

Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt Dummermuth visits Alaska Native Villages, Courts, State Law Enforcement, and Public Safety Officials

April 29 – May 10, 2019



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (far right), listens as law enforcement officials discuss public safety issues in rural Alaska in Kotzebue, Alaska, May 7, 2019. Pictured from left to right are: Northwest Arctic Borough Search and Rescue Coordinator Jimmie Brown; Kotzebue Police Department Chief Tom Millette; and Alaska State Trooper Sgt. Rodney Johnson. The meeting was part of a visit to cities and Alaska Native Villages across the state by Dummermuth to learn first-hand the various public safety, justice system, and victims' services challenges natives, courts and law enforcement agencies face in Alaska. Dummermuth hopes to better understand the various challenges Alaska Natives face, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, listens to Northwest Arctic Borough Director of Public Safety Aucha Kameroff talk about public safety issues facing native Alaskans in the borough during a meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska, May 7, 2019. The second-largest borough in Alaska, the Northwest Arctic Borough covers nearly 36,000 square miles of terrain and is characterized by notably long winters with temperatures reaching less than 50 degrees below zero. The borough's hub is Kotzebue – the hometown of Ashley Barr-Johnson, a 10-year-old native girl who disappeared last September and whose body was discovered several days later. The highly-publicized case has been the cornerstone for calls for legislation and more federal resources to help increase public safety in rural Alaska native communities. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (standing, second from left), shares a laugh with students of Maudrey J. Sommer School (K-12) in Tanana, Alaska, May 2, 2019. The Village of Tanana is located at the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers. With a population of 200, Tanana's school population is between 35-45 students. Dummermuth spoke to the students about how OJP's work assists Alaska Native communities. Dummermuth's visit is part of a broader trip to Alaska Native Villages across the state to learn first-hand the public safety, justice system, and victims' services challenges natives, courts and law enforcement agencies faced, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs (center), poses for a photo with students of Maudrey J. Sommer School (K-12) in Tanana, Alaska, May 2, 2019. Dummermuth spoke to the students about how OJP’s work assists Alaska Native communities. Located at the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers, the Village of Tanana boasts a population of about 200 people. Athabaskan culture is an important aspect of village life and the school participates in village events. During his time in Tanana, Dummermuth also learned about village life, including the challenges brought about by transportation in the village – normally all travel is done via all-terrain vehicles, while transport in and out of the village must be done by boat or plane. Dummermuth also visited the village’s health clinic, which provides services for the entire village. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (left), shares coffee with Chief Curtis Summer, chair of the Tanana Tribal Council (right), and Tanana Tribal Court Judge Judy Kangas (bottom right) in Tanana, Alaska, May 2, 2019. The table pictured here is also where tribal court sessions are held. The court handles an assortment of cases, including child protection, guardianship and adoption; domestic violence; marriages and divorces; and the protection of elders. The Village of Tanana is located at the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers. Dummermuth also learned about village life, including the challenges brought about by transportation in the village – normally all travel is done via all-terrain vehicles, while transport in and out of the village must be done by boat or plane. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (left), speaks with Bryan Schroder, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Alaska, during attendance at the 36th Annual Alaska Tribal Court Conference in Fairbanks, Alaska, May 1, 2019. Dummermuth also attended a Tribal Consultation, facilitated by OJP's Office for Victims of Crime with Alaska Tribal Leaders, their representatives, and stakeholders, to discuss potential future tribal set-aside funding from the federal Crime Victims Fund. Dummermuth is visiting Alaska Native Villages across the state to learn first-hand the public safety, justice system, and victims' services challenges natives, courts and law enforcement agencies faced, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)



Alaska State Trooper Lt. Chad Goeden (right), commander, Alaska Department of Public Safety's Training Academy, reviews the more remote regions of southwestern Alaska on a map during a tour of the academy with Office of Justice Program's Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt Dummermuth (left) and OJP Director of Special Projects Eileen Garry (center) in Sitka, Alaska, April 30. The visit to the academy – which is where all Alaska State Troopers and Village Public Safety Officers are trained and certified – is part of a broader visit by Dummermuth and Garry to Alaska's native villages, courts, and law enforcement facilities to better understand the various challenges Alaska Natives face, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. During their time at the Academy, Dummermuth and Garry learned about the State Troopers' various challenges in providing public safety and law enforcement services, including traveling in hazardous weather conditions, managing cultural differences, recruitment and retention of troopers and funding challenges due to Alaska having no state tax. (Department of Justice photo by Paul Adams)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (center) and Eileen Garry, director of special projects for Office of Justice Programs (left), are provided a tour of the Alaska Department of Public Safety's Training Academy – where all Alaska State Troopers and Village Public Safety Officers are trained and certified – by Academy Commander Lt. Chad Goeden (right) April 30 in Sitka, Alaska. The visit is part of a broader visit by Dummermuth and Garry to Alaska's native villages, courts, and law enforcement facilities to better understand the various challenges Alaska Natives face, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. During their time at the Academy, Dummermuth and Garry learned about the State Troopers' various challenges in providing public safety and law enforcement services, including traveling in hazardous weather conditions, managing cultural differences, recruitment and retention of troopers and funding challenges due to Alaska having no state tax. (Department of Justice photo by Paul Adams)



Chief Judge Peter Esquiro of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska speaks about the Sitka Tribal Court – the state’s oldest tribal court – and its role in the tribe’s justice system during a visit by the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt Dummermuth (off camera) and Eileen Garry, director of special projects for Office of Justice Programs (to Esquiro’s right) and Sitka Director of Social Services Melonie Boord (to Garry’s right) April 30 in Sitka, Alaska. While not all Alaska Native Villages have their own tribal courts, the Sitka Tribal Court handles three specific types of cases, according to the court’s website: Tribal Youth Diversion Effort, domestic violence, and children’s guardianship and adoption cases. The visit by Dummermuth and Garry is part of a broader visit to Alaska’s native villages, courts, and law enforcement facilities to better understand the various challenges Alaska Natives face, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. (Department of Justice photo by Paul Adams)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (center), poses for a photo following a meeting with representatives from the Organized Village of Kake in Juneau, Alaska, April 29, 2019. The meeting was part of a visit to cities and Alaska Native villages across the state by Dummermuth to learn first-hand the various public safety, justice system and victims' services challenges natives, courts and law enforcement agencies face. From left to right are: Village of Kake President Joel Jackson; Matt Dummermuth; Village of Kake Executive Director Dawn Jackson; and Village of Kake Domestic Violence Advocate Heidi Vantrease. Dummermuth hopes to better understand the various challenges Alaska Natives face, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)



Matt Dummermuth, principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (center), poses for a photo following a meeting with representatives of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, in Juneau, Alaska, April 29, 2019. Based in Juneau, the council is a tribal government representing more than 30,000 Tlingit and Haida Indians worldwide, according to the Council's website. The April 29 meeting was part of a visit to cities and Alaska Native Villages across the state by Dummermuth to learn first-hand the various public safety, justice system, and victims' services challenges natives, courts and law enforcement agencies face in Alaska. From left to right are: Council President Richard Peterson; Matt Dummermuth; General Counsel, Office of the President, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska; and Court Administrator Madeline Soboleff. Dummermuth hopes to better understand the various challenges Alaska Natives face, which will help inform possible Justice Department solutions. (Department of Justice photo by Eileen M. Garry)