

**The NewsRoom**

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## **MMS Grant to Help Plan Village Relocation**

### *Funds Return to Alaska Through Federal Revenue-Sharing Program*

**ANCHORAGE** – The 321 residents of Newtok, a remote community in Western Alaska, are one step closer to a new home thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Minerals Management Service.

Newtok sits on the north bank of the Ninglick River, a few miles upstream from the spot the river empties into the Bering Sea. The river is the village's lifeblood, but also a threat; erosion from the river has already claimed the village's landfill and barge dock. At current rates of erosion, the river will begin to devour Newtok itself within 10 years.

The villagers' future currently hinges on a proposal to move the entire community about 11 miles southwest, to a site called Mertarvik – "getting water from the spring" in the Yup'ik language – on nearby Nelson Island.

Moving an entire village encompasses a huge number of factors – in particular, ensuring that the relocation is done in an environmentally sensitive manner. The \$150,000 MMS grant will fund the research and production of a strategic management plan that will outline criteria and guidelines for the relocation; and for community and waterfront development at the Mertarvik location.

The grant was funded through the agency's Coastal Impact Assistance Program, an initiative to share federal oil revenues with Alaska and five other states – Alabama, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas – that produce oil and gas.

"Funding for this plan comes directly from revenues generated by offshore oil leases," said John Goll, director of the MMS Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region. "It's deeply gratifying to see this money being reinvested back into Alaska."

Total CIAP funding for Alaska includes \$79.8 million for fiscal years 2007 through 2010.

**News Media Contact:**

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