

Human Resources Fuel Our Networks



By Jens Laipenieks
CEO & General Manager



The global labor market has been in turmoil for the past few years, and labor shortages have affected ASTAC on many levels. I have previously mentioned our network investments in Fiber and 4G LTE. These networks power our cooperative, but our employees fuel those networks and keep them running.

Without quality employees, our ability to manage and maintain our fiber optic and cellular networks becomes limited. The past year has been challenging, as shown in our call queue wait times and overall network performance. We are committed to getting better.

I am happy to report that we have successfully filled many of our vacancies in recent weeks. For the first time in years, we are 100% staffed in our resident village representatives, combination technician positions, and customer experience staff. These employees answer the phones, take your payments, and solve your problems, without whom we could not operate. Unlike the recent satellite provider offering service in our markets, ASTAC has real

customer experience specialists, not computerized chatbots, and hardworking village representatives and technicians physically on the North Slope. Supporting you, our members is so integral to ASTAC, it's the focus of our mission statement:

ASTAC Mission

Combining robust and affordable broadband with outstanding customer support, enabling all advanced telecommunications services for our members.

In 2023, we have a company-wide goal of improving your entire experience. Every way you interact with us will be reviewed and improved. We have plans to improve our inbound calling experience, voice features, and overall network quality. In the coming months, we will increase our broadband capacity and streamline our network design to ensure your service is the best it can be. In this same timeframe, we will strive to improve the affordability of our products, so your dollars will go further.

Our new website is up and running, which makes it easier for you to navigate, taking fewer clicks to get the information you seek. I encourage you to go to the new [ASTAC.net](https://www.astac.net) if you haven't had a chance yet. We are committed to getting better, for you... on all levels.

Technology Going Green

One major initiative here at ASTAC is our effort to go green in as many areas as possible. For example, we've moved to use less print products and began sharing things like newsletters, instructions, and billing notices electronically versus printing and mailing. More recently we launched online applications for both job openings and scholarships, eliminating the need to email, fax, or physically submit, which eases the process for users. Coming later this year we will also launch our first primarily electronic voting election, only printing election materials upon request.

Another phase of these efforts has also arrived, in the form of what used to be futuristic technology, the launch of embedded SIM cards or eSIMs. eSIM technology has several benefits that make it well-suited for use in our service communities. First and foremost, eSIMs allow for greater flexibility and convenience for users. Unlike traditional SIM cards, which require physical swapping and installation, eSIMs can be activated and configured remotely through software updates. This means that our members in the North Slope can easily switch between different plans or carriers without having to worry about physically swapping out SIM cards anymore.

More importantly, eSIMs have an environmentally friendly footprint. It reduces the need for physical SIM cards, which reduces the overall strain on waste management in our communities and decreases our technological footprint as a company. This has been a request of our membership; and respecting the land by reducing our footprint is essential to prolonging our work. Notably, eSIM technology provides a financial incentive by cutting back on inventory costs. With traditional SIM cards, we would need to purchase and manage large volumes of physical cards, which can be costly and time-consuming.

In conclusion, eSIM technology provides numerous advantages for our cooperative, from enhanced flexibility and convenience, a longer shelf life that is more environmentally friendly, to reduced costs and streamlined operations. These benefits make eSIMs a promising option for ASTAC's network and communities residing at the Top of The World. Check out the latest eSIM support devices today.

Support Across the Region

ASTAC is dedicated to supporting the communities we serve, and proud to have had the opportunity to lift up the Arctic Slope Community Foundation (ASCF) and the Arctic Slope Education Foundation (ASEF) through their respective fundraising events in December and February.

The ASCF's Casino Night fundraiser was a fantastic evening of fun and high energy. The team members who attended the event were thrilled to contribute to the foundation's efforts to support all communities in the region.

In February, the ASEF's Ivalu Gala was beautiful beyond words and an inspiring evening. From the tribute for Dr. Oliver Leavitt to the spectacularly curated fashion show, the talents of the North Slope were not in short supply. There is such joy in celebrating these foundations and supporting their continued work to make a positive impact on all our communities.



New Devices Released



After completing the cellular network conversion in 2022, we knew that the device releases this year would be exciting, but they have wildly surpassed expectations!

The Improved Features:
Brighter and Faster Display
Telephoto Cameras
More Modern Processors
Improved Battery Life
Emergency GPS-Location
Crash Detection
and So Much More



All new models are exceptional smartphones, with fantastic cameras, OLED screens, fast software and performance, and reliable battery life. The decision between them ultimately depends on what one values in a smartphone. Those who prioritize the best camera and battery life will likely prefer the newer Samsung models, while those who value a brighter display, unique safety features, and the option of a smaller phone size may prefer the competitor.

Ultimately, the forever increasing standards of quality, durability, and reliability of smartphones continues to surprise. ASTAC is here to offer its members the latest and greatest, no matter your lifestyle.



2023 Scholarship Application Opens



As a non-profit cooperative, it is imperative we invest in the education of North Slope Borough residents and support all development aspirations. The scholarship program is designed to help local students achieve their academic and career goals by providing financial assistance towards their education. By offering this program, we aim to empower our communities and foster the growth and development of future leaders in our region.

Through this program, we hope to contribute to the development of a highly skilled and educated workforce in the North Slope Borough. Open to all North Slope Borough residents that are accepted or currently enrolled in a post-secondary education institution, we encourage all to apply for the scholarship and take advantage of this opportunity to invest in themselves and their future.

Say tautugniaqmigikpiñ (goodbye) to paper applications and apply today with our new online e-file scholarship application. Visit ASTAC.net/scholarships for more information.

Haley Sielak
2021 and 2022
Scholarship Recipient



ASTAC WELCOMES...



Seven individuals join the ASTAC team and bring with them a diverse range of skills and experiences. With the onboarding of the new CES agents, we are officially fully staffed in our Customer Experience Department. We extend our commitment to providing a supportive and collaborative environment for our employees and are confident that the new hires will thrive in this culture. Overall, we are excited to have expanded our team with such talented and driven individuals, and look forward to further improving our memberships experience.

Please Join Us in Welcoming:

Cindy Baldwin, Project Manager
Jennifer Danner, UTQ CES
Lauren Paneda, Accounts Payable
Mary Hugo, UTQ CES

Nicole Vaitohi, ANC CES
Phillip Olson, ANC CES
Tyler Kirn, Project Support Specialist



2022 COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

North Slope Borough Senior Program
North Slope Sports Package
Barrow Dancers
NSBSD Battle Of The Books
Kiita Learning Community Student Council
Barrow Whalers Football

Arctic Slope Community Foundation
Point Hope Booster Club
Native Village of Atqasuk
Whaling Commission
Tikigaq Cultural Classes

Quyana Brian DeMarco

The board and executive team would like to thank Brian DeMarco for his years of service here at ASTAC. During his time, we transformed our network and grew our fiber footprint, drastically improving the connection to the North Slope. His tenacity and fearless charge kept us moving forward, over rivers, through mountains, and overcoming the fierce arctic weather. We went from one fiber connected community to eight as he led our ops team. Wishing him the best in his next chapter and great success with the Blackfeet Nation in Montana.

Quyanaqpuk, Brian!





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Today**

CURRENT JOB OPENINGS

Exchange Manager – Utqiagvik or Prudhoe Bay

Combination Technician - East Side Communities

Field Engineer, Wireless Networks - Anchorage



NORTH SLOPE
BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

— Striving For Excellence —

**STUDENT REMOTE
CONNECTION:
QR SIGN UP**



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