U.S. Research Effort to Go on

FAIRBANKS – Forced to abandon their main station Oct. 1 when the ice floe on which it was located began breaking, scientists involved in the United States' largest research effort on the Arctic Ocean will carry on their work at a nearby satellite station.

The Arctic Ice Dynamics Joint Experiment (AIDJEX), in which Canadian scientists are also taking part, is to continue through April of next year.

Logistical support for AIDJEX is being provided by the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory (NARL) at Barrow, operated for the Navy by the University of Alaska. Scientists from around the nation are participating in the research. Dr. Norbert Untersteiner of the University of Washington is chief scientist.

Following evacuation of the main station, designated "Big Bear," Untersteiner, NARL director Warren Denner and others had to decide whether AIDJEX would continue or end prematurely.

Ultimately they concluded a new main station could be established on "Caribou," one of the three satellite stations near Big Bear. equipment for shipment to the new main station.

While the daylight lasts, scientists are maintaining a ring of data buoys around Big Bear which record barometric pressure and geographical posittion.

Without a runway at Big Bear ir Caribou suitable for C130 Hercules landings, scientists must rely on smaller Twin Otter aircraft for removal of equipment and supplies to Caribou which means, says AIDJEX logistics coordinator Andreas (Andy) Heiberg, that three h[eavy tracked vehicles and some other heavy materiel will have to be left at Big Bear. "We will keep track of the station and perhaps be able to get in next spring to pick up this equipment but there's not much chance." said Heiberg.

The prefabricated huts will also be left behind, but this planned from the beginning. The cost of removing them would be greater than their value.

NARL hopes to develop a runway at one of the stations big enough to accommodate its R4D (DC3) aircraft, which are larger and can haul more than the Twin Otter. A locally-based helicopter can shuttle materiel between the ocean stations.