

NSB Anchorage office provides support

In a North Slope Borough office you don't expect to look out the window and see trees and mountains. But there is a Borough office where you will see just that, along with paved streets, traffic lights and high-rise buildings.

The view from the NSB Liaison Office in Anchorage is beautiful. It looks toward the mountains north of the city from the sixth floor of the Calais Office Center on 'C' Street.

But if you worked in this office, chances are, you'd be too busy to take time to enjoy the view.

One reason for all the activity in the Anchorage office, is that it really houses five offices in one. A branch of the Mayor's Office, a Planning, a Health and an Assessing Department representative and the Public Works Department's Service Area 10 Division all are quartered here.

In addition, the Anchorage Office provides space and staff support for any Borough Departments who might have business which must be done in Anchorage. Consultants, State and Federal officials are also frequent clients who do their business with the Borough through the Anchorage Liaison Office.

To get a good view of all the duties performed by the Borough's Anchorage staff requires a closer look at each of the five offices centered there.

Mayor's Office

Eben Hopson, Jr. is Acting Liaison Officer of the Mayor's Office in Anchorage.

He sees the liaison role as one designed to make contact with representatives of State and Federal government and the media. Many of the government offices with which the Borough deals are located in Anchorage.

The largest newspapers, radio

and television stations are also centered here; along with printing and production services needed for public information media work.

Dealing with these agencies and services by long distance telephone from Barrow does not always meet immediate Borough needs. This is where the Anchorage Liaison Office comes in.

Press releases, conference arrangements, monitoring project progress with State and Federal officials or Borough consultants are just some of the duties involved. And although they are officially under the Mayor's Office, responsibilities don't stop there.

"The Mayor's staff here spreads out to help other departments," says Hopson. "We can't have staff for every department down here so we fill in for them."

Gloria Williams provides secretarial and receptionist support for the Mayor's Office in Anchorage along with part-time help from Steven Peter who divides his time with the Planning Department.

Planning

Construction projects on public lands are required by law to go through often extensive permitting procedures. Many of the agencies involved in the process have offices in Anchorage.

To clear the permitting path as much as possible is the job of Planning Department Permit Coordinator and Liaison Shehla Anjum who operates out of the Anchorage office.

Located in Alaska's largest city, Anjum is in a position to personally follow-up or check into any pending permit business. From her work, those in Barrow can get direct information on the progress of various planning projects.

Assessing

Field Auditor Jane Igtanloc

serves the North Slope Borough Tax and Assessment Department through the Anchorage office. She deals with issues that involve North Slope Borough properties with out-of-town owners.

"I handle questions primarily from commercial property holders on the North Slope, like airlines and support services," says Igtanloc. "Some of them are as far away as San Francisco."

Igtanloc also collects initial property tax appeal information for presentation to the North Slope Borough Assembly in Barrow. This summer, she will be returning to the North Slope to help with local assessments.

Health

For North Slope residents who need medical care in Anchorage, the NSB Health Department runs a service through the Liaison Office that can prove a lifesaver.

Anchorage Site Coordinator Doreen Edwards supervises Interpreter Margaret Glastetter and Outreach Worker Whitlam Adams in efforts to help Inupiaq patients cope with the foreign cultural environment of the modern Anchorage hospitals.

This may call for translating English medical jargon to Inupiat. It may require assisting a patient with hospital paperwork. It may mean escorting patients from airport to hospital or from one place of medical treatment to another. Often, it involves all these things and more.

"We will help out-patients or in-patients with anything of a medical nature," says Coordinator Edwards. "Someone is always on-call 24 hours a day during the week and on weekends."

The Anchorage Health Department staff also calls on those from the North Slope



Eben Hopson Jr. heads the staff of the liaison office which is located in Anchorage.

who are institutionalized in the Anchorage area.

This includes those in such places as the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, the Booth Memorial Home, the Jesse Lee Home, the McLaughlin Youth Center and the Nakoyia Health Care Center. One example of these other duties is offered by Edwards, "We're planning a Native foods potluck for some of our elders at Nakoyia Health Center this summer."

Just considering hospital patients alone, the Anchorage Health Department staff serves in the neighborhood of a dozen North Slope residents a month. "Our busiest time is in the winter months, but it varies," according to Edwards.

Certainly it is hard to predict when that medical emergency will strike, but if and when the time comes, there will be someone waiting to help in Anchorage.

Public Works Service Area 10

In Service Area 10 the North Slope Borough Public Works Department provides solid waste disposal, waste water treatment, sludge disposal, potable water and land fill service to the oil producers of Prudhoe Bay.

The administrative division for Service Area 10 is located in Anchorage. This puts Service Area 10 Utilities Manager Mike Turner in close contact with his "customers" since most oil producing companies

have their Alaskan headquarters in the State's largest city.

"Being in Anchorage allows us to get direct user input which can be relayed to Public Works Director Irving Igtanloc in Barrow," says Turner. "This is where our customers are. We are also close to State and Federal offices that affect a lot of what we do in Service Area 10."

It also puts the division close to the technical service companies that are often needed when operating a major Arctic enterprise.

"The Arctic environment is very unforgiving," says the Area 10 Manager. "We face the same challenge that oil producers face in trying to install and maintain large machinery on the North Slope. We are in a relatively new industry and we are applying it to the Arctic environment."

"Remoteness is one problem. Another is that many engineers and industry people in the south, just don't understand what Arctic conditions are really like."

All the oil producing operations on the Slope have been included within Service Area 10 boundaries. The Area extends from the Arctic National Wildlife Range on the east to the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska on the west and south from 70-degrees latitude to the Beaufort Sea on the north.



A rough winter for this Barrow taxi is over. As they say, "Breaking up is hard to do."