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**Alaska National Guard**

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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By Jeremy Zidek

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**Multi-agency Effort Helps Tuluksak Address Washeteria Fire Issues**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** – The Native Village of Tuluksak’s water treatment plant and washeteria were destroyed by a fire on Jan. 16, 2021. The facility was the only source of potable water in the community. On January 21st, the community issued a local disaster declaration and requested state assistance.

Currently, residents of Tuluksak have access to bottled water which was donated to the community, and is available for purchase in the community store. Air service is operational, and the ice road to Bethel and other communities provides access for water resupply.

“Living without a washeteria is certainly a hardship. Thankfully, there is potable water in the community for drinking and cooking. Many government and non-government sources have been supplying the community since the loss of the washeteria,” said Paul Nelson, Director, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. “The state will continue to work with partners, including the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, to ensure that Tuluksak has potable water and other critical needs.”

A multiagency group has met to develop short and long-term solutions to the community’s water issues. Short-term solutions may include providing a supply of filtered, but non-drinkable water, to support a temporary bathing and laundry facility, relocating a Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation temporary water plant from Bethel to Tuluksak to decontaminate water from the community’s original well head or other source of water, or purchasing a prefabricated treatment building and transporting it to the community.

Long-term solutions are being evaluated by the multiagency groups to identify a long-term water treatment solution.

The multiagency group includes the Native Village of Tuluksak, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, Indian Health Service; Denali Commission; United States Department of Agriculture; Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium; Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Village Safe Water; Environmental Protection Agency, Alaska Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic

Development, CRW Engineering Group, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and others.

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