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Alaska Power & Telephone Welcomes New Heat Pump Deployment Initiative to its Prince of Wales Island Service Area

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Alaska Power & Telephone Company (AP&T) is excited to announce that Spruce Root – a southeast Alaska non-profit and Community Development Financial Institution – was selected to receive a \$2.5m US DOE grant for a heat pump deployment project for Prince of Wales Island. The project, titled “Decarbonizing the Tongass with Tribally Owned Heat Pumps,” will be a multi-year initiative to add 240 air source heat pumps to residential homes in Prince of Wales Island communities. The program will also include a workforce development component, training local Alaska technicians to maintain heat pumps and perform new installations on a sustainable basis into the future.

Prince of Wales has an abundance of hydropower provided by the Black Bear Lake, South Fork, and Hiilangaay hydropower projects. However, most residents heat their homes and businesses with oil- or propane-based heating systems, using fossil fuels barged in from out of state. Air source heat pumps will utilize local renewable energy from the AP&T’s utility system, helping to more fully utilize existing hydropower resources, and evolve the local microgrid. The project will help reduce emissions, improving air quality within Prince of Wales communities, and the Tongass National Forest.

The project builds upon the success of an innovative heat pump incentive partnership between AP&T and Sealaska Corporation. Beginning in 2022, the two businesses developed a consumer incentive program for heat pumps to further clean energy development and mutually-held environmental goals. Spruce Root – a Sealaska partner – joined in efforts to seek federal grant funding to scale up the initiative to achieve more rapid penetration of heat pump technology. The three entities worked together to apply for funds until finally achieving success via the US DOE’s “Energy Improvement in Remote Areas” program.

Spruce Root Executive Director Alana Peterson remarked: *“Spruce Root is excited to be partnering with private industry to improve the community and environmental well-being on Prince of Wales Island. It was important to design this application to fund the purchase and installation of residential heat pumps, and provide training to the on-island workforce for installation and maintenance of the heat pumps into the future. AP&T was integral in developing our application for this funding and we hope to continue bringing more funding into our region through these types of partnerships.”*

AP&T CEO Bill Marks reflected: *“This new initiative represents a significant step forward for clean energy and beneficial electrification in rural southeast Alaska. AP&T is proud of its partnerships with indigenous and non-profit stakeholders. We are also thankful for the good work of Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, and Representative Mary Peltola, who have worked tirelessly to make federal programs like this available to meet the needs of rural Alaskans. We look forwards to collaborating to help make Spruce Root’s efforts a success for the region, and a model for other Alaska communities.”*

You can learn more about Spruce Root at: <https://www.spruceroot.org/> AP&T (OTCMKTS:APTL) is an employee- and investor-owned utility providing diverse services in 40 locations. Additional company information can be found at: www.aptalaska.com

“AP&T – Employee-Owned, Community-Minded.”