

# NANA merges with 10 village firms

By MARGIE BAUMAN

**F A I R B A N K S** — NANA Regional Corporation and 10 affiliated village firms have officially merged into a single corporation, braving a new trail of economic possibility and survival for land claims firms in Alaska.

Interior Secretary Thomas Kleppe approved the plan of merger in Washington D.C. April 12 and the state followed with approval of the revised articles of incorporation on April 16, said Al Adams, executive vice president of NANA.

The basis of the merger move, initiated over a year ago by NANA, is unified ownership to provide economic strength and better land management. NANA stockholders and those holding stock in ten village firms within the region gave the plan solid support March 29, approving it by a 68 per cent margin.

"It was not a foregone conclusion," one NANA spokesman told the Tundra Times. "We worked hard. We had to get at least 51 per cent 'yes' vote." Such a margin isn't all that easy, to be sure. NANA's bylaws do not demand more than 33 per cent representation for a quorum at the annual meeting and in 1975, less than 50 per cent of the stockholders turned out for it.

Still, the mood for merger was apparent this year and the annual meeting was packed.

Of the area's 11 village firms, only the Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation of Kotzebue will not join in the merger. The KIC

board voted previously to go it alone.

Having put almost all the eggs in the proverbial basket, however, NANA is expected to take more caution than ever in business ventures for the merged firm.

"I expect that we will be a little more conservative, because if NANA falls everything goes,"

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the spokesman said. "Also, probably because there are not (now) operating village corporation, we have to give more thought to the kind of business opportunities we want to develop within the region."

Business ventures of NANA to date have emphasized economic development of the region, with jobs and community needs going hand in hand with profit.

NANA opened a 50-plus room hotel in April, 1975, complete with modern office space for the corporation. Tupik Building Supply, a building material and sporting goods subsidiary, also opened in Kotzebue in 1975 and by January, 1976, had grossed over a quarter million dollars in sales.

Perhaps the most novel venture, however, is NANA Reindeer Enterprises, a non-profit subsidiary being developed to provide a ready supply of meat to the region for years to come. NANA president

The Jade Mountain Products subsidiary is finalizing plans for a plant at Kotzebue, to begin manufacturing products from

some of the estimated 15,000 tons of jade at Jade Mountain. NANA Development Corporation also manages the Drift Inn, a modern apartment facility developed from remodeling of a local hotel.

John W. Schaeffer is quick to note that those reindeer are also "being trained for use in Kotzebue for races, by Santa Claus and as a tourist attraction."

NANA also has a security systems subsidiary with trans-Alaska pipeline contracts, a catering subsidiary feeding some of those pipeline workers and a construction subsidiary whose contracts in 1975 included the new Kivalina school.

These, plus a few other ventures, yielded NANA shareholders 68 cents per share on their stock in 1975, plus jobs for a number of stockholders.

But the maxim of the merged firm now appears to be "proceed with caution." Ahead lie the years when NANA's prize asset -- the land -- will be taxable and board members are aware that the whole area could be wiped out by taxes if they aren't ready.