A Legacy of Sharing
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Executive Summary

This report is a summary of Native corporations’ progress and their contributions to the state, covering economic growth, employment, and philanthropy. Highlights of the 2001 combined findings for the 13 Regional and 30 Village Corporations surveyed include the following:

- Revenue of $2.9 billion and assets of $2.9 billion
- $52.1 million in dividends and $434 million in payroll (within Alaska)
- Statewide employment of 13,062
- Alaska Native employment of 3,122
- $9.3 million donated to charitable organizations and $4.1 million distributed for scholarships to 2,821 recipients.

Introduction

Corporations selected for this report include the 12 Regional Corporations within Alaska, the 13th Regional Corporation, and 30 Village Corporations that provided data for the report.

The regional corporations include:

Ahtna, Inc.
The Aleut Corporation
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
Bering Straits Native Corporation
Bristol Bay Native Corporation
Calista Corporation
Chugach Alaska Corporation
CIRI
Doyon, Limited
Koniag, Inc.
NANA Regional Corporation, Inc.
Sealaska Corporation
13th Regional Corporation (out of state)
The 30 village corporations include:

Akutan Corporation (Akutan)
Baan-O-Yeel-Kon Corporation (Rampart)
Bethel Native Corporation (Bethel)
Choggiung, Limited (Dillingham, Ekuk and Portage Creek)
Cully Corporation (Point Lay)
Deloy Ges, Inc. (Anvik)
Dinyee Corporation (Stevens Village)
Gana-A’-Yoo, Limited (Galena, Kaltag, Koyukuk and Nulato)
Goldbelt, Inc. (Juneau)*
Gwitchyaa Zhee Corporation (Fort Yukon)
Huna Totem Corporation (Hoonah)
Kenai Natives Association, Inc. (Kenai)*
Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation (Kotzebue)
Kootznoolwoow, Inc. (Angoon)
K’oyit’ots’ina, Limited
(Alatna, Allakaket, Hughes, Huslia)
Kuiksarak, Inc. (Goodnews Bay)
Kuskokwim Corporation, The
(Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Crooked Creek, Georgetown, Lower Kalskag, Napaimute, Red Devil, Sleetmute, Stony River, Upper Kalskag)
Kwethluk, Inc. (Kwethluk)
MTNT, Ltd. (McGrath, Nikolai, Takotna, Telida)
Napakiak Corp. (Napakiak)
Nelson Lagoon Corp. (Nelson Lagoon)
Nerlikmute Native Corporation (Andreafski)
Northway Natives, Inc. (Northway)
Paug-vik Inc. Limited (Naknek)
Pedro Bay Corp. (Pedro Bay)
Sea Lion Corporation (Hooper Bay)
Shee Atika, Inc. (Sitka)*
Shumagin Corp. (Sand Point)
Toghotthele Corp. (Nenana)
Tozitna, Limited (Tanana)


Generally speaking, village corporations are smaller than regional corporations and are less visible in the economy. There are currently a total of 168 village corporations and four urban corporations (Juneau, Kenai, Kodiak and Sitka) operating in Alaska. These are the corporations remaining after a number of villages merged either into their region or with each other. All the villages in the NANA Region except Kotzebue merged with the NANA Regional Corporation, and all the villages in the Ahtna Region except Chitina merged with Ahtna, Inc. Additionally, eight of the corporations were created by the merger of 34 village corporations.

Since our goal is to measure the overall economic impact Native corporations have on Alaska, over time, we hope to include as many village corporations as possible in our report.

We believe that a very important measure of corporate impact on Alaska is philanthropy. Together, the 43 corporations included in our report made charitable donations totaling $9.3 million. In addition, the corporations donated $4.1 million for scholarships targeting 2,821 Alaska Native students.

One of the key distinctions between Native corporations and other business entities is that Native corporations are required to share 70 percent of their resource revenues from Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands with each other. Additionally, eight of the corporations were created by the merger of 34 village corporations. In his State of the State address, Gov. Frank Murkowski pledged his administration's support for development in rural Alaska. “I believe that a close working relationship between the State and the Alaska Native corporations can provide the economic engine for rural Alaska.”
Sharing was an ethic embedded in Alaska Native societies, and in every region of the state elders pass on stories of the importance of communal help.

The sharing concept made its way into the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act through a one-sentence provision of the act, Section 7(i), that has been described as elegant in concept, but a nightmare in implementation. Although sharing was always a part of Native cultures, it was generally encouraged only within particular communities and not usually between cultures. It is significant that the sharing provisions of ANCSA require sharing among Native corporations. In fact, the sharing requirements are one of the most important distinctions between Native corporations and other Western business entities.

Through Section 7(i), Native regional corporations share a large portion of their resource revenues with each other. Section 7(i) of the act states simply in one sentence that 70 percent of all resource revenues received by each region from ANCSA lands will be shared among the 12 regional corporations within Alaska. The 13th Region was not included because it was not granted land. Section 7(j) requires that regions then share half of the 7(i) funds they receive with village corporations and individual at-large shareholders.

Alaska Native corporations represent remarkably diverse groups of people from different cultural backgrounds. But a common theme in all such cultures has been group sharing for survival. “In earlier times, communal sharing was a matter of life and death,” said George Irvin, a former Alaska Federation of Natives staffer. He noted that social structures of villages are largely based on obligations of sharing, especially of food. Certain households can gather large amounts of subsistence product, and they have a traditional duty to share with those who can’t produce as much.

“ANCSA’s 7(i) provision fits right in with indigenous customs of obligation,” he said. “Traditional Native cultures do not emphasize the individual as the important social unit; rather, the focus is on the group. Sharing was, and continues to be, the order of the day; and the degree to which modern Native villages work together is remarkable.”

Irvin believes that Native corporations are holding their own in the face of national economic challenges because the leadership has developed considerable business acumen. But two key determinants of the Native community’s future, he said, are the improvement of public education for Native students and the question of village survival in rural Alaska.

On the second of these topics, he noted that a deterioration of economic and social conditions in small villages could lead to greater out-migration to cities and regional centers. One concern is the effect that such out-migration might have on the ANCSA land base of more than 40 million acres owned by Native corporations.

“When village corporation shareholders move away from the land, they become, to some degree, absentee landlords. Their attitudes toward the land can change, as can the attitudes of their children who will inherit stock. Perhaps they will come to value the land more as a means to economic gain than as a cultural end in itself. We should be concerned about the vulnerability of such lands to future loss – because the whole structure of the settlement’s land selections was premised on the existence of villages,” he said.

As for the more immediate financial situation faced by Native corporations in 2001, Native corporations continued to make some gains in the economy, according to Bob Poe, former executive director of the Alaska Energy Authority and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority who today is employed by the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation subsidiary, Arctic Slope Consulting Group.

Poe noted that while returns on investments nationally have been challenging, a number of corporations are pursuing federal contract work, which has relatively small margins, but leads to larger employment and steady returns.

Poe feels that the corporations’ key future challenge
will be to find ways to mentor and incorporate younger Alaska Natives into the corporate leadership. “We’re another year further along, and you’re starting to see that the next tier of Native leaders is ready to lead and move the corporations forward. They have the education along with the marvelous creativity and energy that comes with youth. The biggest thing for the corporations is what they are doing to grow and help those people.”

Poe stresses that one of the best aspects of Native corporation impact on the Alaska economy is that the traditional model of a company developing Alaskan resources and shipping the revenues Outside is reversed. A number of Native corporations invest Outside and bring the revenues back to Alaska, he said.

Neil Fried, labor economist for the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, said that overall 2001 was an above-average year for Alaska, especially the Railbelt, stretching from Anchorage to Fairbanks. He attributed most of the growth to the fact that there was a lot of activity in the oil industry. Generally speaking, business activity tied to Alaska would have done relatively well, he said, while business investments dependent on the stock market nationally fared much worse.

Fried pointed out that although 2001 was a relatively good year, it was a bad year for both the fishing and timber industries.

The only Native corporation that is based outside Alaska and that has almost no impact on the state’s economy is the 13th Regional Corporation. While the corporation’s early history was littered with financial difficulties that threatened its existence, the corporation has posted profits in recent years. In 2001, the 13th Region provided $500 scholarships to eight students.

The corporation is headed by Norman Ream, who is retired and has never drawn a salary in his seven years with the corporation.

“I take no salary, and I never will. Thirteenth Regional needs it more than I do,” he said.

In his position, Ream keeps close tabs on Alaska and follows other Native corporations closely. He believes that the corporations will continue to play a major role in the state’s economy that will only grow more important over time.

“Over the years, they have matured a lot,” he said. “They now have good business management, and they are well operated and well financed.”

Ream stressed that what sets Native corporations apart from other businesses is their tie to Alaska.

“They will be there forever. They are permanent,” he said.

Ream said his dream is that the 13th Region will someday be more established in Alaska. Only about 10 percent of the corporation’s 5,900 shareholders live in Alaska, but all have ties to their home in the state.

In addition to the Native regional and village corporations, the impact of Native non-profit entities has not been fully measured on the state. For example, Tony Vaska, who heads up the Association of Alaska Housing Authorities serving primarily Alaska Natives/Native Americans in the state, said his members have a significant impact on the overall economy.

“The annual grants total more than $100 million cumulatively,” he said. “The money is used for building houses for low-income Alaska Native/Native American people throughout Alaska.”

Also not measured is the impact of the ANCSA sharing requirement. Over the history of the act since 1971, more than $500 million has been distributed to regional corporations, village corporations and some individual shareholders. Carl Marrs, President and CEO of CIRI, believes that 7(i) is a powerful mechanism for the redistribution of wealth.

A unique aspect of the sharing provisions is the creation of a steady stream of revenue for village corporations, as well as individual Native shareholders.
who are shareholders only of a regional corporation and not a village corporation, known as “at-large” shareholders. “For some village corporations, it’s the only income,” said Tom Hawkins, Chief Operating Officer of Bristol Bay Native Corporation and the former chief executive officer of Choggiung, Ltd., the village corporation formed by the merger of village corporations for Dillingham, Ekuk and Portage Creek in the Bristol Bay Region. “Getting the 7(i) check is a big deal.”

Section 7(j) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act calls for half of the resource funds received by each Native regional corporation to be distributed to the villages within the region and at-large shareholders. The amounts distributed annually are determined by a formula based on population.

Karl Potts, Choggiung’s Chief Executive Officer, said that over time, the 7(i) revenue has gradually become less significant for Choggiung as the corporation’s consolidated income has increased.

Potts said that early in Choggiung’s history, the annual 7(i) revenues were extremely important in allowing the company to operate profitably. “Prior to 1993, the component of Choggiung’s financial performance represented a substantial percentage of total revenues. Over the past 10 years, the proportional impact of 7(i) revenues has declined as Choggiung’s businesses have matured and grown. Notwithstanding this fact, 7(i) participation will continue to be a significant component of Choggiung’s financial structure. It is indeed one of the most prominent aspects of ANCSA which embodies a united culture of sharing natural resources for the benefit of the larger community of Alaska Natives. In today’s competitive business environment, such opportunities are rare indeed.”

Financial Overview

The financial presentation of ANCSA corporations demonstrates their economic impact on the Alaska economy. They are an integrated and important part of the state’s economic health. This is not an analysis of the relative success between the individual corporations. It is recognition of their combined success throughout Alaska and in their business endeavors.

Revenue

Native corporations provide jobs, revenue, and commitment to the Alaska economy. In 2001, our sample of Native corporations had combined revenues of $2.9 billion. A large portion of this directly affects Alaska’s economy. More than half of this amount was derived from the operations of the two largest firms, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation ($1 billion) and CIRI ($711 million). Over the past 10 years alone, revenue from the regional corporations increased at an average annual compounded rate of 17 percent. Figure 1 shows total revenue of the 12 regional corporations in Alaska since 1992.

Of the 43 corporations included in this report, 13 were recognized by Alaska Business Monthly (October 2002) as among the state’s top 49 most successful Alaskan businesses. The list was led by Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. Five Native regional corporations were in the top 10, and eight other Native regional and village corporations also made the list. Figure 2 shows the magazine’s rankings for revenues.
Since 1992, net income has not grown consistently, but 2001 was the highest year yet for the 13 Native regional corporations (Figure 3). 2001 had mixed financial results for the corporations overall, however it was a record year for CIRI. Net income was more than four times the previous year’s amount. According to the CIRI annual report, their record net income was driven largely by the sale of CIRI’s telecommunications investments with VoiceStream Wireless Corporation.

Total net income for the 13 regional corporations combined in 2001 was $455 million. Net income for the profitable corporations was $491 million. That figure is offset by net losses of $36 million sustained by five of the corporations. The total equity in 2001 was $1.5 billion (Figure 4). The equity is more than 50 percent higher than the amount of the original ANCSA cash settlement of $962 million.

**Assets**

Similar to revenue, the size of the assets of these firms is also a measure of the economic impact the Native corporations have. Figure 5 shows the total assets of the 12 in-state Native regional corporations.

The combined assets for our sample of Native corporations was $2.9 billion in 2001, according to their annual reports.
Native Corporations

Payroll

Unlike many of the largest corporations which operate in Alaska but are not owned by Alaskans, many of the Native firms generate a significant portion of their revenues in-state. This local activity generates employment growth and injects tax revenues into the state economy. These corporations submitted data indicating a combined payroll of $434 million.

Dividends

Another significant factor adding to the impact Native corporations have on the economy are dividends paid to shareholders (Figures 6 and 7). Earnings passed on to shareholders increase their disposable income, and it is believed that much of the total dividend payout is spent in Alaska. Therefore, dividends not only directly enhance shareholders, but also indirectly benefit all Alaskan residents.

Increased consumer spending, generated from dividends, facilitates further growth and investment in Alaska. The total amount of dividends paid in 2001 for this sample of Native corporations was $52.1 million. This sample of Native corporations represented 98,000 shareholders, but not all corporations paid a dividend. Not included in the dividend total is CIRI’s special distribution to its shareholders in 2001 of $94.3 million.

Multiplier Effect

The economic impact of Native corporations includes the multiplier effect generated from payroll and dividends. An Alaskan economic model developed by Scott Goldsmith, an economist at the University of Alaska Anchorage, estimates that each $1 million in household spending translates to eight jobs with $220,000 in payroll for those jobs.

Based on the $52.1 million in dividends and the $434 million in payroll paid by the Native corporations, this combined amount generated 3,888 jobs with $107 million in payroll. This is in addition to the 13,062 employees directly employed by the 43 Native corporations included in this analysis.
Figure 6
2001 Dividends

Figure 7
2001 Dividends
Employment

The hiring of Alaska Natives is part of the Native corporations’ commitment to welcoming shareholder and Native participation in company operations and growth. The corporations have policies encouraging the hiring of Alaska Natives, shareholders, and their families.

The 43 corporations in this study together have an Alaska workforce of 13,062 employees. Of this total, 3,122 were Alaska Natives.

According to the August 2002 report, Alaska Economic Trends, from the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, 17 Native for-profit corporations and non-profit organizations were among the top 100 employers in the state (Figure 8). This number of Native employers in the top 100 has stayed constant from the previous year.

The report, by labor economist Neil Fried, stated the following:

Native organizations exert growing influence in Alaska’s economy. The Trends list of Native organizations is made up of for-profit and non-profit companies including oil field service companies, caterers, health providers, social services, contractors, personnel services, etc. One organization is new to the list this year—the Association of Village Council Presidents, based in Bethel. The Trends 100 includes only individual firms regardless of ownership, which tends to understate the presence of the Native corporations. If all joint ventures and their subsidiaries were combined, their representation would certainly be larger. Even given these shortcomings, this is still an impressive showing. Many of the employers such as Maniilaq are health and social service providers. The largest player, ranked tenth on the state’s list, was again Alaska Petroleum Contractors—a subsidiary of Natchiq, which in turn is a subsidiary of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.

Also noted in the report was the importance of non-profits to the economy, many of which are Native non-profits:

Although the non-profit sector is not often touted as a powerful force in Alaska’s economy, its presence on the Trends 100 list points to an important story. Twenty-three percent of all Trends 100 employment is with non-profits.

### Figure 8
Alaska Economic Trends 2002

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<th>State Rank</th>
<th>Regional Area</th>
<th>Company/Organization</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Employees</th>
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<td>ASRC</td>
<td>Alaska Petroleum Contractors</td>
<td>Oil Field Services</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>NANA</td>
<td>NANA Marriott Joint Venture</td>
<td>Catering/Hotels</td>
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<td>Calista</td>
<td>Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>Calista</td>
<td>Association of Village Council Presidents</td>
<td>Social Services</td>
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</table>
A Legacy of Philanthropy

As the Native corporations have matured, leaders have found ways to weave traditional Native ethics into the corporate fabric. There is an underlying concern for the well-being of the entire group. In other words, many of the corporations are finding ways to place a higher priority on the needs of the group rather than the needs of individuals.

Together, the 43 corporations included in our report made charitable donations totaling $9.3 million. These tenets are manifested in many of the mission statements from the 2001 annual reports.

The stronger the firms are economically as a group, the greater the chance for cultural perseverance. The economic strength results in a stronger voice in state policies, and it allows for the creation of new entities which are building their own enduring foundations. For example, some of the foundations created by the corporations have significant endowments. Also, profits developed through business ventures allow the firms to distribute dividends and generate wealth from diverse operations, including those utilizing the natural resources from the land.

The corporations also make contributions and support scholarships that help promote continued progress. Scholarships combined with future employment opportunities have significant and long-term positive social impacts for Alaska Natives. The total scholarship dollar amount funded in 2001 from the 43 Native firms was $4.1 million. Not included in this figure are the significant contributions that have been made to endowments.

Figure 9
A Sample of ANCSA Corporation Mission Statements

The Aleut Corporation
Our mission is to maximize profits, provide benefits to our shareholders, and preserve our culture.

Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
To actively manage our lands, resources, diversified operating subsidiaries and investments throughout the world in order to enhance Inupiat cultural and economic freedoms.

Bethel Native Corporation
Is recognized for its integrity, stability, and progressive growth.

- Continues to increase its profits and net worth.
- Continues to economically and geographically diversify its holdings and operations.
- Maintains an effective staff as it promotes and increases qualified Shareholder/Native employees.
- Is sensitive and responsible to social, cultural, and environmental needs and concerns of the Alaska Native Community.
- Will remember the interrelationship of the land and the people when making business plans and decisions.

Bristol Bay Native Corporation
Enriching our Native way of life.

Calista
Provides sound, progressive, business ventures which promote self-determination, economic and social well-being that improves the quality of life for those we serve. Our success will be measured by increased regional employment, corporate profits and shareholder benefits.

Choggiung Limited
To be a competitive and profitable corporation ensuring future and current shareholder benefits, while protecting its land and assets and showing sensitivity to our Native culture.
CIRI
An Alaska Native Regional Corporation with a mission of enhancing the economic, social, and cultural well-being of our shareholders and future generations.

Doyon Limited
Doyon's mission is to continually enhance our position as a financially strong Native corporation in order to promote the economic well-being of our shareholders and future shareholders, to protect our Native way of life, and to protect and enhance our land and resources.

Gana-A’-Yoo, Limited
• To maximize Shareholder wealth through sound investments and opportunities;
• To build strong relations with our Shareholders through expanded communications.

Goldbelt, Inc.
Committed to making a significant and positive difference in the lives of our shareholders.

Huna Totem Corporation
A for-profit ANCSA Village Corporation which shall strive to provide maximum, assured, equal and continuing returns to its shareholders, while maintaining control of its land and recognizing the cultural values of its shareholders.

Konlak, Inc.
To optimize profits to provide dividends and benefits while preserving our cultural pride.

Kootznoowoo, Inc.
As stewards of our land and managers of other assets, the mission of Kootznoowoo Corporation is to provide economic benefits to our shareholders and their descendants, while fostering our cultural identity.

NANA Regional Corporation Inc.
To be a shareholder-managed corporation that enables our people to continuously achieve their goals by living productively in traditional and modern worlds.

Shee Atiká, Inc.
To preserve and enhance our culture for all generations of shareholders, and to provide benefits to shareholders consistently and on a fair and equitable basis.

Sitnasuak Native Corporation
To earn profits on operations while protecting our land, culture, and benefiting shareholders.

Uskpeagvik Inupiat Corporation
To optimize profits for the growth of our corporation and the socio-economic benefit of our shareholders.
Conclusion

Native corporations have had and continue to have a major impact on Alaska’s economy. This report has covered data submitted for total revenues, employment, and philanthropy for 43 Native corporations. The entire impact of all Native corporations and Native non-profits on the state has yet to be measured.

The corporations pay out a higher percentage of their net income as dividends than publicly held business corporations, and they have made substantial philanthropic contributions in the form of scholarships and other charitable donations.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Association of ANCSA Regional Corporation Presidents/CEOs, and especially the association’s executive director, Vicki Otte, for sponsorship of this report. We would like to thank the 43 Native corporations that participated in the survey. Many thanks for their patience and effort. Thanks also to Barbara Donatelli who had the vision to suggest that this report be written and to CIRI for sponsoring the project.

About the Authors

Alexandra J. McClanahan is the CIRI historian. In October 2001, she was the recipient of the Denali Award, the highest award made to a non-Native each year by the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Julee Duhrsen is a Certified Public Accountant and Chartered Financial Analyst. Also assisting in data analysis were KMPG, LLP, staffers, Debra L. Perala, Advisory Services, and Lucinda Mahoney, Senior Manager, Advisory Services.

Assisting in data collection were Cindy Allred, Charmaine Forbes, Johanna Harper and Aaron Leggett. Graphic design by Amanda Rothbarth, Northwest Strategies.

Works Cited


