



## Tanana Chiefs Conference Awarded \$35 Million Grant to Bring Broadband to Rural Alaska Villages

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*With service provider Alaska Communications, this project will expand fiber service in the interior*

FAIRBANKS, Alaska--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 19, 2023-- This week, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) was awarded a \$35 million grant to install affordable, reliable high-speed broadband in three underserved TCC communities. The 100% fiber-based network will be installed in the villages of Venetie, Chalkyitsik and Circle.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230919466784/en/>

The project is part of the Alaska FiberOptic Project, which is a larger collaboration between Calista Corporation; Doyon, Limited; Gana-A 'Yoo Limited; Tanana Chiefs Conference; and Alaska Communications to connect more than 20 communities in the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions, beginning in Fairbanks and extending to the Bering Sea Coast. The terrestrial fiber network will begin in Fort Yukon and extend to Venetie. Submarine fiber cable will be placed in the Yukon River to connect Fort Yukon and Circle. Residents and businesses will receive Gigabit speeds through a fiber-to-the-home connection.

"The lack of reliable connectivity perpetuates disparities in education, healthcare, economic opportunities and social well-being for our people," said Brian Ridley, Chief and Chairman, Tanana Chiefs Conference. "We're working diligently with our Native Corporation partners, the Alaska Delegation, government entities and Alaska Communications to remedy market conditions that have left our Alaska Native Villages on the wrong side of the digital divide. Mahsi' Choo, to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Biden-Harris Administration for this profound opportunity."

The five companies recognize that access to high-speed internet puts access to resources in the hands of rural Alaskans. The Alaska Fiber-Optic Project will bridge the digital divide for many rural communities, providing access to virtual meetings, online classes, telehealth and online jobs without having to compromise their village way of life.

"Keeping the people of rural America connected with reliable, high-speed internet, brings new and innovative ideas to the rest of our country," said USDA Rural Development Deputy Under Secretary Farah Ahmad. "Thanks to President Biden's Investing in America agenda, we're making sure that people in rural communities across Alaska have access to high-speed internet so they can connect with their loved ones and tap into economic opportunities. As this Administration grows the economy from the bottom up and middle out, we're delivering historic funding to ensure rural America remains a great place to live, work and raise a family."

The collaborative work of Tribes, Tribal nonprofit organizations, government and telecommunications entities can be credited for the pending upgrade in access to digital communications in these communities.

"USDA Rural Development works alongside Tribes, municipalities, and telecommunication companies to connect remote and rural communities to high-speed internet," said USDA Rural Development State Director for Alaska Julia Hnilicka. "I am deeply proud of the partnerships created through USDA's ReConnect program and humbled by the passion Alaskans have for working together toward a common goal. Alaskans deserve affordable, reliable high-speed internet, not only for students to learn and thrive, but also for patients to access medical care. This investment is just one example of how the Biden-Harris Administration's unprecedented push for equity is providing rural Alaskans with opportunities."

Connecting all communities across the United States to high-speed internet is a central part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda to rebuild the economy by rebuilding our nation's infrastructure. This agenda is driving more than \$500 billion in private-sector manufacturing investments, rebuilding America's infrastructure, lowering costs and creating good-paying jobs.

Alaska Communications will build, operate, and maintain the network and service.

"We're honored to expand our work with Tanana Chiefs Conference to provide the technical expertise and experience building, operating and maintaining critical broadband infrastructure," said Kathleen Redmond, Vice President Strategy and Operations, Alaska Communications. "It's exciting to think about the opportunities ahead for the residents of Venetie, Chalkyitsik and Circle."

### **Tanana Chiefs Conference**

Tanana Chiefs Conference is an Alaska Native non-profit corporation that works toward meeting the health and social service needs of the Alaska Native people living within the 235,000 square mile region in Interior Alaska. TCC was formally founded in 1962 and emerged out of the long-standing tradition of Interior tribes working together to advocate for their communities. For more information visit [www.tananachiefs.org](http://www.tananachiefs.org).

### **Alaska Communications**

Alaska Communications, a subsidiary of ATN International, Inc. (NASDAQ: ATNI), is the leading provider of advanced broadband and managed IT services for businesses and consumers in Alaska. The company operates a highly reliable, advanced statewide data network with the latest

technology and the most diverse undersea fiber optic system connecting Alaska to the contiguous U.S. For more information, visit [www.AlaskaCommunications.com](http://www.AlaskaCommunications.com).

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Tanana Chiefs Conference

Taryn Calhoun, public relations specialist

(907) 452-8251 ext.3570

[taryn.calhoun@tananachiefs.org](mailto:taryn.calhoun@tananachiefs.org)

Alaska Communications

Heather Marron, manager, corporate communications

907-564-1326

[heather.marron@acsalaska.com](mailto:heather.marron@acsalaska.com)

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