

ALASKA NATIVE, 95, STAYS IN HER OWN HOME THANKS TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRIBAL SUPPORT



NEW SHOWER AND FLOOR INSTALLED WITH RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS.



ELLEN DEMIT ON THE PORCH OF HER HOME.

Outline Of Need: Ellen Demit, a 95 year old Alaska Native lives alone, in her own home in the community of Tok on the Alaska Highway. Ms. Demit is blind, has other health issues and was no longer able to get into or out of the standard-size bathtub in her home.

How Rural Development Helped: USDA Rural Development provided Ms. Demit with a \$7,500 home improvement grant. These grants, available to income-eligible homeowners age 62 or older, are made available to address life, health or safety concerns in an applicant's primary residence. Using the funds provided, the Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA) installed a walk-in shower, insulated the bathroom floor, installed new flooring and insulated the water pipes. The IRHA donated all labor and materials not covered by the USDA Rural Development grant.

The Results: Ms. Demit is able to stay in her own home and can use the shower installed by IRHA with funds provided by USDA Rural Development. She has family nearby and is visited by her grandson on a daily basis but is proudly self-sufficient. “Helping Alaskans help themselves makes my job worthwhile,” said Fairbanks Rural Development Loan Specialist Kim Wood. “Ms. Demit told me she is no longer concerned that she’ll slip in the bathroom. She feels better able to care for herself. This Rural Development program, combined with the efforts of the IRHA, really improved the quality of daily life for the grant recipient.”

In fiscal year 2008, USDA Rural Development provided 30 home improvement grants to income eligible seniors living in rural Alaska, and provided 11 home improvement loans at 1% interest to income eligible Alaskan homeowners. More information about the program is available on the USDA Rural Development web site.

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