

Kotzebue

Twenty-six miles above the Arctic Circle, a traveler will find the City of Kotzebue, which is located approximately 549 air miles northwest of Anchorage on the Baldwin Peninsula in Kotzebue Sound. Kotzebue is home to over 3,000 people, 75% of which are Alaska Native. The facility, a two-story building with a small apartment on the second floor, seats around 80 people. While the congregation is able to provide housing and a small stipend, most pastors have either been appointed missionaries or have been bi-vocational.



Community:

Location – The City of Kotzebue rests upon a “sand spit at the end of the Baldwin Peninsula in the Kotzebue Sound where the Noatak, Kobuk, and Selawik rivers end,” (City of Kotzebue). Kotzebue is 549 air miles northwest of Anchorage and 26 miles above the Arctic Circle and contains 27 square miles of land and 18 square miles of water (Explore North).

Travel/Transportation – Most people coming to Kotzebue do so by air. Many locals will boat between communities. Kotzebue serves as a supply hub for 10 satellite villages in the Northwest Arctic Borough and one in the North Slope Borough (City of Kotzebue).

History – The Kotzebue site has been inhabited by Inupiat Eskimos for approximately 600 years. According to Explore North, “Kikiktagruk was the hub of ancient arctic trading routes long before European contact, due to its coastal location near a number of rivers.” In 1818, a German explorer, Otto Van Kotzebue, discovered North Sound; and the community was named after the sound when a post office was established in 1899 (Explore North).

Population – According to “City Data,” Kotzebue’s population in 2019 was 3,246 people which is up from 2000 by 5.3% (City Data).

Demographics – City Data notes the following races in Kotzebue: Native Alaskan (74.3%), White (17.3%), Hispanic (2.8%), and Black (1.9%). The estimated median household income in 2019 was \$78,912 which is up from 2000 which was \$57,163. For further details, please refer to this link in City Data: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Kotzebue-Alaska.html>.

Jobs – Kotzebue has an unemployment rate of 12.2% with the average income of a Kotzebue resident being \$28,419 a year. Most of the available jobs are in the transportation/warehousing, retail, and construction industries (BestPlaces). Please refer to this article for information on the economy in Kotzebue: <https://www.citytowninfo.com/places/alaska/kotzebue>.

School – For a listing of the public school, please click this link in CityTownInfo.com: <https://www.citytowninfo.com/places/alaska/kotzebue>.

Church History:

Kotzebue Assembly of God was established by Jim and Linda Schulz in 1979. In June of 1980, Pastor Schulz purchased land and a building project began. The new church facility was dedicated in 1982. Chuck and Vicky Mays served in Kotzebue from 1992-1999 and Jim and Nancy Mercer served in Kotzebue from 1999-2006. Sister Mercer, looking back over their ministry, recalls about church growth, “(It) was due to the emphasis placed on the congregation being empowered and equipped to do the work of the ministry.” More recently (2017), Beau Abernathy noted between 60-80 people in attendance, with half of those being children and youth.

Sources:

“City of Kotzebue...Gateway to the Arctic.” City of Kotzebue.

<https://www.cityofkotzebue.com/>

Accessed May 25, 2021.

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