps and Fiber to the Home (FTTH) Design plans are finalized with ASTAC and its partners. We have worked diligently to ensure the network design has met the unique requirements of Kaktovik. We appreciate our partners, expertise, and commitment to delivering a robust and reliable network. Furthermore, our crew is in the village rolling out the FTTH installation. This project phase will be a great start to bringing reliable high-speed internet access to Kaktovik. We understand the importance of connectivity in today's world and are dedicated to ensuring that Kaktovik residents can access the digital resources they need.

As an overview of the project schedule, we started the FTTH installation in June by focusing on the strand deployment. That initial phase was critical to laying the foundation for the network. In July, our focus shifted to the mainline fiber installation, which forms the backbone of the FTTH network. Currently, we are working to extend fiber to the home, and we will proceed with the necessary conversions in September and October to ensure that all residents can benefit from a new fiber infrastructure.

Implementing a middle-mile solution is one remaining challenge in enhancing the customer experience. ASTAC is prioritizing this aspect of the work to establish the connection between Kaktovik and the ASTAC core network. By implementing the middle mile, ASTAC will be able to truly deliver the necessary internet speeds and service enhancements that the community truly deserves.

We understand that this project holds great importance for the community and cooperative, and we are committed to maintaining open lines of communication throughout the entire process. Your feedback and involvement are invaluable, so we encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your patience and support as we endeavor to bring a successful project to the Kaktovik community.



# ASTAC Staff Updates



We have welcomed 10 new members to the team and four of our staff were promoted to new roles. Each individual helps us further diversify ASTAS's range of skills and expertise. We extend our excitement and welcome the new staff and congratulate those who continue to advance on our team. Overall, we are grateful for our team and look forward to further improving our memberships experience.

Please Join Us in Welcoming:

Allen Passi, Village Representative  
Caitlin Perez, Product Coordinator  
Daisy Lembrecht, UTQ CES  
Emily Duncan, Accounting Associate  
Isabel Quimel, HR and Office Manager

Jyzyka Gage, ANC CES  
Laura Holman, Communications Specialist  
Randy Dobbs, North Slope Manager  
Seth Hess, QC and Revenue Assurance Specialist  
Steve Shelton, Combination Technician

Please Join Us in Congratulating:

Aaron Blooding, Sr. Combination Technician  
Ashlee Bobbitt, Sr. Customer Experience Manager  
Rebecca Sparks, Sr. Communications Manager  
Ricky Mowry, Sr., Combination Technician

To view any current openings with the cooperative, please visit [ASTAC.net/careers](https://ASTAC.net/careers) and apply today.

## Staff and Board Summer Picnic

ASTAC Board of Directors and staff gathered in Anchorage on a rainy evening for the annual summer picnic. Getting the team and board together every year gives everyone extra energy at the halfway mark and allows everyone an opportunity to connect. Discussions include current projects, favorite moments in service communities and what's in store to close out the year. We're grateful to have such a wonderful board and staff that are committed to providing stellar service to the North Slope.



# Annual Meeting Announcement – Remember to Vote!

ASTAC's 2023 Annual Meetings are being held during the week of October 2nd, and the team will be visiting every community. Members in Anaktuvuk Pass, Kaktovik, and Wainwright will be able to vote for Director Elections through SmartHub (online), request a mail-in paper ballot, or in-person at the community meetings. Voting closes September 25th, so be sure to get your votes in now. For full meeting and voting details, please visit [astac.net/annual-meetings](http://astac.net/annual-meetings).

We hope to see you at the meetings!

DATE	WEEKDAY	COMMUNITY	VENUE	TIME
OCTOBER 2	MONDAY	ANAKTUVUK PASS	NUNAMIUT SCHOOL	12 PM
OCTOBER 2	MONDAY	KAKTOVIK	COMMUNITY CENTER	6 PM
OCTOBER 3	TUESDAY	PRUDHOE BAY	SA-10 CONFERENCE ROOM	8 AM
OCTOBER 3	TUESDAY	NUIQSUT	NUIQSUT TRAPPER SCHOOL	12 PM
OCTOBER 3	TUESDAY	UTQIAGVIK	BARROW HIGH SCHOOL	6:30 PM
OCTOBER 4	WEDNESDAY	ATQASUK	MEADE RIVER SCHOOL	12 PM
OCTOBER 4	WEDNESDAY	WAINWRIGHT	ALAK SCHOOL	6 PM
OCTOBER 5	THURSDAY	POINT LAY	CULTURAL CENTER	12 PM
OCTOBER 5	THURSDAY	POINT HOPE	TIKIGAQ SCHOOL	5:30 PM

## IPAWS NATIONAL TESTING ALERTS

If your mobile phone is on and within range of an active cell tower, you will receive the national test. Wireless providers will transmit the national test for 30 minutes, but your phone should only receive it once.

**Test will take place at approximately  
10:20 a.m. AK on Wednesday, October 4, 2023.**



## Board of Directors

**Marietta Aiken**  
President, Utqiaġvik

**Trish Brower**  
Alt. Secretary, Prudhoe Bay

**Della Segevan**  
Director, Atqasuk

**Carla SimsKayotuk**  
Vice President, Kaktovik

**Sophie Tracy**  
Alt. Secretary, Point Lay

**John Long, Jr.**  
Director, Point Hope

**Isabel Nashookpuk**  
Secretary/Treasurer, Wainwright

**Olivia Cabinboy**  
Director, Nuiqsut

**Pearl Burris**  
Director, Anaktuvuk Pass