



Coastal Villages Region Fund Announces Leadership Transition

Eric Deakin retires after 18 years; Nick Souza appointed to CEO

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, May 21, 2026 —Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) announced today that Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Eric Deakin is retiring from the organization after 18 years of service, including six years as executive director and CEO. He will become an advisor to The Truth Alaska. The CVRF Board of Directors has appointed Nick Souza, previously the organization’s director of sales and marketing, to serve as CEO.

Deakin joined CVRF in 2008 and was named chief operating officer in 2018 before being appointed executive director and CEO in 2019. His tenure was marked by significant organizational growth and positioned CVRF well for the years ahead.

“On behalf of the board of directors, I want to thank Eric for his years of dedicated service to Coastal Villages Region Fund,” said Larson Hunter, chairman of the CVRF Board of Directors. “Under his leadership, CVRF strengthened its fisheries operations, expanded opportunities for member communities and positioned the organization for continued long-term success.”

During Deakin’s tenure, CVRF achieved two of the highest revenue years in company history; acquired additional fishing vessels and quota to become a participant in all three pollock sectors; led the industry in salmon bycatch avoidance through innovative gear and fishing methods; and established the Community Quota Share program, enabling all member tribes to become owners and participants in the crab fishery. He also led rapid response to two historic and catastrophic storms that hit CVRF’s member communities; oversaw the acquisition of a Honda dealership that has enhanced rural service and training while adding new revenue to fund community programs; and launched innovative initiatives such as geographic information systems mapping using drones and advanced software to support rural infrastructure development.

“It has been the honor of my career to serve Coastal Villages Region Fund and the residents of its 20 communities,” Deakin said. “Years ago, I joined CVRF because I believe deeply in the organization’s mission to create long-term opportunity and economic strength for western Alaska communities. That commitment has only deepened over the years, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside such dedicated employees, board members and community leaders.”



Souza has worked in key leadership roles at CVRF for 20 years and brings extensive operational knowledge as well as longstanding industry and community relationships to the CEO role. He previously served as director of sales and marketing, working closely with executive leadership, vessel operations and fisheries management to support strategic initiatives for CVRF’s member communities and employees.

“Coastal Villages Region Fund’s mission and commitment to the region is unchanged,” said Souza. “I’m honored by the confidence the board of directors has in me, and I look forward to working alongside our staff, board members and partners to continue delivering the programs, benefits and opportunities our villages depend on.”

CVRF remains financially and operationally strong, and the operation’s fisheries, regional programs and strategic initiatives will continue without interruption.

For more information about Coastal Villages Region Fund, visit www.coastalvillages.org.

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About Coastal Villages Region Fund

Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) uses Bering Sea fishing rights granted to it by the Community Development Quota (CDQ) program to foster sustainable and diversified local economies in western Alaska. CVRF is a 501(c)(4) Alaska nonprofit corporation and operations in 20 member communities along the west coast of Alaska, from Scammon Bay to Platinum. CVRF generates the money to fund its programs by harvesting fish in the Bering Sea with its own fleet of vessels.

CVRF is dedicated to creating sensible, tangible, and long-term economic development opportunities that generate hope for the more than 9,100 residents of its communities. It is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of one member democratically elected from each community. CVRF is the largest Alaskan-owned seafood company in history and the first CDQ group to own and control the vessels that harvest the vast majority of its CDQ allocations. For more info, visit www.coastalvillages.org.

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