



ViBES

Viabile Business Enterprises for Rural Alaska

Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska Anchorage

&

University of Alaska Center for Economic Development



[Research Summary](#) [Map](#) [Business Matrix](#) [Profiles of Success](#) [Full Report](#) [Advisory Board](#) [Contact Us](#)

The Viable Business Enterprises for Rural Alaska (VIBES) research project studied what types of small business enterprises might be viable in different sizes and types of rural Alaska communities. The report both describes the existing patterns of business activities in rural Alaska and identifies community characteristics that favor different numbers and types of enterprises. The target communities are small, rural communities off the road system with populations ranging from 200 to 1,400 persons. The data comes from four primary sources: the Alaska business license file; a community database compiled from a wide range of public sources; a random sample survey of business enterprises; and in-depth, case study interviews with selected businesses. The products are designed for use by the Center for Economic Development (CED), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), regional economic development planners around the state and their small business and community development clients. The objective is to increase the success of private sector income generating business activities in rural Alaska.

VIBES in the news:

[Currency bypasses the Bush, May 5, 2008. pA-1](#)

[The Tundra Drum Article 1](#)

[Setbacks generate success stories, May 6, 2008. p A-1](#)

[The Tundra Drum Article 2](#)

[Village rallies around art co-op, May 7, 2008. p A-1](#)

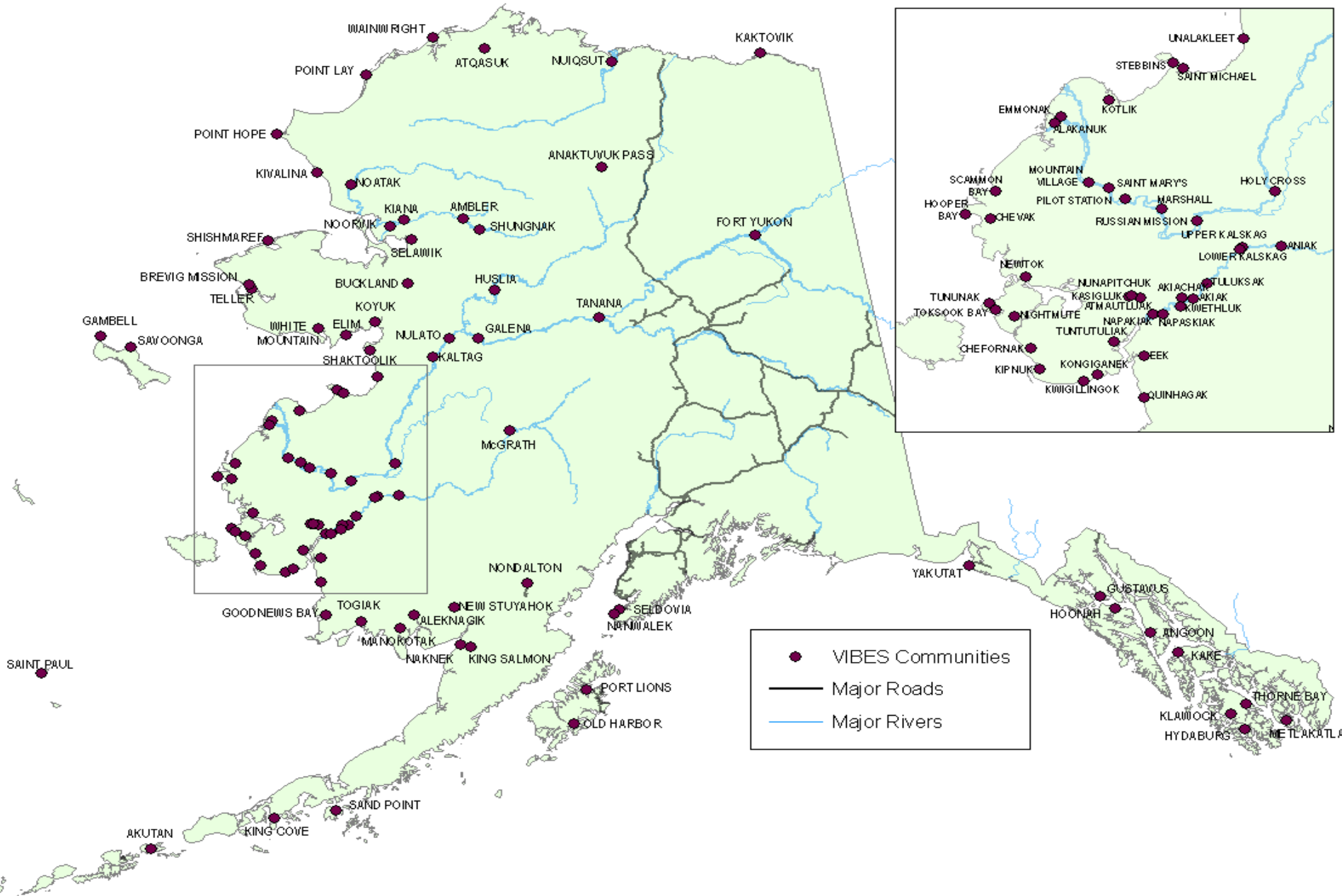
<http://media.aprn.org/2008/ann-20080305-04.mp3>



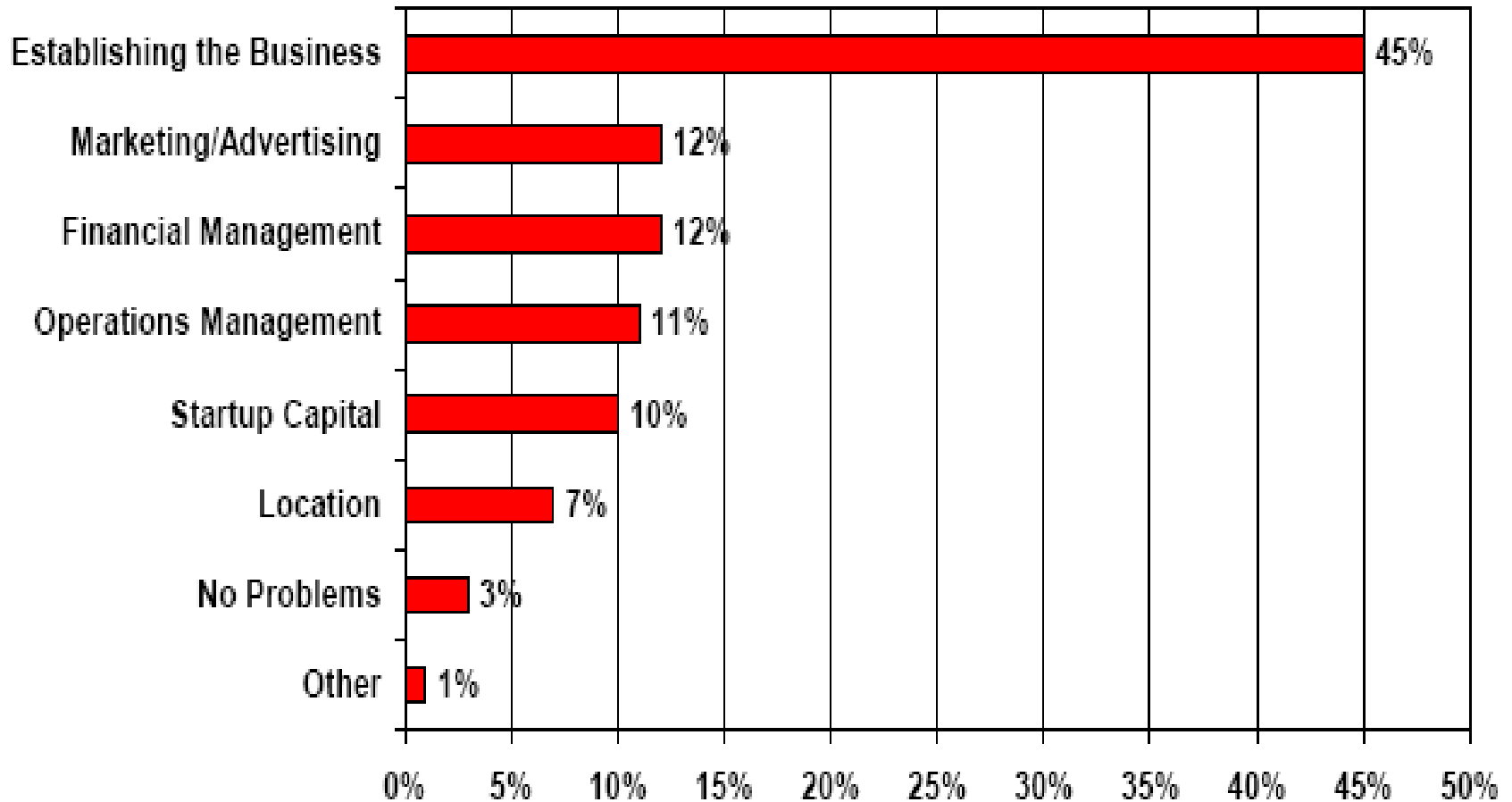
What works?

**WHICH COMMUNITIES HAVE
ADVANTAGES?**

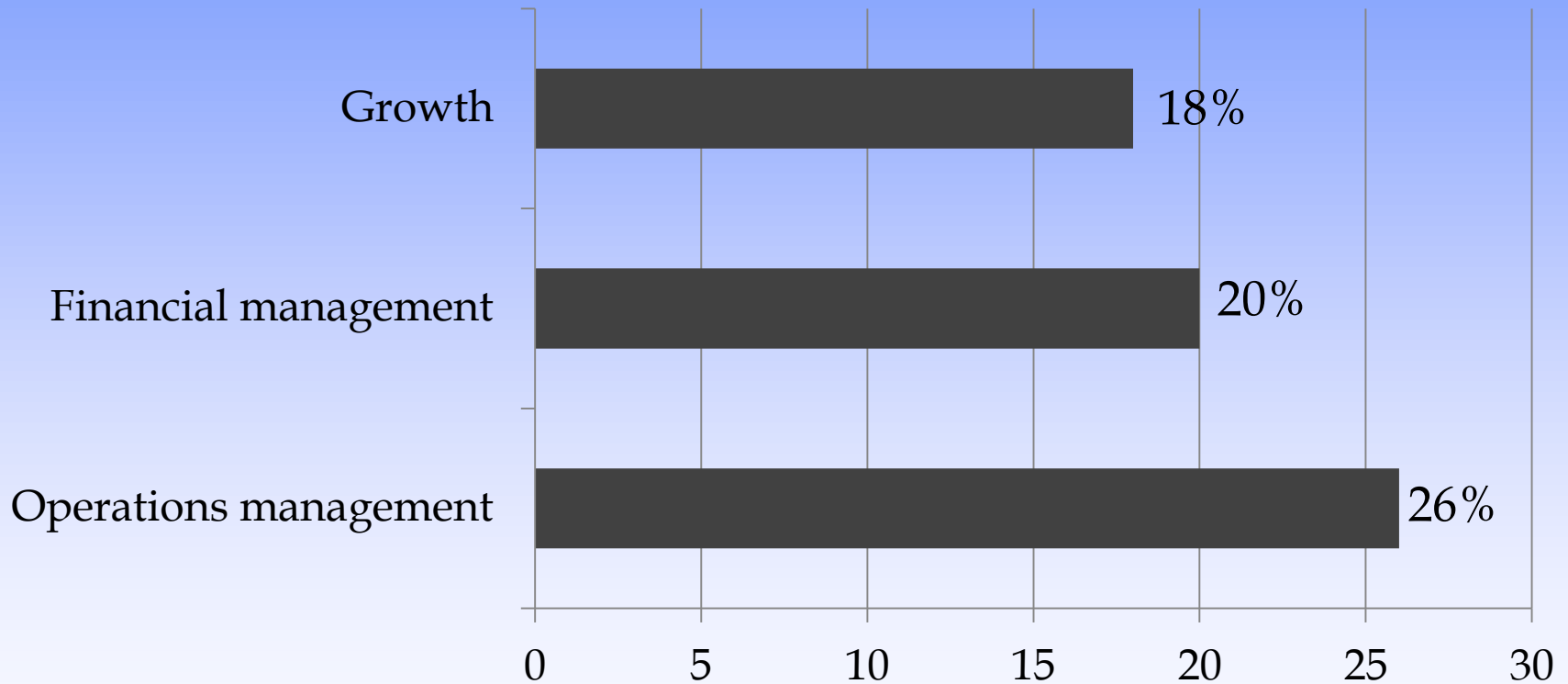
Rural communities off road system, population 200 to 1,400



Start up Challenges



Current Challenges



23 Case Studies



Challenges

1. Finding employees/
work ethic
2. Cooperation among
community
3. Insurance, bonding,
contractual relations
- banking
4. Marketing from rural
Alaska
5. Energy costs

Help requested

- Loans and grants
- Marketing assistance
- Business assistance

Keys to Success



- ❖ Do what you love
- ❖ Do what you know
- ❖ Hard work
- ❖ Family support
- ❖ Community cohesion
- ❖ Training and technical assistance
- ❖ Start small

Statewide issues



- ❖ High energy costs
- ❖ Dependence on by-pass mail
- ❖ Need for reliable internet connectivity
- ❖ Expand financial literacy programs for youth
- ❖ Expand opportunities for business internships for rural entrepreneurs