

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING IMPROVES SANITATION IN THE WESTERN ALASKA COMMUNITY OF QUINHAGAK



WATER SYSTEM: The new Quinhagak water tank and utility building, constructed with funds provided by USDA Rural Development through the efforts of Alaska's Congressional Delegation. (Photo courtesy of Tim Krug, USDA Rural Development)

OUTLINE OF NEED: The Western Alaska community of Quinhagak, located Southwest of Bethel on Kuskokwim Bay, has a population of about 550. Most of the residents are Yup'ik (Alaska Natives). Most of the homes in the community do not have indoor plumbing.

HOW RURAL DEVELOPMENT HELPED: USDA Rural Development provides utility program funding to Alaska's Village Safe Water Program. Through the efforts of Alaska's Congressional Delegation, Rural Development has provided up to \$30 million a year to the State of Alaska for this program. Starting in 2002, Rural Development funded a phased \$3.5 million water quality improvement project in Quinhagak. Funds were used to design and construct a sewer pipeline to the washeteria (where many community residents wash their clothes and shower). Additionally, a water storage tank, capable of holding up to a quarter million gallons, was built, along with a utility building housing boilers, pumps and water and sewer equipment.

A dozen homes have been connected to the new water and sewer system, with plans to connect about 98 additional homes.

THE RESULTS:

Residents of a rural Alaska community are being connected to a safe, reliable water system which will greatly improve their quality of life. Instead of hauling water to their homes, community residents will be able to receive water service in their houses, improving sanitation in the community. “This program would not be possible without the support of Alaska’ Congressional delegation,” said Acting Rural Development State Director Chad Padgett. “The Village Safe Water Program has been supported by Federal appropriations for many years and it is making a real difference in the quality of rural life. A safe, reliable water supply is a basic human need and this program provides this service to rural Alaskans.” said Padgett.