

# Eagle residents approve IRA constitution with 32-5 vote

by the Tanana Chiefs Conference  
for the Tundra Times

**FAIRBANKS** — Native voters in Eagle approved a proposed Indian Reorganization Act constitution by a vote of 32 to five in an election with a 73 percent turnout of the tribe's registered voters.

The April 29 election was the first election to adopt a tribal constitution under the IRA in Alaska since passage

of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The vote follows an 11-year effort by the village to organize its tribal government under the federal law. Originally, the village requested the election on July 11, 1978.

The request by Eagle and other Alaska Native villages to organize under the IRA was variously opposed by the State of Alaska and opponents

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of tribal government in Alaska. This opposition resulted in a freeze on IRA activity within the state.

In November 1987, Eagle and TCC filed suit against the Bureau of Indian Affairs to require the secretary to hold the elections under the IRA. TCC filed the suit on behalf of 20 other villages.

In April 1988, the tribe and the Department of Interior reached a settlement to hold the election. The Interior secretary has 45 days after the election to approve the constitution.

In a February letter to the village, the secretary's office advised Eagle that there was nothing contrary to federal law in the proposed constitution.

The constitution clarifies many of the tribe's powers of self-government, including the power to establish a tribal court and enact laws for the village. The constitution does not clarify the exact boundaries of the tribal lands, but leaves that issue unresolved.

Elections for the 20 other villages are still pending.