



Aleutian GREENS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Farming for a Sustainable Future
Partnership Produces Hydroponic Greens in the Aleutians**

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, October 6, 2017 – The Aleutian Housing Authority (AHA), a non-profit organization who primarily provides affordable housing, and Blaine Shaishnikoff, a Qawalangin Tribal Member and nearly lifelong Unalaska resident, are pleased to announce their partnership and the recent formation of their company, Aleutian Greens, LLC.

Located in Unalaska, Alaska, nearly 800 miles southwest of Anchorage, the innovative startup is using a sophisticated hydroponic growing system to supply the community with the first-ever, locally-grown produce. Growing up in Unalaska, co-owner and operator Blaine, recognized the challenges his community faced with not having a reliable and sustainable food source. “Our people have lived here for thousands of years and have always provided for themselves by living a subsistence lifestyle. Providing my community and my region with a locally-grown, quality food source is something that I feel very strongly about and it is what we’re trying to do.”

In 2014, Blaine competed and was a finalist in the Aleutian Marketplace Contest hosted by the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA) and the Aleut Corporation (TAC) for his hydroponic greenhouse submission. In 2016, he began talking with AHA Executive Director, Dan Duame, who was also considering a form of hydroponic growing in the region after attending a VH Hydroponics seminar during the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC). “I was interested in doing a project like this for some time, but realized that to be successful, we would need a strong local partner. After talking with Blaine it did not take long to realize that he had the potential to be that partner and it was the right time to do it,” said Dan.

Their conversations sprouted into a partnership in early 2017 and after receiving approval from a very supportive AHA Board of Commissioners, they teamed with VH Hydroponics (VHH) to design and build two containerized growing systems (CGS) out of 40 foot shipping containers. “VH Hydroponics is thrilled and excited to be a part of Blaine’s and AHA’s efforts to bring healthy, fresh food to the Aleutian Chain. We are honored to have such capable and innovative partners out there and we’re excited for the people of Unalaska,” said Dan Perpich, Founder.

The high-tech units were constructed in Spokane, Washington and shipped via Coastal Transportation from Seattle. They arrived in Unalaska on July 1st. Each container is capable of producing 450 heads of various lettuce types per week, as well as a large variety of herbs and other leafy greens. The hydroponic method allows for a much shorter growing cycle than traditional farming – as short as six weeks – and is not restricted by weather or seasons. The adaptable and scalable planting schedules allow for

customized harvests that can be scheduled weekly, depending on customer requests. The growing environment is optimal for producing a consistent, quality, nutrient rich product that is pesticide and GMO free.

Mr. Duame retired from his position as AHA Executive Director in late June and handed the operation over to Deputy Director, Erin Wilson. “We’re known for providing affordable housing in our region, but this venture reinforces our mission of also being a major generator of economic development. Growing up in King Cove, we didn’t always have access to fresh, quality foods. Our hope is to reduce our region’s reliance on shipped produce and supply our people with the first ever, locally-grown food source,” she stated.

In late September, the company distributed their first harvest of nearly two-thousand crops featuring “Unalaska Grown” butterhead and green leaf lettuces, kale, mizuna, arugula, basil, Thai basil and dill to residents and businesses throughout the community. Boxes of the locally-grown produce also made their way to the communities of Akutan, Cold Bay and King Cove aboard the M/V Tustumena on its last Aleutian voyage of the year. “We’ve had a real good response! Everyone is excited about the taste and the freshness and they keep asking us where they can buy it,” said Blaine.

The company will start by selling a variety of leafy greens and culinary herbs to local grocery stores, restaurants and commercial kitchens, but the owners already see the opportunities for expansion. They are considering their options to serve the surrounding communities of Atka, Akutan and Nikolski with the hope of ultimately serving all of the Aleutian and Pribilof Island communities. The business can easily connect multiple containers to expand growing capacity to meet customer demand.

Although there are nearly 800 miles between them, as partners, Blaine and Erin are dedicated to achieving their ultimate goal and their company’s mission: *To enhance the health and well-being of our Aleutian residents by providing a locally-grown, sustainable source of fresh foods that are of the highest quality and nutritional value, year-round.*

For updates, please refer to the company’s Facebook page - Aleutian Greens, LLC

About Aleutian Housing Authority

Aleutian Housing Authority is a regional Native non-profit organization and the primary provider of affordable housing in the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands region. Headquartered in Anchorage, AHA manages 294 units in 10 rural communities and is a major generator of regional economic development and employment and job training opportunities. AHA manages a broad range of federal and state programs which are primarily grant funded. As a partner in Aleutian Greens, LLC., AHA manages the administrative functions including accounting and advertising and provides general oversight of the operations.

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About Blaine Shaishnikoff

Blaine has lived most of his life in Unalaska. He and his wife Catina (also a nearly lifelong resident of Unalaska) have three beautiful children, Hayden (8), Laneah (6) and Keenan (5 mo.). Blaine is an active member of his community. He has served on several boards and currently holds a seat on the

Qawalangin Tribal Council. He and his wife enjoy raising their children in Unalaska and spend their free time hanging out with their family whom they are very close to. Blaine, who “let’s God guide the opportunity”, can trace his roots to a long line of entrepreneurs. His grandfather, the late Larry Shaishnikoff, started the first movie theatre in Unalaska and was also the owner of the renowned Elbow Room. His parents, Bill and Diane Shaishnikoff, are the owners and operators of Bering Shai Rock and Gravel. It’s no wonder that Blaine, at the age of twenty-seven, is now a third generation Shaishnikoff to own and operate his own local business. As a partner in Aleutian Greens, LLC., Blaine, with the help of his wife Catina, manage the company’s overall local operations.

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About VH Hydroponics

[VH Hydroponics](#) is an agricultural technology company that designs and builds smart farming solutions for use around the world. Headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska, the company’s initial vision was to solve food production challenges inherent in northern climates. Their solution, a 40’ Containerized Growing System (CGS), came to market in 2015. On its fourth generation, this industrial grade turnkey farm-in-a-box is optimized for high yield, year round production. To complement their existing product line and bring commercial growing techniques to consumers, VHH has developed a cabinet-style in home hydroponic growing system. This product enables a family to grow vegetables inside the home all year round. A veteran owned company, VHH manufactures all their systems in the United States in a 120,000 sq. ft. facility located in Spokane, Washington, with emphasis on commitment to both environmental, health and safety excellence.

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