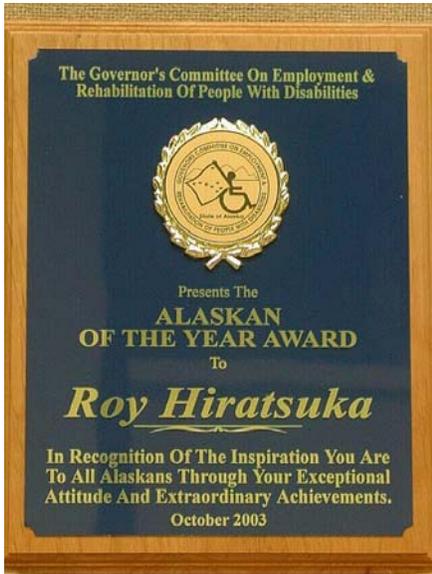
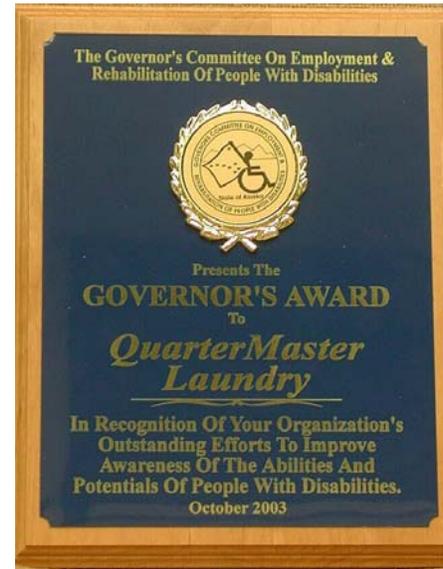


2003 GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE AWARDS RECIPIENTS



Alaskan of the Year: Roy Hiratsuka of Dillingham is a person with a disability who works at the Regional Native Non-Profit agency that operates the local food bank. He assists others in need to gain working skills. He puts individuals from Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation, Public Assistance, Mental Health and the jail to work helping local people. As a result of his consistent work expectations for each employee, the result is that each individual gains self-esteem and respect. Many return to work as a volunteer. Although a wheelchair user, he has not let this stop him from driving his jeep, snow machine or his fishing boat so he can continue in his subsistence lifestyle. He is an advocate for the people and lifestyle of Bristol Bay residents having testified in Juneau at legislative hearings. He is a role model for all Alaskans and the first Alaskan of the Year from Rural Alaska.

Governor's Award: The QuarterMaster Laundry at Ft. Richardson is a federal government facility that handles all the laundry for the U.S. Army both on that post and Ft. Wainwright in Fairbanks. In the past three years, they have hired over 100 people with disabilities. Carolyn Kennedy, plant manager and Brenda Brown, office manager consistently turn to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to hire job-ready employees. These two ladies have hired individuals to fill not only their technical production jobs but also higher-level management positions located throughout the Army post. Tom Rentz supervises QuarterMaster and receives this award on behalf of all employees.



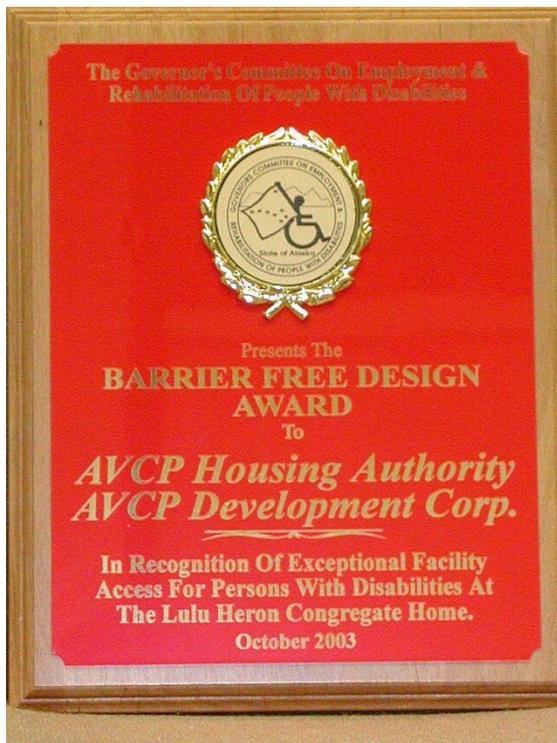
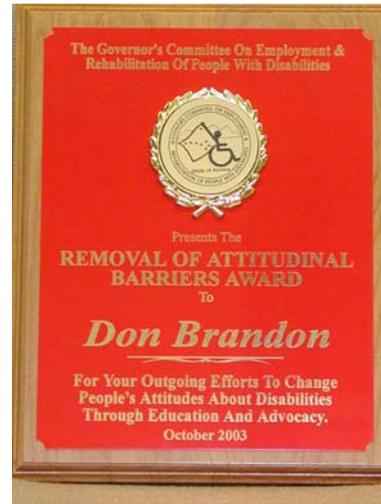
Employer of the Year:

Jane Peterson of Kodiak is a restaurateur who owns and operates the local McDonald's franchise. She regularly employs persons with disabilities and advocates for equality among all her employees. Jane shows her willingness to provide work-scheduling accommodations to her employees so they can participate in outside activities such as Special Olympics. Jane shows a unique ability to incorporate the teaching of life skills with the teaching of job skills. She modifies jobs for particular employees based upon their special needs and unique abilities. She donates the use of her restaurant for community organizations to meet regularly and supports the fund raising efforts of local social service

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organizations. She contributes to programs that promote the safety and well being of others such as the Coast Guard, Kodiak Police Department, Youth Services, Fire Prevention Week, Bicycle Safety Day, etc.

Removal of Attitudinal Barriers: Don Brandon of Juneau serves as the state's ADA Coordinator. He evaluates state facilities to insure they are built to comply with accessibility standards outlined in the American's With Disabilities Act. For many years Don has provided disability awareness and sensitivity training to hundreds of private and public sector employers throughout the state as well as to numerous boards and other organizations. He is one of the most experienced trainers in Alaska to deliver a program called "Windmills," which helps participants explore their own attitudes and beliefs about people with disabilities.

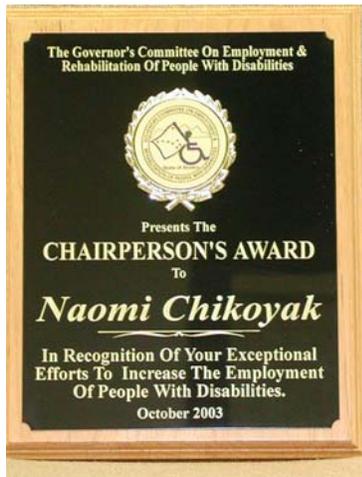


Barrier Free Design Award: The Association of Village Council Presidents of Bethel is this year's award recipient for the outstanding design of the Lulu Heron Congregate Home. This new 16-unit complex provides accessible apartment living for Alaska Native elders and persons with disabilities. It is the most accessible facility in Bethel and is an outstanding model for designers to use. Instead of using building plans from the city and shipping it all to Bethel on a barge for assembly, this facility was designed to fit the unique needs of a rural Alaskan community and the potential users. From the parking lot access features to the halls, common areas, doors, bathrooms, kitchens, signs, decks, laundry facilities, this building is totally compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and then some. A couple unique and culturally appropriate

design features that go beyond the requirements of the ADA include a wheelchair accessible steam bath and smokehouse. It is a most user-friendly, aesthetically pleasing building that one would be pleased to find in any urban city. To find this in a remote Alaskan community where design features often equate to higher expenses is all the more exciting and unusual.

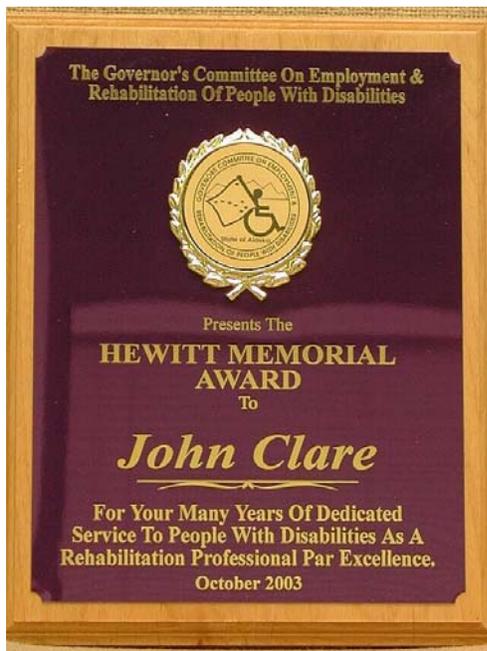
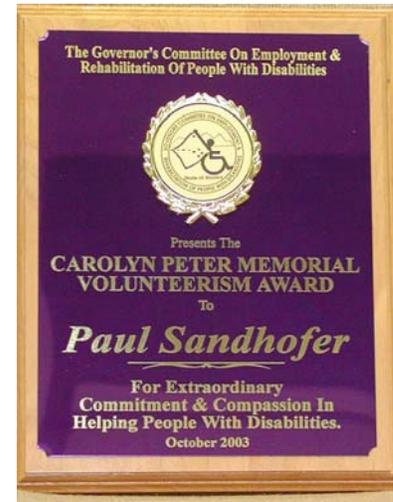
Chairperson's Award: Naomi Chikoyak of Bethel manages the local Subway franchise. She has hired numerous local individuals with disabilities through the state and tribal vocational rehabilitation programs. She provides extra support and encouragement to bring out the best in each person. If they are too shy at first to work with the public in

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front, they start in the back prepping food and other duties until they have the confidence to move up front serving customers directly. She demonstrates flexibility in working with her employees, some of whom experience severe cognitive or emotional problems. She does not use job coaches to help her employees that need more direct supervision. Rather, she shows a unique talent to work with all her employees regardless of whether they have a disability or not.

Carolyn Peter Volunteerism Award: Paul Sandhofer of Anchorage is a volunteer for the board of Directors of Access Alaska and is always looking for ways to improve the quality of life for those with disabilities making sure that they always have a voice. As a volunteer advisory board member of the Chugach State Park, he has helped assess trail and campsite accessibility for users with disabilities. Over the years of helping visitors find accessible places to visit in Alaska, he set up his own online business to aid travelers to Alaska.



John Hewitt Memorial Award: For the past eight years, John Clare of Soldotna has been a traveling, one-person blindness and low vision expert. He is a certified Orientation and Mobility instructor for people who experience blindness and low vision. He is a private pilot with his own plane who loves to fly around Alaska including remote villages to help people who have lost their vision and to provide training or to refer them to other agencies for help. He has almost single-handedly brought blindness and low-vision services to rural Alaskans during this time. Kent Ireton of DVR in Anchorage who nominated John calls him "the consummate professional serving the blind and visually impaired across the state." For many Alaskans who have lost vision, he has been a ray of hope who has come to their door to deliver help in the form of highly specialized rehabilitation training that enables a

person to get on with their life in spite of visual loss. John has recently accepted a job with the Kenai School District, which will occupy his time more fully in one place at the expense of his private business.

The Governor's Committee on Employment & Rehabilitation of People With Disabilities recognizes outstanding individuals, organizations and employers around the state of Alaska each year for their accomplishments. Congratulations to this year's award recipients.

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2003 Awards



Alaskan of the Year Roy Hiratsuka



Governor's Award Quartermaster Laundry



Tom Hildreth of AVCP Housing Authority receives the Barrier Free Design Award for the Lulu Heron Congregate Home in Bethel. Naomi Chikoyak of Subway in Bethel receives the Chairperson's Award for hiring new employees with disabilities.

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Ruth L'Hommedieu (left) presents the Carolyn Peter Volunteerism Award to Rose Sandhofer accepting on behalf of her father, Paul Sandhofer of Anchorage.



Denny Macom (left) presents Don Brandon of Juneau with the Removal of Attitudinal Barriers Award.



Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich congratulates Alaskan of the Year, Roy Hiratsuka.

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2003 Awards



John Clare's Hewitt Memorial Award



Featured speaker, Sabine Becker



Commissioner of Labor, Greg O'Claray presents Employer of the Year Award to Tonya Valerio for Jane Peterson of Kodiak McDonald's.

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Governor's Committee on Employment & Rehabilitation of People With Disabilities



Commissioner Greg O'Claray congratulates Tom Rentz of Quartermaster Laundry

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