

Community Development Quotas

Jobs and opportunity for 56 villages

On December 3, 1992 the U. S. Secretary of Commerce issued approval of the Community Development Quota (CDQ) program. With state and federal cooperation, the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council allocated 7.5% of the harvestable Pacific pollock to the Alaskan CDQ program. Six community development organizations, whose 56 member villages stretch from the Aleutians to Norton Sound, have completed their planning and preparations and are heading toward the fishing grounds of the Bering Sea. Men and women of Alaska's coastal villages will now have the opportunity for meaningful participation in a fishery that saw their grandparents watching from shore as Russian and Japanese trawlers harvested Alaskan pollock far off on the horizon.

The State of Alaska used the full weight of its expertise to analyze the business and community development plans of these organizations, all but one of which are non-profit. Proposals scoring highest included training and education, measurable milestones, plans for transition to self-sufficiency and a means to put village residents immediately to work in the fishery. The community organizations worked tirelessly to describe their harvest methods, develop audit controls and profit sharing programs, and form sound legal relationships with a joint partner who provided up-front cash and industry knowledge.

Villagers have participated in training programs to qualify for jobs aboard off-shore factory trawlers. Education endowment funds will be established to provide scholarships for those pursuing degrees in fisheries management and business administration. The time will certainly come when marine biologists, marine engineers, navigators, machinists and other professionals enter their field with the assistance of these scholarships.

Community plans are varied and include such projects as vessel purchases, infrastructure enhancement such as harbor development, revitalizing shore-side processing, investment funds, fish tendering facilities, buy back of fishing permits and the establishment of training facilities for roe technicians. Other potential projects include savings plans to purchase future quotas in pollock and other fisheries, research projects, financing programs for vessel purchases and small fisheries development, and the purchase of training vessels.

Plans call for some groups to have up to 250 full-time employees by the year 1995. Success of that magnitude could possibly mean that the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council would expand the CDQ program to other fisheries.

Additional information on the CDQ program is available from the Department of Community and Regional Affairs. Contact John Walsh at 465-4890. ■