

# Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

September 2000

The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to ensure dignity and independence for Alaska's seniors and to assist them, through programs and services funded by the Commission, to lead useful and meaningful lives.



**Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger** is a monthly publication of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

## Commissioners

Chair

**Marjorie Hays**  
Soldotna

**Doris E. Bacus**  
Kodiak

**Peggy Burgin**  
Anchorage

**Ella Craig**  
Anchorage

**Alison Elgee**  
Juneau

**Jesse L. Gardner**  
Anchorage

**Bob Gregovich, Jr.**  
Juneau

**Banarsi Lal**  
Fairbanks

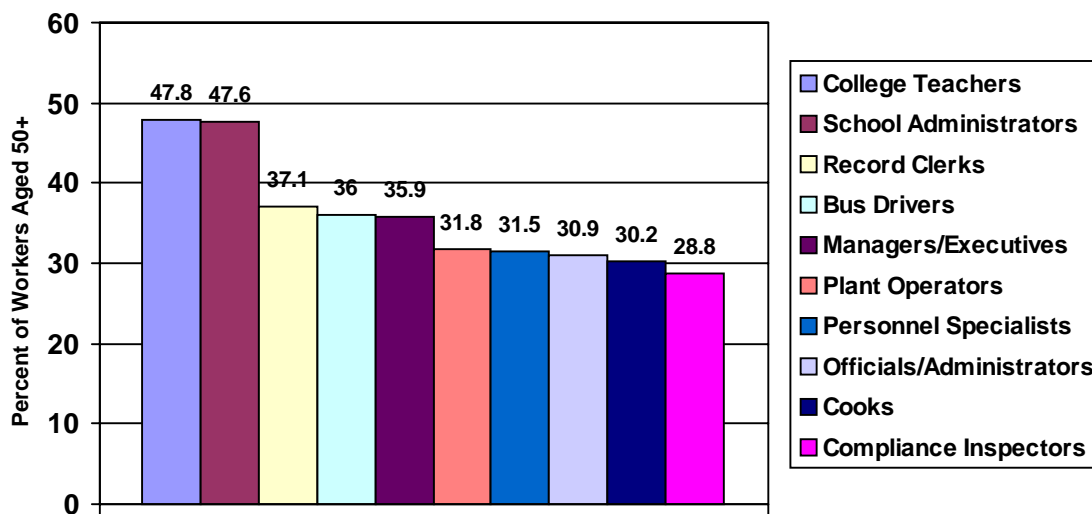
**Bernice Joseph**  
Anchorage

**Dan Karmun, Sr.**  
Nome

**Jonathan Sherwood**  
Juneau

Executive Director  
**Jane P. Demmert**  
P O Box 110209  
Juneau, AK 99811-0209  
(907) 465-3250  
Jane\_Demmert  
@admin.state.ak.us

## Occupations with Largest Percentage of Alaskans Aged 50+



This data, collected from Permanent Fund Dividend and Voter Registration information by the Alaska Department of Labor Research and Analysis Division, indicates that the occupations with the largest percentage of Alaskans aged 50+ cover a wide spectrum of skill and income levels. The average age of Alaskans in these occupations is just over 45 years old.

## Alaska Joins the Nation in Honoring Older Workers

By Presidential Proclamation, September 24-30, 2000 is *National Older Worker Employment Week*. Governor Knowles has proclaimed that same week *Employ the Older Worker Week* in Alaska.

This is the 52<sup>nd</sup> year that the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Administration on Aging of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have promoted efforts to assure that the special contributions of older workers are acknowledged. The American Legion initiated *National Employ Older Workers Week* in 1958 to promote employment opportunities for older Americans.

This year's observation of National Older Worker Employment Week is perhaps more significant than in past years because of the current economy. With Alaska's and the rest of the nation's unemployment rates falling to unprecedented low levels, many employers are having difficulty filling vacant positions. Older workers help fill those positions in many cases, lending their experience and maturity to Alaska's workforce.

Governor Knowles's proclamation reads:

"Alaska is witnessing a dramatic growth in its senior population. Many Alaskans are  
(Continued on page 2)

## Director of Nenana Senior Center Nominated for National Older Worker's Award

Margaret Sanders of Nenana has been nominated to receive the Green Thumb, Inc. Prime Time Award. Each state is invited to nominate one person for the award. The winner will be honored at an awards dinner on October 6 in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Sanders, who took her first job when she was a senior in high school, started the Nenana Tortella Council on Aging in 1976. She has served as the council's project director ever since. In the last 24 years Ms. Sanders has seen more Federal and State senior agencies develop as the concept of aging became better defined. As a result, she has seen more elderly people staying in Alaska, and able to live in their own homes.

Ms. Sanders says that working keeps her young. She finds particular satisfaction in working with seniors, and sees the Nenana Senior Center as a tool to educate people about volunteering and enjoying being with elders. Ms. Sanders feels that an attitude of caring and pride in your work, and a strong work ethic that demands you always give your best is the most important attribute a worker can bring to the workplace.



Margaret Sanders, Director of the Nenana Tortello Council on Aging and Alaska's Prime Time Award Nominee.

### Older Worker's Week (continued from page 1)

living longer, healthier lives. This trend will continue in the new millennium as increasing life expectancy and better health among our older population alters the very definitions of "old age" and "retirement." This dramatic growth in Alaska's senior population has resulted in the "graying" of the workplace.

Employers across the state, in both the public and private sectors, need to be aware of the changing dynamics of Alaska's workforce. There needs to be a renewed focus on the qualifications, dependability, and skills of the older worker.

Ability is Ageless. Alaska needs to recognize and appreciate Alaska's older workers' experience, wisdom, creativity and ability to remain a viable, strong part of Alaska's workforce.

To assist Alaska's diverse economy and to fill the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must make a commitment to employ Alaska's older workers in jobs that will assist them in leading useful, independent, and meaningful lives in jobs that will tap their creative potential and productive capacity.

Now, therefore, I, Tony Knowles, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim the week of September 24-30, 2000 as *Employ the Older Worker Week* in Alaska, and encourage citizens to recognize the contributions that older workers make to the workplace and to our economy."

The Alaska Commission on Aging supports senior employment through the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Employers owe it to themselves to recognize the valuable resource we share in our older workers and to expand efforts to eliminate all forms of age discrimination in the workplace. Officials and organizations responsible for job placement, training, and hiring, are urged to intensify their efforts

(Continued on page 4)



Dillingham's Marrulut Eniit Assisted Living Facility.

## **Dillingham's "Grandma's House" Receives National Best Practices Award**

Marrulut Eniit Assisted Living Facility (Grandma's House) in Dillingham has been awarded the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) "Best of the Best" Best Practices Award. The "Best Practices" designation describes HUD-funded programs that are maximizing resources by using innovative methods to make a significant difference in the lives of the people in the communities they serve.

Marrulut Eniit is the first state-licensed assisted living facility in rural Alaska. The facility enables the elders to remain in the local area and interact with family, youth and the greater community, while having quality living accommodations under the supervision of licensed caretakers 24 hours a day.

The Bristol Bay Housing Authority developed the Marrulut Eniit Assisted Living Facility through a collaboration with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, Bristol Bay Native Association, the City of Dillingham, Cordes Development of Sunset Beach, California, Curyung Tribal Council (Dillingham), Ekuk Tribal Council, and HUD.

The 100 winners were selected from more than 2,800 nominations. A HUD best practice is defined as a program or project, management tool, or technique that fulfills at least two of the following characteristics:

1. Generates a significant positive impact on those it is intended to serve or manage.
2. Can be replicated in other areas of the country, region, or local jurisdiction.
3. Demonstrates the effective use of partnerships among government agencies, non-profit organizations, or private businesses.
4. Displays creativity in addressing a problem, and demonstrates effective leveraging of resources.

The top 100 HUD grant recipients recognized for their exemplary use of HUD funding received the "Best of the Best" Award at the conclusion of HUD's four-day Best Practices and Technical Assistance Symposium held in August in Washington D.C.

