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# $5 million Yearly Payroll for Next 20-Years

Copper Center – According to Paulette Schuerch, President and CEO for the Copper River Native Association, CRNA's clients will soon achieve "equal access to health services" as other regions have enjoyed for decades. A recent funding award by the national office of the Indian Health Services will pay for professional staff to operate a new Regional Health Center known as the Multi-Disciplinary Combined Facility. The new staff will provide health, dental, administrative, community, elder and maintenance services.

On December 16 in Rockville, Maryland, CRNA CEO/President Paulette Schuerch and CRNA Board Secretary/Treasurer received a Joint Venture Construction Program (JVCP) award notification letter from R. Admiral Gary Hartz of the Indian Health Service (IHS). Schuerch said Hartz understood the critical need of CRNA's request and noted the innovative modular construction was key to winning the competition. "We demonstrated we could build a health center for roughly half the cost of other health facilities in Alaska," Schuerch noted.

Staffing a new a regional health center for tribal beneficiaries has been a long-term goal for CRNA, with administrators planning the facility and pursuing funding for over ten years. Schuerch said the project has been one of the CRNA board priorities since she joined the organization as CEO in July of 2007.

Under the direction of Schuerch, consideration of both capital and operating funding sources such like the nationally competitive IHS JVCP application and other funding opportunities started over a year ago and kicked off with a meeting of board members, community members and consultants at the Alaska Federation of Native convention in October, 2008.

"We met with funders and supporters at the same time and shared with them our vision and how we could make that vision a reality with a lower cost facility, quickly constructed and bringing a new payroll to the region," noted Schuerch.

In the present round of JVCP project funding, three Alaskan organizations and one Oklahoma organization are receiving awards. In Alaska, in addition to CRNA, staffing funds will go to Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC – Fairbanks), and South Central Foundation (SCF – Wasilla).

In the history of the JVCP program, these are also the first awards presented to

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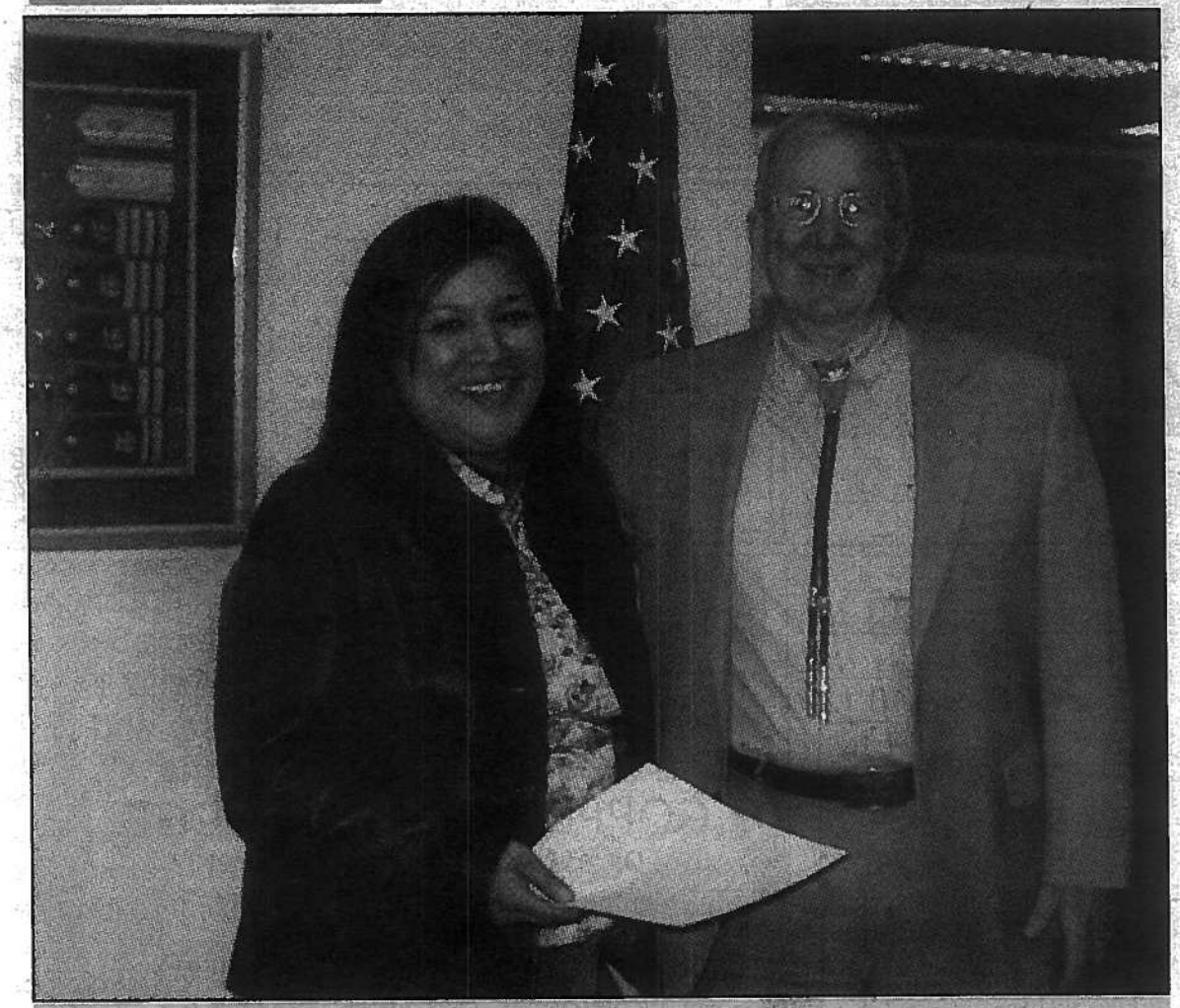


*CRNA photo*

Paulette Schuerch, CRNA President/CEO and R. Admiral Gary Hartz in Rockville, Maryland with the official IHS contract award letter in hand. More photos page 5.

# CRNA wins IHS National Competition; $5 million Yearly Payroll for Next 20-Years

*continued from page 1*

Alaskan Tribal health providers. The final provisions of the CRNA award and the award contract will be signed in 2010.

Schuerch said, "This is truly a historical moment for CRNA. Since the Tribes have taken over management of our public health services in the 1970's we have been told that we would not be able to have a health center because there was no public health system in the Copper Valley. With the recent award from the Joint Venture Construction Program we will be able to manage our own quality health care in a respectful way that our beneficiaries truly deserve."

Schuerch and Yoshimoto traveled to Wash DC recently and visited the offices of Congressman Don Young, Senator Mark Begich, and Senator Lisa Murkowski. They also visited the Indian Health Service of R. Admiral Hartz. Hartz surprised Schuerch with the official letter and notification of the JVCP award – making CRNA the first agency to be notified of the current awards.

CRNA photo

In addition to the JVCP staffing funds, Schuerch noted Senator Lisa Murkowski's earmark giving CRNA a Department of Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative grant for $1 million ($1,000,000) dollars was signed into law by President Obama. The $1 million grant funding will help provide the match funds CRNA needs to obtain financing to establish the new 40,000 sq. ft. complex that will be located next to the Ahtna headquarters building. The new health center is projected to cost about eleven million dollars.

Lorraine Jackson, CRNA Board chair says, "This means that CRNA 's beneficiaries will not have to travel from far and wide to go to the Anchorage Native Medical Center, and can receive emergency and childrens' services right here in the region."

According to Jackson, CRNA currently provides 11 JVCP awards plus two demonstration projects that were started in the early 1990's.

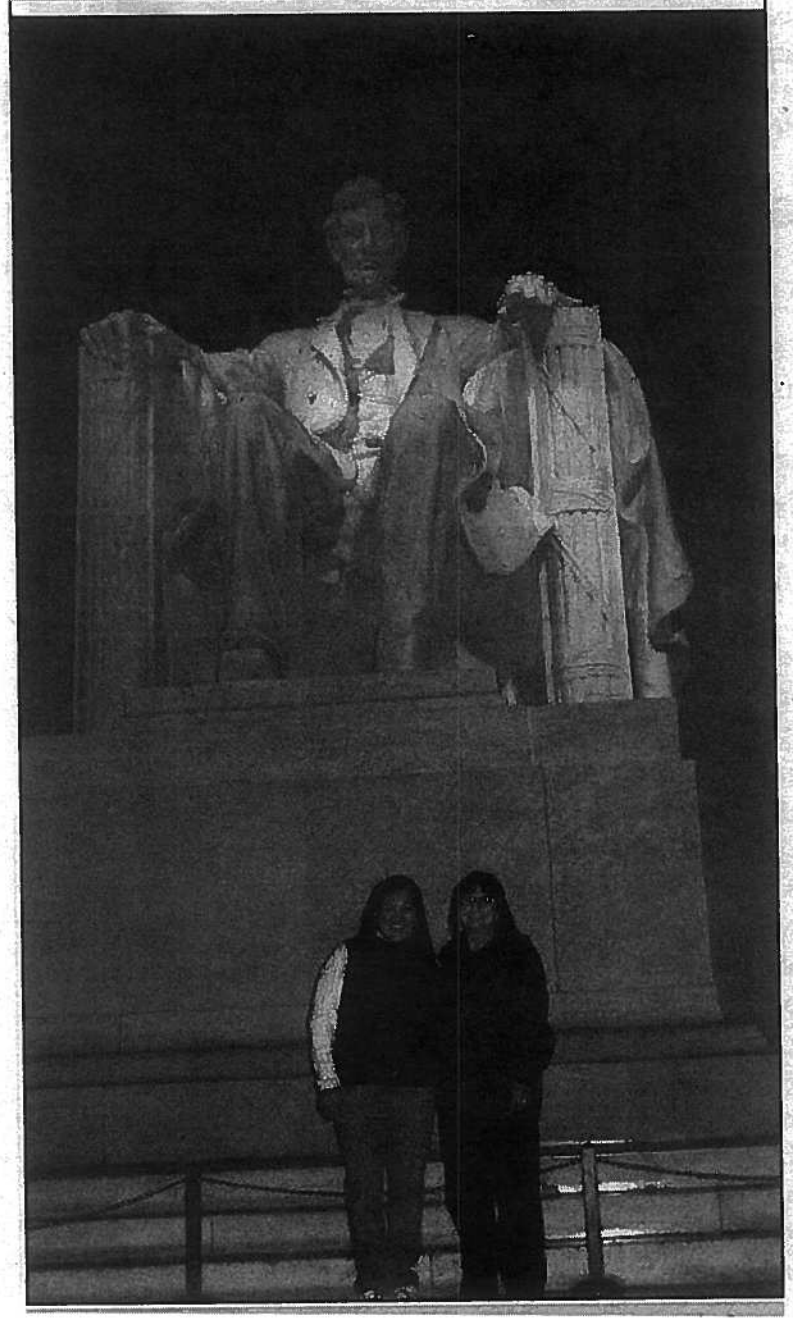
"We're grateful for the support of local and regional organizations who shared and supported CRNA's vision," emphasized Schuerch.

CRNA photo

A visit to the nation's capital put CRNA on Congressman Don Young's funding priority list. Paulette Schuerch CRNA President/CEO outside Capitol Building.

CRNA photo

Paulette Schuerch, Gary Hay, Mike Scott (President of Manillaq Services LLC), and Lisa Yoshimoto visit a prefabrication business in Oregon in preparation of building a new multi-disciplinary facility in Glennallen



gion."

According to Jackson, CRNA currently provides over 10,000 miles a month in patient transport to the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage. Those miles, particularly those driven in the winter months, became part of the justification for the facility project request. The new CRNA facility will tie in transportation resources like the Soaring Eagle van transport system, making access as convenient as possible by having the transit facilities located near the new health center", Jackson said.

As a boost to the local economy, according to Jackson, an estimated 28 local jobs will be created as the new facility is brought on line: "We are very excited about the new jobs coming to our region and are ready to train our local beneficiaries to fill as many of those positions as possible." Jackson estimates that the JVCP award will bring a combined payroll of $100 million dollars over the next 20 years.

Legislation passed in 2001 directs the IHS to make funding available for joint venture projects on a competitive basis, giving priority to tribes that currently

1990's.

"We're grateful for the sup-

emphasized Schuerch.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