

  
**Board of Managers meeting**  
**March 19, 2014 noon-1:00pm (Alaska Time)**

**AKEN Agenda**

Location: Redoubt Building, 4105 Tudor Centre Drive, Redoubt Conference Room 1 on 1<sup>st</sup> floor,  
 Anchorage, AK, 99508  
 Call in number: 1-907-729-6583

**Attendees: Alda Norris, Corrie Whitmore, Vanessa Hiratsuka, Iris Matthews, Douglas Cost**

Topic	Discussion/Activities	Follow-up/Action Items
<b>Call to order</b>		12:06 pm
<b>Review of Agenda</b>	Added agenda items: articles of incorporation & strategic plan	
<b>Approval of Minutes</b>		Approved
<b>Treasurer Report</b>	Account is at about \$500 and PayPal account has roughly \$500 (note can move up to \$500 from PayPal to checking account per month).	
<b>Call In Number Status</b>	Cost prohibitive for all options considered (lowest fee was \$90/meeting); seeking instead to utilize a regular conference line of one of the current member's organizations (Doug will look at potential affiliation with UAF, Corrie will follow up with Lexi & ISER).	
<b>AEA Panel Proposal update</b>	AEA 2014 Conference topic is Visionary Evaluation for a Sustainable, Equitable Future. Panel "Making a Vision into a Sustainable Reality: Building a New Culturally Competent Professional Organization in Alaska" was submitted with 4 AKEN panelists. Details below March minutes' text.	
<b>Review Draft articles of incorporation</b>	<p>PO Box cost \$198 a year - suggestion to ask member to be the AKEN mail agent - seeking consistent location so not moving frequently. For next 2 years, Iris offered to use her business PO box address.</p> <p>Articles of Incorporation needed to complete nonprofit status filing with State of Alaska (cost \$50 for application, every 2 years registration with a \$50 cost). This draft was completed and BoM agreed Iris would bring it to next meeting for review, then submit with \$50 filing fee.</p>	

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	<p>Becoming a federally recognized nonprofit is tabled at this time, for cost reasons: LegalZoon advises it would cost \$500 to do paperwork and there is a \$400 filing fee.</p>	
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	<p>No strategic plan in place but might be helpful. Will use next (May) BoM meeting for strategic planning. Iris offered to facilitate the strategic planning session and assist with crafting the May agenda.</p>	
<b>Committee Updates</b>		
<b>Membership Committee</b>	<p>Membership committee update: Currently 27 paid members: 2 students, 1 affiliate member, 24 full members</p> <p>Question on changes from initial membership to this 2<sup>nd</sup> year of membership- idea to outreach to past members to outreach back to initial membership</p> <p>Add Iris to membership committee</p>	
<b>Program Committee</b>	<p>Program committee update - schedule of upcoming programs</p> <p>April 16 - Bill Herman on RBA and Program Planning</p> <p>June 18 - Panel on Culturally Competent Evaluation</p> <p>Look at BP Energy Center as location for 2014 program meetings.</p> <p>Vanessa to check in with Diwakar on program panels suggested.</p>	
<b>Nominating Committee</b>	<p>Nominating Committee update: no updates at this time</p>	
<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS, EMERGING ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES</b>		
<b>Announcements</b>		
<b>Next Meeting</b>	<p>Next meeting: General Membership Meeting April 16, 2014 noon -1:30pm</p>	
<b>Adjournment</b>		12:41pm

**Session Title: Making a Vision into a Sustainable Reality: Building a New Culturally Competent Professional Organization in Alaska**

**Session Abstract (145/150 words):** The Alaska Evaluation Association was created in 2012 to provide a professional network to explore evaluation issues and challenges in the 49<sup>th</sup> state. As the organization nears the end of its second year, the founding members are working to ensure that it provides valuable opportunities for professional growth; continues and grows as an organization beyond the its original members; and contributes to more rigorous, culturally competent, and effective evaluation in Alaska. We plan to do this through several linked but separate efforts. We will use technology and social media to be more efficient and accessible across the state, and communicate our mission, purpose, and opportunities to a broad audience. We will continue to emphasize content that addresses the unique challenges facing evaluators in Alaska. And we will continue to self-evaluate to obtain feedback on how we are doing and guide our planning efforts moving forward.

**Corrie Title: Making A Shared Vision Into A Sustainable Organization**

**Corrie Abstract (149/150 words):** The Alaska Evaluation Network (AKEN) emerged from visionary evaluators' dedication to building evaluation capacity within the state of Alaska. Our founding members agreed that there is a need for a larger professional pool of local evaluators in Alaska; that evaluation of programs that affect Alaska Native and rural populations should be tailored to their circumstances and needs; and that it is in the state's best interest to nurture and develop local evaluation expertise. Affirming this shared vision was a wonderful first step; however, believing this was vital did not mean we knew how to make it so. In this presentation, the first President of AKEN will talk about the process of turning a shared vision into a sustainable organization with by-laws, meeting calendars, and plans for a 2015 "Year of Evaluation" Conference and reflect on how shared vision energizes our work, adding value to tasks that support the organization.

**Iris Title: Finding Common Ground Across Distance & Disciplines**

languages are spoken by students in the schools and the majority of students are not Caucasian. **Iris Abstract (134/150 words):** Alaska is a surprisingly diverse state. In Anchorage, over 93 Most rural communities are predominantly Alaska Native, and the challenges of providing services in these rural communities is well documented. Because of this diversity, and vast geography, Alaskan organizations must be visionary in their approaches to providing services. As a new network, the Alaska Evaluation Network (AKEN) is simultaneously building its internal organizational capacity, and a learning community of Alaskan evaluators that can more effectively work with the organizations that are doing innovative work in our communities. At this stage, AKEN's challenge is to find local evaluators, who are spread throughout the State, and build relationships across distance and disciplines, so that we can find commonality in how we approach the challenges of creating, evaluating, and improving programs in a diverse and vast state.

**Lexi Title:** Remember, Everyone is Busy: Using AKEN's Self-Evaluation for Planning

**Lexi Abstract (149/150 words):** Once the founding members of the Alaska Evaluation Network had accomplished the administrative work of becoming an AEA affiliate, their work shifted from the nuts and bolts of by-laws and bank accounts to the larger task of ensuring the organization provides value to its members. As part of that, we surveyed our membership in late 2013 and learned that:

- Most AKEN members work in education and public health;
- Most are in Anchorage, a few in Fairbanks and only a handful in other communities;
- Most want to share experiences and learning from others evaluators

We believe a conference can provide opportunities for professional growth, broaden our reach into fields beyond education and health, and widen our membership to communities beyond Anchorage and Fairbanks. We will show how we are structuring our first conference to provide a diverse set of presentations accessible to evaluators across a range of fields and locations.

**Alda Title:** Keeping in Touch Across the Thousands of Miles

**Alda Abstract (150/150 words):** Evaluators face logistical challenges when they must travel to do their work, and this is especially true in Alaska. The 2010 census states that Alaska remains a very geographically dispersed state, with an average of 1.2 persons per square mile spread out over about 570,640 square miles. Luckily, state investment in infrastructure for wireless and broadband communications allows people to connect across the distance. When face-to-face meetings are cost-prohibitive, electronic communications allow for discussions, planning and more. AKEN has made use of web and social media platforms to reach, recruit and retain a network of evaluators in hopes of building the evaluation capacity of a growing state. AKEN utilizes conference calls in addition to Facebook, Twitter and blogging to reach out to remote areas and diverse audiences. As with any technology, there are limitations, but overall the benefits outweigh the drawbacks when it comes to building a local AEA affiliate.

**RELEVANCE (448 / 500 words):**

Over the last 30 years, the evaluation profession has grown, in Alaska and nationally. The American Evaluation Association is not quite 30 years old, having been formed in 1986 from the merger of the Evaluation Network and the Evaluation Research Society; each of those organizations had existed at that time for only about a decade (Coming Together, 1986).

Over that time, the need for rigorous evaluation has grown, driven both broadly by a trend towards transparency and accountability, and specifically by increased evaluation requirements attached to federal (and other) grant funding, especially in health and education.

Evaluators in Alaska are often challenged by small sample sizes, the need to work across diverse cultures, and high transportation and communication costs that can increase the difficulty of implementing a rigorous evaluation plan. We may not have the option of networking with local colleagues, and may be unaware of other evaluators in Alaska facing and overcoming similar challenges. Our belief that we could benefit from networking and collaboration with others working in the same environment led to an effort to create a local affiliate of the American Evaluation Association

The Alaska Evaluation Association was created in 2012 to provide a professional network to explore evaluation issues and challenges in the 49<sup>th</sup> state. As the organization nears the end of its second year, the founding members are working to ensure that it provides valuable opportunities for professional growth; continues and grows as an organization beyond the its original members; and contributes to more rigorous, culturally competent, and effective evaluation in Alaska.

This panel presentation focuses on AKEN's work transforming our vision of a new, culturally competent professional organization from a vision into a sustainable reality. This panel will focus on Alaska's unique needs and contexts, with evaluators working in remote areas and tribal communities reflecting on their experiences and the needs of the populations they serve, and the use of technology and social media to be more efficient and accessible across the state, and communicate our mission, purpose, and opportunities to a broad audience.

Panelists are affiliated with universities, tribal health systems, Cooperative Extension, and consulting firms. They serve as internal and external evaluators working in culturally diverse communities and have much experience in capacity building to share (Boyle, Lemaire & Rist, 1999; Leviton, 2001).

#### References

- Boyle, R., Lemaire, D., & Rist, R. (1999). *Building Effective Evaluation Capacity: Lessons from Practice*. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- Coming Together: Evaluation Network and Evaluation Research Society Share Common Business Agendas at Evaluation '85 Leading to the American Evaluation Association. (1986). *American Journal of Evaluation*, 7: 107-110.
- Leviton, L. C. (2001). Presidential Address: Building Evaluation's Collective Capacity. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 22(1), 1.
- United States Census Bureau (2010). State & County QuickFacts: Alaska. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/02000.html>

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