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History of the Development
of the Response to the
Alcohol-Related Impact of the
Alaskan Pipeline Construction



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EXCERPTS

Dedicated to
George Ed. Smith
Chairman of the Board
Board of Directors
of A.L.M.E.A.
and to the many
who helped us.



History of the Development of the Response to the Alcohol-Related Impact of the Alaskan Pipeline Construction

Early in the planning effort undertaken to deal with the impact on Alaska of the pipeline construction, Senator Stevens requested the Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) to examine what preventive actions might be undertaken to lessen the problems that could stem from alcohol use, particularly of the nature that would be common to the boom atmosphere and to the immigrating labor force composed primarily of highly paid construction workers. The effect of sudden wealth to some groups of Native Alaskans would potentially pose other alcohol-related problems that warranted consideration in terms of prevention.

A list of carefully considered prevention strategies was drawn up by the Institute and submitted in mid-1973 to the Governor as well as to key officers of the oil companies composing the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The response was less than enthusiastic. In fact, the reaction of one major oil company's medical director was paternalistic at the best, hostile at the worst. There was no acknowledgment from the State. One NIAAA staff person commented after visiting Alaska and attempting to promote these prevention strategies that he had never seen such whole-hearted concern for the welfare of the physical environment and less concern for the welfare of the humans operating within it.

As an additional strategy, NIAAA attempted to suggest to both labor and management that the union contracts being negotiated should allow for controlled use of beverage alcohol at line camps as a means of discouraging bootlegging (and the more dangerous surreptitious drinking) that would result from a "dry-camps" agreement. This effort also failed. (Interestingly, a year later, NIAAA was asked by one of the prime contractors for strategies that would serve to reduce the rampant bootlegging on the line.)

In view of the lack of interest in, or appreciation of, the need for a preventive effort to counter the effect of alcohol use as an impact factor, NIAAA planned a set-aside of funds for FY 1975 with the idea of stimulating the State into submitting an application that would utilize these funds to deal alternatively with the foreseen consequences of this impact factor. This was seen as potential support to the State Office of Alcoholism which, from its own low level in the State bureaucracy, had attempted to call attention to the potential need for vastly increased

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alcoholism services. The inability to provide hard data and a tight pipeline impact budget frustrated this attempt.

In early 1974, the State Office was informed of the planned set-aside and urged to begin the development of an application that would address the rapidly developing service need comprehensively. Two initial applications submitted by the State were unacceptable to the extent that they were kept back from review so as not to jeopardize or impede speed in the effort by having to overcome a formal denial of funds. As a result of further NIAAA urging, in May of 1974 the Office began a series of grass roots meetings and conferences in urban centers and corridor communities to assess impact problems more accurately and to define needs, priorities, and possible solutions. These meetings were culminated in September with a State-wide conference held in Alaska with NIAAA funding support and participated in by the Governor, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism, community representatives, the National Council on Alcoholism-Alaska Region, the Alaskan Native Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Alaska Labor and Management Employee Affairs, Inc., the University of Alaska Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, the Department of Law, Department of Public Safety, Department of Community and Regional Affairs, and the Alaskan Federation of Natives.

At about this time the Alaska Labor and Management Employee Affairs, Inc. submitted a proposal to NIAAA asking that they be considered as the occupational program focus for the pipeline construction labor force. Due to the method whereby this proposal was submitted, it was not perceived as, nor administratively handled as, a formal grant application. Nonetheless, it pointed up the availability and appropriateness of this organization as a component through sub-contract of the comprehensive activity for which the State would be seeking grant support from NIAAA, and the State was urged to consider this fact in the preparation of its application.

After a series of further meetings held at NIAAA's suggestion under the auspices of the Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism and attended by a consultant furnished by NIAAA, the State submitted its third application around the 1st of October. Staff review resulted in certain amendments agreed to by the State by telephone communication, and the grant was accepted for review on October 18 in the amount of \$600,000.

Due to the proposed start date of January 1, 1975, and the critical need, NIAAA gave the application an out-of-the-ordinary review. Had the need been any less critical, approval would have been withheld, but in consideration of the unusual circumstances, approval was

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given subject to 19 conditions (a record in the history of NIAAA reviews up to that time) all of which were met within the time frame permitted. One unusual requirement was that the State hire two additional consultants to be employed directly for the purposes of the grant. For this, an additional \$50,000 was allowed, a review action that has remained unique in NIAAA history.

The purpose of the grant was to bring about prevention and treatment efforts to be directed toward impact-related problems in pipeline corridor communities and urban centers to which people and problems would gravitate. The goal of the project was the amelioration of problems related to alcohol abuse and alcoholism attendant on the pipeline construction, in particular the extension of care to those individuals (pipeline personnel and corridor community residents) with impact related alcohol problems.

The projects had four main objectives:

- (1) To implement emergency impact programming in critical pipeline corridor areas;
- (2) To strengthen the critical intake referral facilities in the urban centers of Anchorage and Fairbanks;
- (3) To expand and develop by contract existing occupational alcoholism programs underway by the Alaska Labor and Management Employee Affairs, Inc. (ALMEA) so as to cope with the scale of effort required to provide direct services to 15,000 camp workers and an estimated 30,000 support service, management, and technical personnel;
- (4) To coordinate the impact program with key existing alcoholism programs and appropriate state agencies through a Pipeline Impact Coordinator with the State Office of Alcoholism.

Of these objectives, one of the most significant was the task assigned to ALMEA under contract. Up to that time, no occupational program had been undertaken for an employee work force of such a size. Even since that time, no occupational program has been undertaken in an organized work force of this size made up of such a large number of separate companies (Alyeska and its many sub-contractors): distributed over such a wide geographical area; and an area of such geographical, meteorological, communication, and transportation extremes; and, further, relatively remote even in its largest urban center from well established treatment resources.

Lastly, the very nature of this work force, the environment in which it was deployed, and the nature of the work it performed placed it at a high level of risk to alcohol-related problems. There was serious doubt at both the Federal and State level that ALMEA was equal to this challenge.

The following is a brief outline of what Alaska Labor and Management Affairs, Inc. (ALMEA) did in regard to the Alyeska Pipeline Service Project.

Ongoing attempts and outreach had been successfully established through communication with every camp and pump station along the pipeline with pipeline personnel on a one-to-one basis as well as educational literature.

ALMEA's program was instituted by labor and management as a broad approach to industrial alcoholism including drug abuse and other employee problems. Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., contractors and labor unions are in total agreement that alcoholism and alcohol abuse is a major problem in Alaskan Industry.

ALMEA was founded by the Alaska Chapter for the Associated General Contractors, Inc., the statewide Teamsters Local No. 959, and the Western Council which exercises jurisdiction over all of Alaska's AFL-CIO unions.

ALMEA is the first and only industrial alcoholism program for the State of Alaska and the Alyeska Pipeline Service Project. ALMEA has "Policy on the Illness of Alcoholism" statements with the following unions, contractors and agencies:

- a) Alaska Chapter, Associated General Contractors.
- b) Alaska Federation of Natives
- c) Teamsters Local No. 959.
- d) Community Enterprise Development Corp.
- e) Alaska Gas & Service Co.
- f) Anchorage Central Labor Council.
- g) Western Alaska Building & Construction Trades
- h) Alaska Federation of Labor.
- i) Culinary Workers Union
- j) Paving Products, Inc. (Contractor)
- k) O.L.A. & Sons, Inc. (Contractor)
- l) Whitney Brothers Plumbing & Heating (Sub-contractors)
- m) Resource Associates of Alaska.
- n) C.J.M. Construction, Inc.
- o) Alaska Public Employees Association.
- p) Municipality of Anchorage, Health Department.
- q) Salvation Army Comprehensive Alcohol Program.
- r) Northern Alaska Health Resources Association.
- s) Alaska Hospital and Medical Center, Inc.

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. designated ALMEA as the appropriate organization to coordinate programs relating to occupational alcoholism in the Trans Alaska Pipeline Construction Project. See attachment of Letter from E. L. Patton.

ALMEA's on-going objective is to mobilize managers, supervisors, safety personnel, foreman, job stewards, business agents, dispatchers, medics, native

and non-native camp and non-camp counselors, as well as fellow workers in a cooperative effort in early identification and referral of personnel with early symptoms of alcoholism or related problems which interfere with job performance. ALMEA has continuing cooperation and referrals from labor, management and other office personnel.

If medical treatment is not indicated, an alcoholism program is recommended by the Occupational Alcoholism Specialist with the concurrence of the employee's immediate supervisors in labor and management.

If medical treatment is indicated, the Occupational Alcoholism Specialist gives immediate assistance in reaching the proper physicians and facilities.

ALMEA's specific objectives are:

1) Prevention through early identification. The work area is the most successful place to carry this out.

ALMEA's Occupational Alcoholism Specialists hold training sessions with the field medical technicians, native counselors, shop stewards, foreman, supervisors, camp managers, safety personnel and middle management personnel at the camp sites along the pipeline.

ALMEA has shown alcoholism education films at different pipeline camps. The weekly safety and job steward meetings have assisted in early identification. These work site meetings have been a good place for communication of ideas and distribution of prevention materials to the workers. Occupational Alcoholism literature has been posted at these sites as well as information on meetings.

2) Individual contact and counseling: The initial contact can usually be made by the supervisor during working hours as the problem with work deterioration becomes evident. The supervisor then contacts ALMEA or refers the employee to contact ALMEA. After ALMEA's contact with the employee, ALMEA in turn directs the individual to a suitable program. It can be a long or short range program, depending on specific needs.

Individual counseling and group meetings will take place in the camps and the four ALMEA offices in Fairbanks, Glennallen, Valdez and Anchorage. Referral will often be a follow-up to these activities, when a worker goes on R & R or is transferred to another camp. When the employee is removed from a camp because of alcohol abuse or alcoholism, referral will be made to an agency in the area to which he is taken. If no agency is available in that area, evacuation will be utilized to transfer the person to an area where help is available.

3) Education and training is extended to all industrial and occupational personnel along the Pipeline through the two indoctrination centers in Anchorage and Fairbanks. All pipeline personnel must go through these

centers before going onto the pipeline camps or pump stations work sites. The purpose and services of the ALMEA program is explained to workers going through these centers. Posters, brochures, and listing of ALMEA contact and branch offices are also provided to all employees passing through these centers.

Meetings led by the ALMEA Occupational Specialist or client contacts of ALMEA who are in the site as workers, are important in prevention because they inform workers regarding alcoholism education through individual contact, films, etc.

4) Referrals to ALMEA Occupational Alcoholism Specialists are held on an individual basis with personal attention to each client. Individual counseling is used to help the client recognize symptoms for what they are, face up to the realities of their drinking, drug or other problem affecting job performance, and realize the jeopardy of their security and health if they do not accept treatment or referral.

Although ALMEA is not formally affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous or any AA group, ALMEA actively encourages recovering clients and former clients to attend AA meetings. Recovered alcoholics (all former clients) have established AA meetings in many camps. Union dispatchers are kept currently informed on where AA meetings are being held so they can keep workers informed when they dispatch them from the union halls.

ALMEA cooperates with and utilizes the services of native counselors on the pipeline, as well as other public or private agencies dealing with alcoholism or drug abuse.

ALMEA's follow up is largely an effective transfer of the client to an appropriate service agency, keeping track of the client while in that agency, keeping track of the client and noting disposition when released. ALMEA assists the individual in getting back into his job. This clearance is usually obtained when the client is referred to ALMEA.

Former clients are encouraged to communicate with ALMEA's offices when they are back on the job and to continue with whatever program they were referred, if possible. Every effort is made to pair-up a new client with a former client, if possible, for mutual support. Newly dispatched clients or former clients are informed if an ALMEA contact or AA contact is stationed at his future workplace. Follow-up does require on going work and communication to keep track of each client and to be certain that he gets the assistance he/she needs.

Anyone working, eligible or able to work, covering all occupations — union — non-union — management — anyone referred to ALMEA is extended help at no charge to the client or employer.

ALMEA will continue to provide public information concerning our program. We have frequent articles in the

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. newspaper CAMP-FOLLOWER. New articles will also appear in the Associated General Contractors, Alaska Chapter BULLETIN, the local newspapers and construction magazines.

Brochures and newsletters are mailed to interested persons. Educational material and brochures are distributed through the orientation centers of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

ALMEA's Board of Directors consists of the following people:

President, George Ed. Smith. A 34 year Alaskan and industrial management figure. Since 1968 has been General Manager, Alaska Chapter Associated General Contractors of America, Inc. (AGC). Also management member Trustee on 12 joint union and management trusts. Member of the Salvation Army Advisory Board and a 25 year member of the Western District Boy Scouts Council. On the Board of Directors of the Alaska Plan Policy Board (EEO) and the Apprentice Outreach Program.

Vice President, Jesse Carr. A 30 year Alaskan leader of organized labor and Secretary-Treasurer of the Teamsters Local No. 959. Teamsters No. 959 has a membership of approximately 25,000 throughout the State. Carr is also a Trustee of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Secretary-Treasurer, J. J. "Pat" O'Malley. A 25 year central figure in Alaskan organized labor, past President of Roofers Local No. 190, and past President of the Western Council of Building and Construction Trade Unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Currently the Area Representative of the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Studio Club (a halfway house).

Trustee, The Honorable C. J. Occhipinti. A 36 year Alaskan is the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in the Third Judicial District of Alaska. His sincere concern with alcoholism has been reflected during his long tenure on the legal bench.

Trustee, B. Gil Johnson. An attorney-at-law with the firm of Johnson, Christenson & Shamberg. He is a 26 year Alaskan and former Commissioner of Labor for the State of Alaska.

Member, Father Norman Elliott. A 17 year Alaskan is actively concerned with the problems of alcoholism in Alaska. He is Rector of the All Saints Episcopal Church in Anchorage.

is then well into winning total recovery. A physician knowledgeable in alcoholism and nutrition is the best judge of what an alcoholic should or should not take and, of course, should always be consulted before taking ANY drugs.

Tom Keenan came to Alaska in 1964. He was 21 and looking for adventure and big money. He worked from one job to the next, and eventually got into fishing. "I took up the typical pastime — drinking!" He found that while he was out on the fishing grounds he could stay straight and only blew it when he got into town and local bars. Within a period of time, he was drinking for drinking's sake and not for any social or congenial reasons.

Then, after a king crab season, he realized that "there's gotta be something better than this," and decided to investigate what was around for a practicing alcoholic who really wanted to get off the sauce. He was thirty-one when he finally stopped.

"In 1973 I got involved with the New Start Center in Anchorage (an outreach program for returning offenders) and I felt good about myself and wanted to share my experience with others. I went to work as a laborer at Glenallen and then Valdez, and in 1975 I accepted a job as occupational specialist with A.L.M.E.A."

"It's been the greatest thing that has happened to me — outside of getting sober. First time I started a job and finished it. Even through the frustration, I was able to remain sober and gave of myself. It was interesting to realize that I did have some skills and knowledge and didn't have to be intimidated by titles. I had something to contribute as well as to learn."

Keenan's frustrations were many. He talked with labor and management, chaplains, and local citizens. He established communication for a recovery system. "A lot of people didn't take the effort really seriously. After all, for them the pipeline was just another job. I was frustrated."

Riding the camp bus proved to be an experience for Keenan in alcohol and drug abuse. "Some of the people on the pipe were okay, but some were really sick. Alcohol or drug abuse is a touchy subject with a lot of people: moralizing and mental health get all mixed up in people's feelings, plus the fact that they just don't want to get involved. They figure, "I drink myself, so why should I interfere!" "Lots of ignorance — even among educated people — as to what alcohol really is. It's socially acceptable and in Alaska part of our tradition is to leave the other guy alone."

For Keenan, drawing a paycheck was not enough. "It wasn't easy getting a good response from the Native

Counselors. Sometimes they'd refer and sometimes they wouldn't."

In the two-and-a-half years that Keenan was with the program, he worked closely with the community of Valdez in developing their Valdez Council program and getting DWI referral systems established within the court in Valdez.

"Don told me to go to Valdez and get it together, and the way to learn about a project is to do it. Don has always been strong on trust and he backs his people. He wasn't always flying to Valdez and looking over my shoulder. He left the footwork and leg work to me and took over the paperwork headaches."

Keenan regrets that the referral systems didn't work as successfully as they should have. "The people in Valdez didn't want to admit that they had a problem."

The Alaska Teamster March issue quoted Ryder in crediting Jesse Carr, Ed Smith, Pat O'Malley and Senator Ted Stevens as the "prime movers" in establishing the present program. Ryder emphasized the fact that "there are a lot of young people on that pipeline, looking to make a stake for the future. If we can be of help to them and others, we're doing our job!" Ryder's personal interest in working with the younger alcohol abuser was evident from his first involvement with A.L.M.E.A. "...the stigma of having a drug related problem is less today than it was a few years ago, and with continued public education it will be much less in time to come..."

There was no doubt that the work did exist. The first three months of 1976 matched the entire number of clients in 1975 (498 clients) and showed no sign of slackening off.

Alyeska did negotiate for office and living space in the various communities and allowed A.L.M.E.A. to use such accommodations. These in-kind services took place in Valdez and Glennallen specifically with Alyeska furnishing space outside the campsite itself.

Once again, Will Foster directed Ryder's attention to the need for supportive evidence in data form to indicate that he was doing the kind of good job that all connected with the project actively said he did. In his letter, Foster suggested the necessity of gathering the best data possible to support the need for continuation after the federal funding runs out. Especially important, he commented, in light of the value placed on the services offered. Once again, the criticism that Alaska labor/management was well able to afford to pay for its own help was brought forward by Foster as one which he had had to justify to other worthy groups throughout the State.

The day to day work of dealing with workers along the pipeline continued.

Although the pipeline was at its peak performance, the final stage of the construction would begin in 1977

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employed A.L.M.E.A. Clients paid in taxes that was used by the A.L.M.E.A. program for assisting these clients.

97.12%

Represents the percentage of the Federal Tax monies paid by the A.L.M.E.A. clients that was used by the Federal Government for other than the A.L.M.E.A. Program.

Conclusion

Will Foster of NIAAA stated "A.L.M.E.A. did do the job in spite of all obstacles. No other Occupational Program in the United States has come close to what A.L.M.E.A. accomplished during the pipeline impact."

According to Ryder, "Will Foster was a tough taskmaster who definitely knew what he was doing; without his help and direction the State of Alaska and A.L.M.E.A. would not have been able to cope with all of the problems. We all certainly thank him for being a part of the battle."

Ryder also states that "In the six years of A.L.M.E.A.'s operation, not a single official from NIAAA Occupational Branch ever visited Alaska or the pipeline construction with the exception of Dr. Noble, who was Director of NIAAA at the time. The Occupational Branch could have learned a great deal from this operation to help other Occupational programs in the rest of the country."

George Mundell and Paul Post were very prompt in returning phone calls and letters from the State Office of Alcoholism. A.L.M.E.A. has been in business for 6 years and has the distinction of being audited by the State each of those 6 years; no other program can top that record. All crank accusations and anonymous letters pertaining to the accountability of A.L.M.E.A.'s program have proven to be just that, cranks.

Virginia Blanchard, while Chief Auditor of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse for the State of Alaska, extended the services of her office and herself personally beyond the call of duty in helping the many programs throughout the State. Though retired now, Virginia is still active in programs and willing to help at any time.

The Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism, which has a tough task determining which programs are reaching the alcoholic that needs help and the funding decisions it is responsible for, have been very fair with A.L.M.E.A. Extra thanks is extended to Bob Winslow and Dr. Stanley Austin, members of that body, for their

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knowledge and keeping up on what is going on in the alcoholism field.

Don Ryder feels the success of the program was due to the many volunteers who helped us, our recovering clients who in turn helped others, a good working Board of Directors, a staff who stayed with us through the whole impact, helping other programs and they in turn helping us. In conclusion, Don Ryder expresses thanks to all who have helped us to help others in need.



Don Ryder, Executive Director
Alaska Labor & Management Employees Affairs, Inc.