

Koniag pays first dividend

by *Tundra Times* staff

Koniag Inc. took a giant step away from its turbulent past and took an historic step toward the future by issuing its first shareholder dividends.

The move capped years of restoring the capital originally granted to the corporation under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. That capital was depleted by years of unsuccessful investments and internal strife.

Koniag President Frank Pagano said the milestone had given shareholders and directors a new sense of confidence, while the proven stability of the firm has given it new strength in pursuing new investments.

"We've had quite a bit of congratulations on the stability of the corporation," Pagano said. "We've gained a lot of respect from shareholders. We feel great about that."

According to Koniag's most recent newsletter, the good news was accompanied by words of caution against euphoria. The report stated that Chief Executive Officer Uwe Gross was gratified by the accomplishments but is also committed to keeping Koniag on an even keel.

"(WE should not) let success go to our heads. As long as I'm around, we're not going to build monuments to ourselves," he said.

Koniag's net earnings for 1994 exceeded \$1 million. The push to restore the lost capital was aided recently by settlement of a net operating loss (NOL) dispute with the IRS and progress on arrangements to sell Koniag land to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council for inclusion in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

Pagano said Koniag is actively pursuing several new investments, including an environmental cleanup group in Anchorage and potential investment in the Buskin River Inn on Kodiak Island.

"We're at the stage where we can do these kinds of things," he said.