

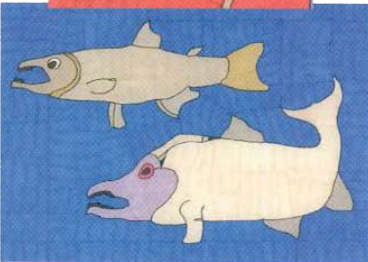
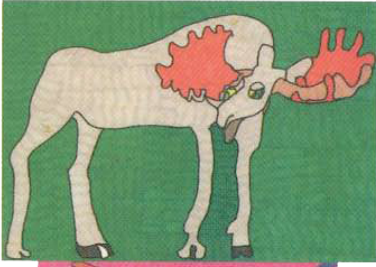
# State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee

## **2010 Annual Report**



*“Killer Whale”*

*Artist: Erik Behnke, Homer, Alaska  
Entrepreneur and Former DVR Client  
[www.brownbearproducts.biz](http://www.brownbearproducts.biz)*



## **Our Cover Artist: Erik David Behnke**

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Erik is a young adult artist, Special Olympic athlete and former Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation participant.

*From his website:* “He was born when his parents were trappers at Lake Clark, now a National Monument area. He grew up in many small towns and villages with his mother, a “bush/rural” teacher. Today he lives in the artist community of Homer.

He has been developing his skills in art for over 18 years with his favorite medium being a combination of pen and felt tip markers. He draws all his black lines in his own creative style and adds color as he imagines.



As an adult with Down's Syndrome and autism, Erik's innocence prevails in all of his art. His goal is to work independently as an Alaskan artist, sharing this colorful, charming view of life.”

### **Brown Bear Products**

P.O. Box 1918, Homer, Alaska 99603  
Email – [brwnbear@alaska.net](mailto:brwnbear@alaska.net)  
[brownbearproducts.biz](http://brownbearproducts.biz)  
(907) 226-2004

# Committee Members

## **Ron Boynton**

Fairbanks  
Business

## **Jim Burton**

Fairbanks  
Former DVR Recipient

## **John Cannon**

Wasilla  
Alaska Workforce  
Investment Board

## **Don Ford**

Dillingham  
Advocate

## **Irma Goodwine**

Bethel  
State Independent  
Living Council

## **Charles Jones**

Fairbanks  
Business

## **Karla Jutzi**

Anchorage  
Community  
Rehabilitation Program

## **Don Levine**

Juneau  
Dept. of Education &  
Early Development

## **SueEllen O'Connor**

Wasilla  
Rehabilitation Counselor

## **Christie Reinhardt**

Anchorage  
Parent Training &  
Information Center

## **Teresa Sarabia**

Juneau  
Tribal VR

## **David Schneider**

Wasilla  
Business

## **Pam Stratton**

Anchorage  
Client Assistance  
Program

## **Cheryl Walsh**

Juneau  
Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation Director

## **Pat Wendt**

Wasilla  
Business

The Alaska State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) is composed of volunteers from around the state who demonstrate a commitment to assist Alaskans with disabilities to achieve their goal for employment.

Appointed by the Governor, the SVRC serves both as an advisor and partner to the Division Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Its members help to shape policy through participation in strategic planning, needs assessment, consumer satisfaction surveys and ongoing program evaluation.

The SVRC reports annually to the Governor and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

The committee includes people with disabilities, community rehabilitation program employees, representatives from independent living, special education and Tribal VR programs, advocates, VR participants and business leaders.

# Strategic Plan

## **DVR MISSION**

To assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

DVR is committed to continuously improving the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to those Alaskans who are in need of and who are receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

DVR utilizes the strategic plan to put into action this concept of continuous improvement. The strategic planning team is composed of the DVR management team and members of the SVRC including the chair, the representative from the Client Assistance Program, the Tribal VR programs and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

DVR along with the leadership of the SVRC has implemented an on-going three-year strategic planning process. The four goals identified below were identified during the 2010 – 2012 planning cycle and provide the organizational foundation for the work of DVR and for the SVRC as well.

### ***Goal 1: High Quality Services***

DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them to obtain employment consistent with their career goals. This goal reflects DVR's continued focus on improving the VR service delivery system with the objectives and strategies identified by the CSNA.

### ***Goal 2: Highly Skilled Staff***

DVR will recruit, employ, retain and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff. This goal reflects the value DVR places on well trained staff and the serious need for succession planning with the anticipated loss of key staff in the near future.

### ***Goal 3: Improve Organizational Systems***

DVR will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems. This goal reflects DVR's commitment to organizational effectiveness through the continual analysis and improvement of agency systems and resources including both the delivery of VR service and administrative functions.

### ***Goal 4: Distinguish Role in Workforce System***

DVR will distinguish its role in the workforce system and leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for employment of individuals with disabilities. This goal is intended to strengthen our connection to other programs that serve individuals with disabilities and to develop relationships with employers.

“The feeling of being able to do something productive and to be a good addition to my local community is beyond words. Getting the feeling of self-worth alone is worth a fortune.”

- DVR Participant



In FY 2010, the SVRC focused on the improvement of transition services for youth with disabilities by holding community forums on transition in conjunction with the SVRC’s quarterly meetings. These forums will continue into FY2011 and when completed will have been held in both urban and rural communities. The SVRC has supported and will continue to support DVR’s effort in the implementation of Project Search. Project Search is a high school transition program offering one-year internships for students with disabilities with a goal of learning competitive work skills.

Other strategies supported by the SVRC include:

- the enhancement of the VR service delivery system through the use of technology;
- the provision of low-vision training to counselors who will provide service to individuals who are blind or have visual impairments;
- the development of additional Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) in rural areas of the state; and
- the provision of training to CRPs with an emphasis on the delivery of transition services to youth with disabilities.



*Fairbanks Community Forum for Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities – September 2010*

# DVR at a Glance

“It has been a long time since I’ve looked forward towards a future in a positive light. Thanks to Voc. Rehab., I’m excited to see what’s coming up around the bend.”

- DVR Participant

The individuals who represent DVR’s caseload are of all ages and from all walks of life. Although each person has his or her own unique story, it can be useful to look at aggregate numbers to understand broad programmatic needs.

The 2010 Comprehensive Needs Assessment provides a complete picture of the Alaska DVR participants and can be found at:

[www.labor.alaska.gov/dvr/about\\_us/Comprehensive-Needs-Assessment-2010.pdf](http://www.labor.alaska.gov/dvr/about_us/Comprehensive-Needs-Assessment-2010.pdf).

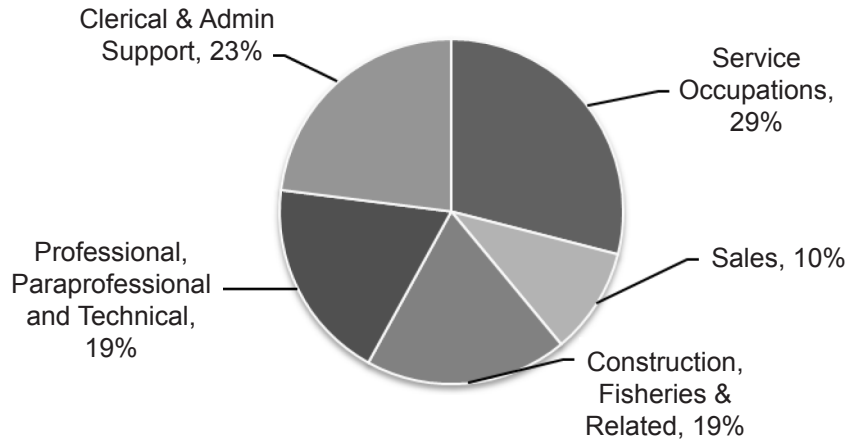
## VR Outcomes

- 4,101 individuals participated in the VR program
- 336 different Alaskan employers hired DVR participants
- 530 individuals exited the DVR program employed
- 80% were employed by the private sector, 14% by federal, state or local governments including school districts and 6% were self-employed
- For those individuals exiting employed, the average hourly wage increased from \$3.69 at application to \$14.58 at closure. The \$14.58 is a 7% increase from the previous year and is 64% of the State’s average hourly wage.

## Who DVR Serves

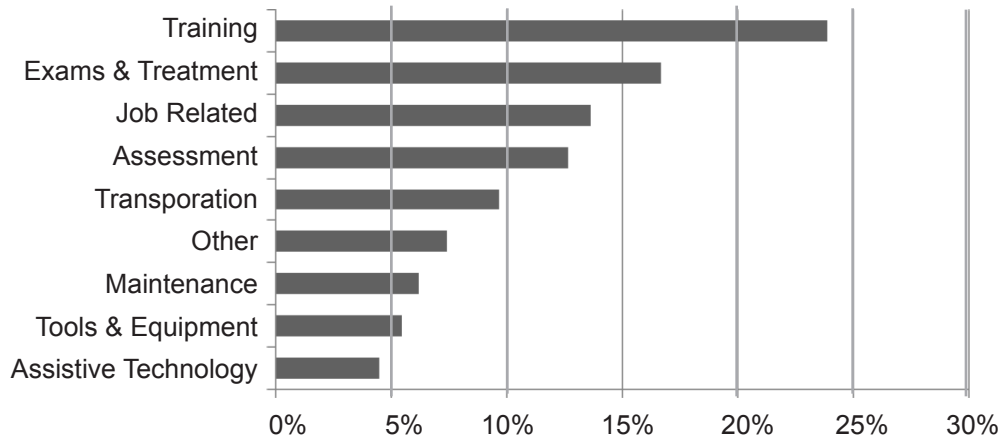
- 1,782 individuals applied for VR services
- 1,201 individuals received information and referral services through DVR’s orientation
- 2,213 individuals received VR services under an Individualized Plan for Employment
- 30% of DVR applicants receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) , Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or a combination of both
- Caucasians at 73% and Alaska Natives at 22% were the largest ethnic groups served
- 88% of DVR participants were significantly disabled with two or more functional limitations to employment
- 38% of DVR participants have a primary disability of a behavioral health diagnosis.
- 37% have a physical or orthopedic disability.

## Occupations of VR Participants

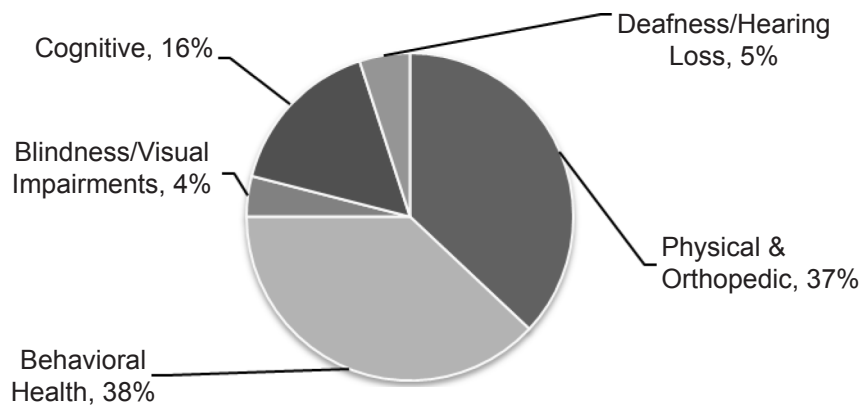


## Purchased VR Services

(\$5.4 million)



## DVR Participants by Disability



# Consumer Satisfaction

## DVR Participants with Open Cases

As part of the triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment surveys were mailed during June, 2010 to all individuals with an open case.

*Key findings from the open case survey:*

- 2,256 surveys were mailed with a 23% response rate.
- 67% of the respondents were receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) as compared to 24% in eligible status and 10% applicant status.
- The disability groups of the respondents were in proportion to DVR participants as a whole.
- 93% respondents said they were treated with courtesy and respect and were involved in choosing their vocational goal.
- 84% felt they received enough information to make good choices, available services were explained, and their phone calls were returned.
- 81% indicated services were provided in a reasonable amount of time.
- The most frequent comments for improving VR services were in the areas of the VR process taking too long and the counselors being too busy.

## Cases Closed from an Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE)

The SVRC collaborates with DVR to conduct an ongoing survey of DVR participants whose cases are closed from an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The report is available at:

[labor.alaska.gov/svrc/reports/consumer-satisfaction-survey-fy2009.pdf](http://labor.alaska.gov/svrc/reports/consumer-satisfaction-survey-fy2009.pdf).

*Key findings of the federal FY2009 closed from IPE satisfaction survey:*

- 847 surveys were mailed with a 24% response rate.
- Overall satisfaction with VR services increased 3% from the previous year to 88% and even higher at 92% for those leaving employed.
- 93% of respondents were willing to refer either friends or family to DVR.
- 99% of respondents felt they were treated with courtesy and respect.
- 90% reported services were provided in a reasonable amount of time which is an 8% increase from FY2008 and was the item with the largest increase.
- The relationship with the VR counselor and the help received are what individuals liked most about their experience with DVR. Nine percent stated the time required for VR services was too long which is down by 3% from the previous year.



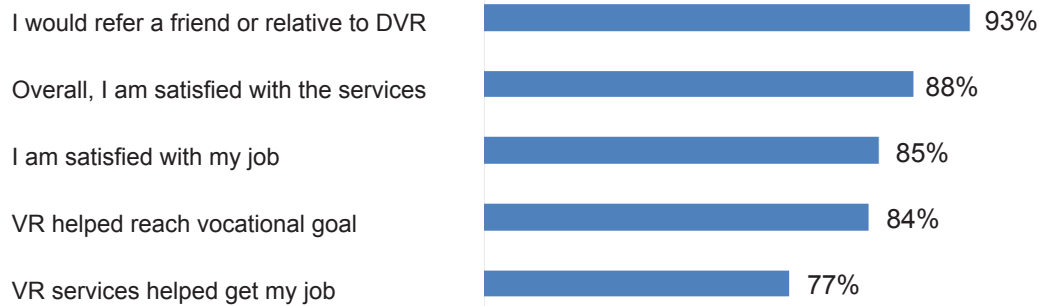
“There is no way that I could have stood up for myself, not 25 years ago, not now, and yet you guys were able to go, ‘You can do this, you can do this,’ and now I’m doing it.”

- DVR Participant



## Consumer Satisfaction Survey 2009 Results

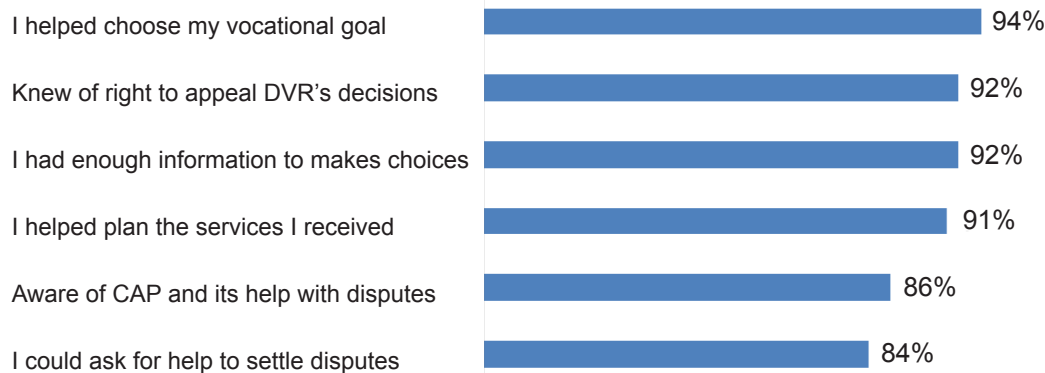
### 1. Program Satisfaction



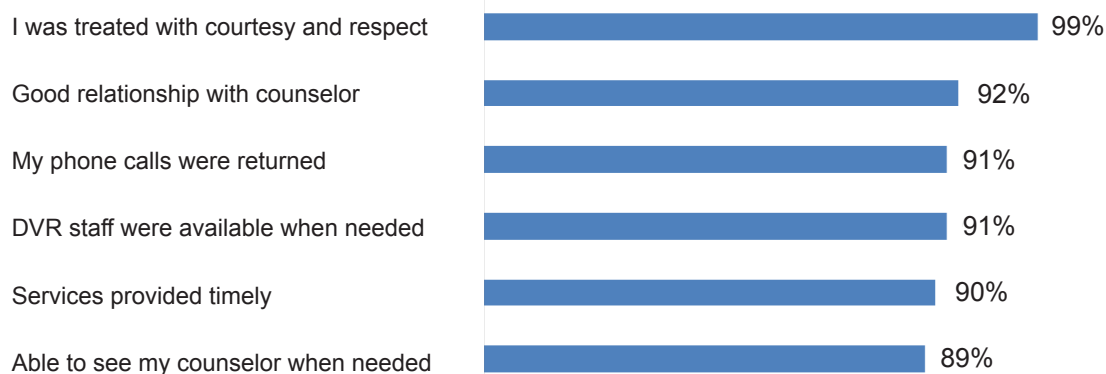
### 2. Program Information



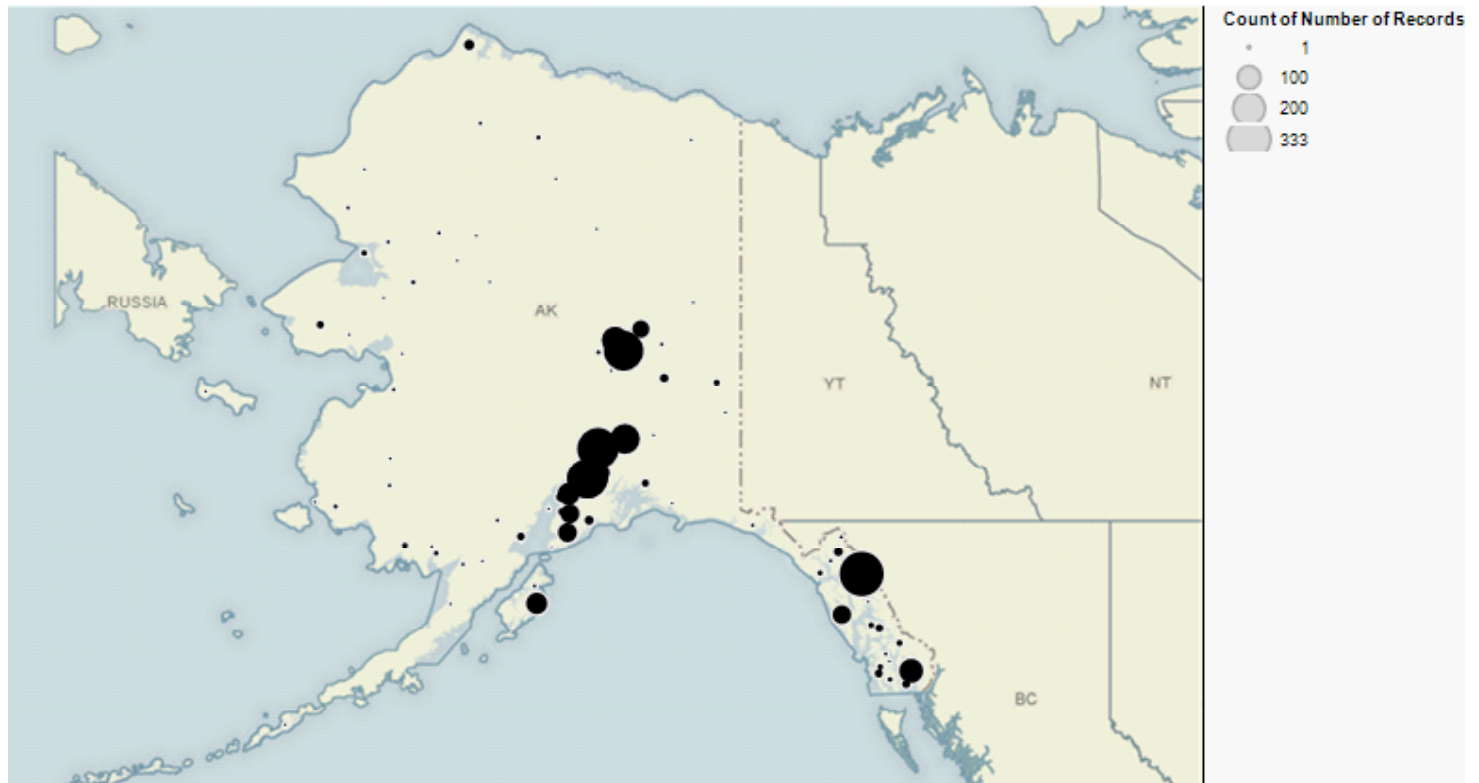
### 3. DVR Participant Involvement



### 4. DVR Participant and Staff Interaction



# DVR Participants



Distribution of all individuals served by DVR in FFY2010 by zip code

Source: DVR Management Information System

The map above demonstrates DVR's presence throughout the state including rural Alaska. The strongest client base is along the primary road corridors of the Kenai Peninsula and from south central Alaska (Anchorage/Wasilla/Palmer) to the interior (Fairbanks). Southeast Alaska is represented with offices in Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan.

"I was homeless for a long time, and now I'm working with DVR and being led through doors that I didn't know were there to open."

"Thanks to DVR, I'm going to school and I'm going to get my medical assistant associate's degree within two years. They are helping me get back on my feet so that I can get back out in the world and back out to society and do something good."

"They (DVR) provided me with counseling, they helped me discover how I could work around my disabilities, and bring the skills that I already had into new perspective."

# The Committee Seeks Your Input

*The State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee invites you to:*

## **Apply for Membership**

If you care about issues pertaining to disability and employment, the SVRC encourages you to apply for committee membership.

You may apply online at: [gov.alaska.gov/parnell/services/boards-commissions/apply-online.html](http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell/services/boards-commissions/apply-online.html)

You may also apply by sending a completed boards and commissions application, resume and a brief letter explaining your desire to serve the State of Alaska, to:

### **Office of Governor Sean Parnell**

Attention: Jason Hooley, Director of Boards & Commissions  
P.O. Box 110001, Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Contact the Boards and Commissions office:

**Call:** 907-465-3500

**Fax:** 907-465-8110

**E-mail:** [boards@alaska.gov](mailto:boards@alaska.gov)

## **Attend a Meeting or Public Forum**

All State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee meetings and forums are open to the public. Meeting dates are available at [labor.alaska.gov/svrc/calendar.htm](http://labor.alaska.gov/svrc/calendar.htm). Notification of the meeting times and the agenda are posted 30 days prior to the meeting at [notes3.state.ak.us/pn/pubnotic.nsf](http://notes3.state.ak.us/pn/pubnotic.nsf).

More information about the SVRC is available at [labor.alaska.gov/svrc/](http://labor.alaska.gov/svrc/) including minutes from previous meetings and DVR participant and stakeholder public testimony.

## **Share Your Thoughts and Ideas Directly with the SVRC**

**Call:** Voice/TDD 907-269-3570 or 1-800-478-4378

**Write:** Chair, State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
1251 Muldoon Road, Suite 101  
Anchorage, AK 99504-2096

**Fax:** 907-269-3632

**E-mail:** [jane.mcintosh@alaska.gov](mailto:jane.mcintosh@alaska.gov)

# **State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee**

## **2010 Annual Report**

Sean Parnell, Governor

Clark Bishop, Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development

### **Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Juneau, AK 99801-1894