BREAKING STEREOTYPES:
REPORTING ON RURAL ALASKA

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ABSTRACT

This project has two components. The professional skills component is a seven-episode podcast and accompanying website about life in McCarthy, Alaska, a tiny community situated at the end of a 60-mile dirt road surrounded by the country’s largest national park. The podcast was informed by personal experiences and interviews with 18 area residents about life off-grid in a remote Alaskan community. The professional analysis discusses current news coverage of Alaska Native communities and peoples and provides advice for reporters about best practices when covering Alaska Native communities and peoples. The research draws on an analysis of 51 articles about Alaska Native peoples and communities, 25 of which were written by a Native-run newspaper and 26 of which were written by a non-Native run newspaper. That analysis then informed nine interviews with writers, academics and current or former reporters who are Alaska Native or who work in rural Alaska Native communities. The final article presents the strengths and weaknesses of current coverage, thoughts about what reporters could be doing better and important points to keep in mind before reporting on Alaska Native peoples and communities and on indigenous communities in general.