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# Multi-Million Dollar Contracts Keep Bering Straits Corp. on the Go

Reprinted from  
All-Alaska Weekly June 27, 1975

One of the most active Native regional corporations is Bering Straits Native Corp. headquartered in Nome but soon to have a Fairbanks branch office.

Headed by Tom Drake, who was superintendent of the State Jail here for a number of years, the corporation is involved in building the nine-story 165-room Fairbanks Plaza Hotel as described in last week's issue.

But it is also involved in transportation, construction, and a multiplicity of businesses.

At the present time it is beginning a tug and barge operation at the Yukon River, near where the bridge is being built and the air cushion transporters are being operated.

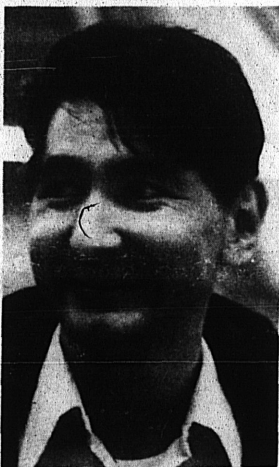
For that operation, pontoons were transported here from Washington State.

The firm owns two-thirds of the stock of Alaska Truck Transport, Inc., a trucking firm with terminals in Fairbanks, Valdez and Anchorage and interstate authority to operate between Montana-Idaho and Alaska.

The firm has commitments to transport commodities and heavy freight to Prudhoe Bay and is finding it time consuming crossing

the Yukon River on the hovercraft transporters.

For that reason it is setting up a tug and barge operation, primarily for its own use, but also with the thought in mind that it can probably do other business as



**THOMAS DRAKE** heads the Bering Straits Native Corporation.

well.

Most of the Bering Straits activities are located in an

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# Bering Corporation...

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industrial area that is developed south of Fairbanks.

It has a 42% interest in Life Systems, Inc., the only indoor concrete products firm in the Interior. It has 60% interest in Mobat Alaska, Inc., a firm which sells new tires and recaps heavy truck, rolligon, and off the road truck tires.

The Bering Straits Leasing Corp. which will operate the Yukon River tug and barge service is a wholly owned subsidiary of the regional corporation.

The corporation also has a construction business which has been successful in obtaining a number of contracts.

It is involved in a joint 50-50 venture with Central Construction, Co. of Seattle in an \$11 million road construction project—building the Alaska portion of the Skagway to Carcross highway.

It has a \$1,805,000 construction job for the Corps of Engineers at Galena, asphaltting the runway at Galena.

It has a \$1.9 million road job in Nome. It involves reconstructing the Nome-Solomon Road which was devastated by flood last November and putting the ferry system back into operation at the mouth of Safety Lagoon.

The construction division also is planning to build a four-story office building in Nome, with about 6,000 square feet on each floor.

The first floor will probably be for commercial space. But other floors will house the regional corporation's headquarters, two of its non-profit arms, the Bering Straits Native Association and the Norton Sound Health Corporation. And it will probably also house the Bering Straits

Regional Housing Authority.

The authority has taken delivery of some of the 180 homes which it will construct in the next 18 months in six of its villages.

In Fairbanks, when the regional corporation ran into a difficult housing problem and could not find housing for its employees it purchased four apartment buildings at 1422 Noble Street. The buildings were purchased from local developer Daniel Gaudiane.

Although the corporation worked with UV Industries last year, they're not doing so this year. The corporation does have an agreement to lease some of its land adjacent to Lost River Mining Corporation to that entity, for the purposes of developing a fluoroite, tin and tungsten mine.

Lost River was to get started this year but that company became engaged in additional exploratory work and the mine will not start until next year. According to Tom Drake, of Bering Straits Corporation, a \$70 million construction job will be needed before it can go into operation.

According to Drake, it is expected that the corporation will be involved in about \$3 million in construction of the hotel with subsidiaries providing electrical, mechanical, concrete and steel for the Plaza Hotel.

He said that about 150 to 180 of Bering Straits personnel will be working in Fairbanks and when the hotel is completed, about 80 will be working there on a full-time basis.

"Next year there will be about 200 to 250 of our people in Fairbanks," he said.