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Village Public Safety Office Program Graduates 12 Today



VPSO graduates are as pictured from left to right starting in front row, Clinton Wiehl, Deon Jones, Jody Potts, William Buck, Curtis Nayokpuk and Glenn Bixler. Second row, from left to right: Jack Linn, Lucas Stotts, David Askoak, Gusty Tunguing, Carlos Navarro and James Gregory Jr.

(SITKA, Alaska) – The Village Public Safety Officer Program will graduated 12 cadets from the Department of Public Safety Training Academy in Sitka at 1 p.m. today. The ceremony was at the Sheet’ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Community House in Sitka.

The graduation added 12 to Village Public Safety Officer ranks. They are David Askoak II of Newhalen; Glenn Bixler of False Pass; William Buck of Gakona; James Gregory Jr. of Lower Kalskag; Deon Jones of Hydaburg; Jack Linn Jr. of Gambell; Carlos Navarro of Golovin; Curtis Nayokpuk of Shishmaref; Jody Potts of Gulkana; Lucas Stotts of Shaktoolik; Gusty Tunguing III of Ekwok; and Clinton Wiehl of Beaver.

VPSO Academy classes are conducted only once a year, and consist of 10 weeks of intense training complete with both rigorous physical regimen and heavy academic load. In addition to class attendance, each cadet prepares for weekly inspections while seeing to their own personal responsibilities, as well as testing every Saturday on classes taught during the previous week. On any given Saturday, the cadets can be expected to take up to a total of five tests. Specific areas of study include health and fitness, ethics, use of force, rural patrol, holding cell and guard hire procedures, professional police communications, emotionally disturbed persons, criminal justice overview, community oriented policing, cross cultural communication, cold water survival, Oleo Capsicum (OC) spray, baton, Taser, defensive tactics, report writing, first aid, criminal code, driving while intoxicated and field sobriety testing, stress management, interview and interrogation, crime scene investigation, physical evidence, search and rescue, search and seizure, firearms awareness, bloodborne pathogens, Title IV, juvenile justice, domestic violence, sexual assault, officer survival, fire service, probation and parole and alcohol and drug interdiction.

The VPSO Program began in the late 1970s as a means of providing rural Alaskan communities with needed public safety services at the local level. It is designed to train and employ individuals residing within the village as first responders to public safety emergencies such as search and rescue, fire protection, emergency medical assistance, crime prevention and basic law enforcement. The presence of these officers has had a significant impact upon improving the quality of life in participating villages. As a result, VPSOs are generally the first to respond to calls for help from members of the community, hence their motto "First Responders, Last Frontier".

Employment opportunities are available within the VPSO Program. To qualify, individuals must be 21 years of age, a U.S. citizen, possess a high school diploma or equivalent and be of good moral character. To learn more, please refer to [Village Public Safety Officer Program Home](#) at <http://www.dps.state.ak.us/ast/vpso/> or contact Statewide VPSO Coordinator Sgt. Leonard Wallner, in Anchorage at (888) 619-1410 or (907) 248-1410.

Photos of the graduation class can be found at [VPSO Graduation](#).