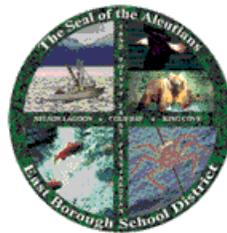
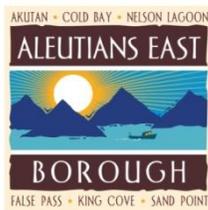


## In the Loop



Bringing the Aleutians East Borough, the AEB School District and Eastern Aleutian Tribes together by sharing common goals.

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## **King Cove Tribal Leaders Ask Interior Secretary Jewell to Reconsider Decision on Izembek Land Exchange and Road**

King Cove Tribal leaders and members sent a letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell yesterday, requesting that she reconsider her decision in which she rejected the land exchange and small gravel road corridor from the remote community to the nearby Cold Bay Airport. Today, members of Alaska's Congressional Delegation and Governor Sean Parnell sent similar letters to Jewell. Congress had enacted this land exchange in 2009 to secure the health, safety and quality of life for



King Cove, Alaska

Alaskans, including Alaska Natives who live in Cold Bay. In the Tribes' and Corporation's letter, members of the Agdaagux Tribe, the Belkofski Tribe and the King Cove (Native) Corporation called Jewell's decision "arbitrary and capricious" because it was based upon the Secretary's mistaken determination that there was a landing craft alternative to the road that met the "safe, reliable, and affordable" access criteria of the Purpose and Need Statement of the EIS. The Secretary's conclusion that such an alternative existed was based on faulty and unsubstantiated information provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS).



Interior Secretary Sally Jewell

The letter states that the tribal leaders "earnestly believe the Secretary would have reached a different decision had she known there is no alternative to the road that meets the safe, reliable and affordable Purpose and Need criteria of the EIS."

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service led Secretary Jewell to believe that there is a landing craft alternative to the road when that alternative doesn't exist," said Aleutians East Borough Mayor Stanley Mack. "That occurred after the

Fish and Wildlife Service read a Borough letter, written to the Corps of Engineers about a year ago. In that letter, the Borough, which has a Corps permit, committed only to try and develop a landing craft alternative. However, we learned soon afterward that neither landing craft nor any marine craft could provide safe, reliable and affordable transportation between King Cove and Cold Bay. The Service latched onto the landing craft concept and ran with it, by including it in the EIS. Secretary Jewell then based her finding largely on that information."

The letter points out that the USF&WS's landing craft alternative will not meet the "safe, reliable, and affordable" access criteria of the Purpose and Need Statement of the EIS because there is no docking or receiving facility for a landing craft or any marine vessel on the Cold Bay side, other than the existing Cold Bay dock. People and emergency vehicles cannot be unloaded safely and reliably, especially sick or injured patients being medevaced in harsh weather conditions. Additionally, a landing craft could not reach the northeast corner of Cold Bay in winter icing conditions and at low tides, and therefore, would not be a dependable option. The letter also mentions that a landing craft or any marine vessel is far more expensive for the Borough compared to the road alternative.

**To continue reading, click [here](#).**

# King Cove Tribal and Community Leaders Laud Senate Legislation to Construct Road to Cold Bay Airport



Senator Mark Begich

King Cove tribal and community leaders are praising the introduction of legislation earlier this week (Jan. 15, 2014) by Sen. Mark Begich to approve a land exchange and construction of a life-saving road corridor connecting the remote community to the neighboring all-weather Cold Bay Airport. This comes three weeks after Interior Secretary Sally Jewell rejected a similar proposal, passed by Congress and approved by the President in 2009. Jewell announced her decision two days before Christmas following an environmental impact statement (EIS). This bill, known as the *King Cove All-Weather Road Corridor Act*, amends the existing law, requiring the Interior Secretary to convey the federal land (206 acres) needed to construct the single-lane gravel road corridor in exchange for 56,000 acres from the State of Alaska and the King Cove (Native) Corporation. No further analysis by the federal government would be necessary.

“After hearing first-hand about the tragic consequences of critically ill people being transported through 12-foot seas to get medical care, their decision to put wildlife ahead of public safety was simply irresponsible,” said Sen. Begich said in a press release. “Even after visiting King Cove and being stranded in inclement weather themselves, DOI bureaucrats have failed to recognize Alaska’s unique needs.”



Part of the state land conveyance

“We are very grateful to Senator Begich, Senator Murkowski, Congressman Young and Governor Parnell for their continued commitment to fight for the people of King Cove,” said King Cove Mayor Henry Mack. “Protecting the lives of our elders, children and everyone else in our community so we have safe, reliable access to the Cold Bay Airport for health and quality-of-life reasons have always been at the heart of this matter. We don’t want to see any further loss of life or tragedy because of extreme weather conditions standing in the way of critically-needed health care.”

To continue reading, click [here](#).

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## Reclaiming Alaska

*By Doug Conboy, AEBSD Superintendent*

Last fall, on September 10<sup>th</sup>, I was privileged to sit in with a group of concerned citizens of Sand Point who had met to talk about a serious problem.



Sand Point, Alaska

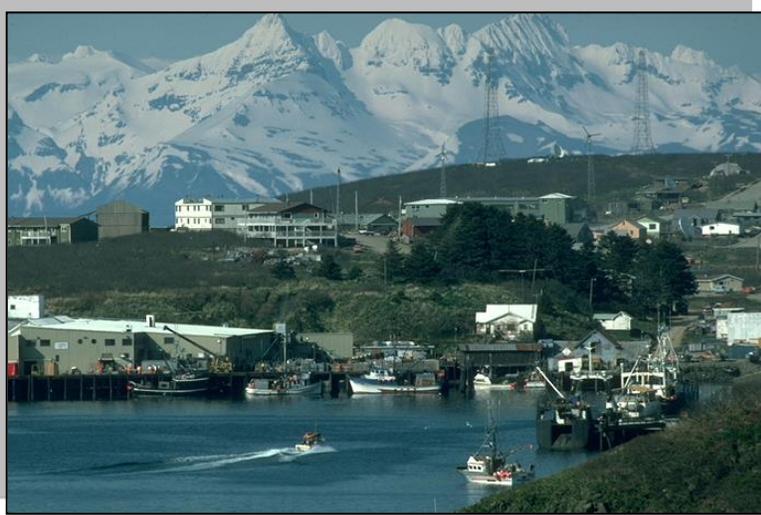
This problem was and is having a decidedly negative effect on the entire community.

In the discussion that evening, it was pointed out that Sand Point was not alone in this, and that according to law enforcement, most of the small communities in the State of Alaska have the same problem in varying degrees. We talked for over four hours that night. It took two and a half hours of the meeting to get to the point of stating the exact reason for our interest in meeting. The Community of Sand

Point has a significant drug problem!

Many folks reading this column may say, “I don’t do drugs” and that will be true, but none of us are UNAFFECTED by the drug culture that is growing in Alaska and in Sand Point. What is the cost of this cultural plague that is being visited upon us? It is difficult to put a monetary value on it, but it is surely a large number. However, the toll that is being taken on our most valuable resource, our human capital, is beyond computation. Many in our community lament the loss of initiative and willingness to work and productivity in our young folks. Captains of successful boats offer lucrative jobs to young people but end up putting them off the boats because of the ravages of the drugs that have taken over the lives of many in Sand Point. I have no first-hand experience or knowledge in this area, but I do listen. What I write here has been gathered from what I have been told in conversation with lifelong residents of Sand Point.

Last summer, when I was hired as the Superintendent of Schools for the Aleutians East Borough School District, I read up on Sand Point. Here is what I found:



Sand Point, AK

*“Sand Point is a prosperous community located on Popof Island in the Aleutians. It is home to a large commercial fishing fleet. The community has a vibrant economy based on the fishing industry.”*

How long will a description of Sand Point include descriptors like “Prosperous Community” and “Vibrant Economy” if we as a community remain inactive and let the drug dealers continue to ply their destructive trade, preying on the lives of the people here? How long can our young adults use the drugs before it starts to bury them from the myriad of ways that drug use can kill a person?

Last year was a very good year for the fishing fleet. In the days before the cancerous drug culture in Sand Point was established, what would be observed in the aftermath of a good summer’s fishing would be new vehicles, people building new homes or improving their existing ones. How many new houses have started up recently? How many new vehicles have been brought into the community? Few are seen, at least by my observation, and I am unaware of any new homes going up. Maybe I am mistaken.

I do know, from firsthand experience, that last summer, a known drug dealer was sent out of Sand Point by some committed citizens of the community. We all know that eliminating one individual is not going to stop the flood of destructive chemicals that are coming into this community. In order to make a difference, each resident has to stand up and say no to this movement. If the community of Sand Point will stand up together, this can be done. If we choose not to do this, what can we expect? More destruction and further decay as the hard-earned money



Local residents told an alleged drug dealer to leave Sand Point after he arrived on a plane in August 2013. Photo courtesy: Carmen Dushkin

from fishing leaves Sand Point in the pockets of the drug dealers. No improvements to the community due to lack of funds and a steady decline in the overall quality of life here. Many in Sand Point see this danger and are interested in making a stand for Sand Point.

Thomas Jefferson said, *“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for Good Men to do nothing.”* As a community, perhaps we have done nothing about this evil for too long.

It is time to reclaim our community and make Sand Point, in reality, equal to how it is described on the internet once again.

An event has been planned to kick off a community wide effort to change the dynamics of this town. We want to “Reclaim Alaska” starting with Sand Point!

## **RECLAIM ALASKA – SAND POINT**

### **Community Gathering**

January 24, 2014

1:00-3:00 PM Main Program

5:30 PM Community Potluck/BBQ (Bring side dish, appetizer, or dessert)

7:00PM Boys Basketball Game

Sand Point VS King Cove –Free Admission

All events will take place at the Sand Point School

Please mark your calendars and make it a priority to join us on January 24th at the Sand Point School to get started and then stay together as a community until this disease is cured in Sand Point.

# Andy Varner Takes the Helm as Sand Point's New Administrator

He is already a familiar face to the many Sand Point residents he will soon meet. For the past four years, he led SWAMC (Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference) as the organization's executive director. Now, Andy Varner is moving in a new direction, as he takes the helm as Sand Point's administrator.



Andy Varner, former SWAMC Executive Director, is Sand Point's new administrator.

"I got to know a lot of the people in the region, the Borough and from Sand Point when I worked with SWAMC," said Varner. "So moving into local government and working for one of the regional communities seemed like a natural fit."



The Robert E. Galovin Small Boat Harbor, prior to the start of the rehabilitation project.

rehabilitation project.

"It's going to be done in a couple of months, so that will be great for the community," he added.

Other projects on the horizon include starting work on resurfacing and paving of a few City roads.

"We're definitely going to try and see if we can get

Varner says he has enjoyed the regional perspective at SWAMC. However, being responsible for one community and helping to direct capital improvement projects in the City is very exciting to him. Some of the big projects he'll tackle include wrapping up work on Sand Point's small boat harbor



Varner expects the small boat harbor rehab project to reach completion in a couple of months.

that design done and get things mobilized,” Varner said. “We’re also pursuing funding to upgrade the City dock.”

Before joining the City of Sand Point, Varner spent eight years with SWAMC. Four of those years he served as executive director. Prior to taking on that position, he served as SWAMC’s economic development specialist.

Prior to his stint at SWAMC, Varner worked for the City of Kenai as an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer.

“I worked in City Hall as their economic development coordinator,” Varner said. “That’s what brought me to Alaska.”

Varner, born and raised in Windsor, Missouri, graduated from the University of Missouri. After graduation, he taught English in South Korea and Slovakia for three years. When he returned home, adventure still beckoned.

“So I thought, where’s adventure? Where’s an interesting part of the country? That ended up being Alaska,” he said.

He later met his wife in Alaska. Now he’s the father of a two year-old little girl and has a baby boy on the way.

“I grew up in cattle country, and now I’m in fish country,” Varner said. “That’s been a steep learning curve but one I’m trying to figure out every day.”

Since coming on board earlier this month, Varner has become acquainted with a myriad of issues involving the City.

“I’ve enjoyed learning about all the different issues,” he said. “Learning all the intricacies of the City and the different issues we’re involved with has been exciting. I hope I can continue the good work that my predecessor, Paul Day, did for 16 years.”

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## **Bobby Jo Kramer Joins City of Akutan Staff as Finance Manager**

When Bobby Jo Kramer saw a job opening with the City of Akutan as the finance manager, she jumped at the chance.



**Bobby Jo Kramer**



Akutan at sunrise.

“I thought, ‘Oh, I want to work for them!’” she said. “It just sounds so exciting.”

Kramer was able to visit Akutan several times years ago when she worked for APIA (Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association). At the time, she worked as the regional transportation planner and later became APIA’s economic development coordinator. When she visited the community, she was very impressed.

“It’s absolutely unique and beautiful,” Kramer said. “It’s isolated, but the people have worked to incorporate modern ways with native ways of life. They have sewer, water and electricity. The

City uses hydro power and is exploring putting geothermal power to use. However, they still have their native traditions and subsistence lifestyle.”

Kramer, originally from the Native Village of Pilot Point, worked as the finance manager for the Ugashik Traditional Village before accepting the same position with Akutan. She has also worked with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and with Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership, a non-profit.

Kramer came on board with the City of Akutan’s Anchorage staff on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. She’s hopeful she’ll have the opportunity to visit Akutan soon.

“That’s the exciting part about taking this job – to go there and visit the community and work with the staff in the City office.”



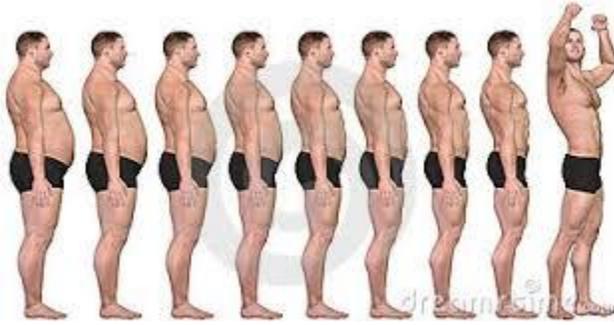
Akutan, AK

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## Cold Bay Residents Hope to Lose Big in Biggest Loser Contest

It’s that time of year when many people either live up to or break their New Year’s resolutions. Often, those resolutions are about losing weight and becoming fit. The City of Cold Bay is no

exception in that area, and the residents have no intention of breaking their resolutions. In fact, they're hoping to become Cold Bay's biggest loser.



"Anybody in Cold Way who wants to sign up can do so at any point," said organizer Candace Schaack.

Cold Bay's Biggest Loser contest was launched January 6<sup>th</sup> and will run through June 6<sup>th</sup>. There's a \$50 entrance fee that will go towards administrative costs such as stamps for letters soliciting donations for contest prizes. Currently two airlines have been contacted and have expressed interest in donating round trip tickets.

"They (the airlines) sounded pretty excited about what we're doing and hopefully will be willing to help out," Schaack added. So we'll probably know more within a couple of weeks.

In the meantime, enthusiasm about the contest is building. Twenty-one people signed up during the first week of the contest. The organizers and contestants also have a Facebook page.



"We go on there and post different motivational things or ideas for exercise and weight loss," Schaack added.

The contest also features monthly challenges, ranging from exercises, such as lunges, to dieting challenges.

"People are coming up with a lot of different ideas," Schaack said.



The weigh-ins occur every Tuesday at the health clinic until the contest ends. Already, people are seeing results.

"Everybody's really excited about it," she added.

Schaack is also taking part in the contest.

"I'm not really in it to lose weight, but I definitely want to work with my family to become healthier because we can definitely lead healthier lives", she said.

Schaack said she'd like to give a big thanks to Paige Kremer, Leticia Melendez and June Morgan for coming up with the idea to hold Cold Bay's Biggest Loser contest.

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## **Tribal Exemption from Affordable Care Act is Now Available**



For months, President Obama's Affordable Care Act has grabbed the headlines, as uninsured people across the country scrambled to get health insurance before the deadline. Those receiving care through Indian Health Service were unclear at first how the act would affect them. Now more information is available as well as applications for an

Alaska Native/American Indian Tribal Exemption. That can be obtained from your local EAT clinic or at [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov).

In order to qualify, you must fill out an application for all eligible Alaska Native head of household and children in the home. You must also include a copy of your tribal card, Certificate of Indian Blood or shareholder corporation card for each person applying. Those who do not need to apply are people who currently have Medicare, Medicaid, VA Benefits, Denali Kid Care and CHIP. Anyone who needs assistance can call Brenda Wilson at (907) 497-2311 or email her at [brendaw@eatribes.net](mailto:brendaw@eatribes.net).



### **Helpful Links:**

[The Affordable Care Act & You - Alaska Native Health Consortium](#)

[Application for Exemption for American Indians/Alaska Natives](#)

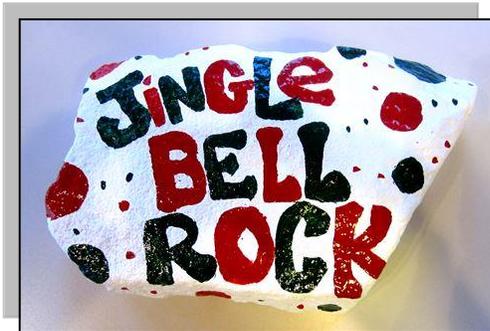
[Healthcare.gov](#)

[Dos and Don'ts - Protect Yourself - by the BBB](#)

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## Results from King Cove's Holiday Jingle Bell Rock House Lighting and Coloring Contests

*By Savannah Yatchmeneff*



Beginning in mid-December, the entire community of King Cove, both young and old, anxiously waited for the 3:00 p.m. Jingle Bell Rock Contest clue to be posted via Facebook, fax, and posted signs at the local stores and post office. Once the clue was posted, everyone was running around town by foot, four-wheeler, bicycle and car, checking everywhere they thought the rock was hiding, based on the clue. The first day from my office

window, I counted more than 40 people who checked the St. Herman's Russian Orthodox Church bell and the City's playground.

As each day passed and a new clue came out, the crowd searching for the Jingle Bell Rock grew! This was definitely a family event, with students enjoying their winter break. When Friday's clue came out with Gould's Store's name in it, everyone flocked to the downtown loop.

It looked like rush hour traffic in King Cove - people were everywhere! On Saturday when the beach front clue came out, the entire boardwalk and beachfront was covered with people searching. It looked like well over 100 residents.

People were out at all hours of the day! Rain or shine, wind or snow - people were dressed for the occasion with high hopes of being the lucky winner. Some people were out with their flashlights searching well into the night. The Jingle Bell Rock was eventually found early Sunday

afternoon, right before the 7th clue was



Residents search the beach in hopes of finding the Jingle Bell Rock. Photo by Savannah Yatchmeneff.

to be posted. This was definitely one of the longest searches we've had for the Jingle Bell Rock – lasting 7 days!

The Jingle Bell Rock Contest has definitely become a city-wide community tradition. Residents continue to say this is a holiday event their families look forward to and have so much fun doing! The City enjoys putting this event on. Next year we have high hopes of making the prize money even higher!

**The City's Annual *Jingle Bell Rock* Contest:**

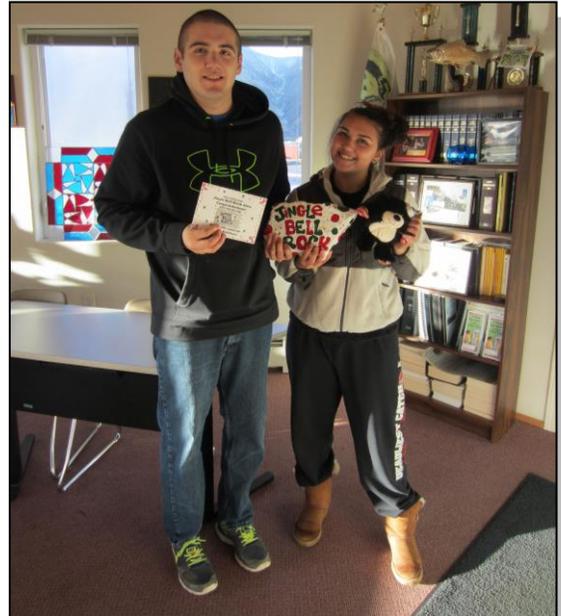
Started: December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Ended: December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013

Who found it: Miles & Shaelyn Walker (siblings)

Where: The Rock was hid underneath the newly remodeled boardwalk that runs along the town's beachfront.

Prize: \$400.00 cash donated by the City of King Cove



Siblings Miles and Shaelyn Walker won the City's annual Jingle Bell Rock Contest. Photo by Savannah Yatchmeneff.

**Information on other holiday contests in King Cove:**

**The City's *Deck The House Light* Contest:**

Started: December 2013

Ended: December 24<sup>th</sup> with judging on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Who Won: Steve Cochran and Branden & Sarah Curwen's family – City's policemen who live in a duplex building.

Prize: free electricity for the month of December and \$100.00 Cash.

Info: This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year the City had the light contest. Again, we intend to make this an annual tradition. It really



boosts the Christmas spirit throughout town – residents enjoy taking an evening car ride to look at all the lighted homes. Light bills tend to be higher in the December month, so the City wanted to give the winner free utilities for the month. To select the best decked out house, the selected judging panel drove through the community on the evening of December 23<sup>rd</sup> to cast their vote. The winners were announced Christmas Eve Day.

### **City Holiday Coloring Contest:**

Started: December 13, 2013

Ended: December 18<sup>th</sup>

Who Won Categories:

Congratulations to the winners of the City of King Cove Holiday Coloring Contest! The City Office is decorated with over 50 colored entries!

- Noah Samuelson – 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Madeline Newman – 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Tia Lewis – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade
- Mathew Tepper – Kindergarten on Down

Prize: \$ Cash Prize and Toy



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## **Got News?**

If you have news you'd like to share, please email [ltanis@aeboro.org](mailto:ltanis@aeboro.org) or call AEB Communications Manager Laura Tanis at (907) 274-7579.





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