

Energy Program in NSB

Seal oil lamps heated sod houses on the North Slope a century ago. But today the houses have grown larger and so have the heating problems. In North Slope villages fuel oil prices are soaring towards three dollars a gallon; draining pocketbooks and sending shivers up homeowners' spines.

To help homeowners stay warm and save money, the North Slope Borough asked the State to extend its Energy Audit Grant and Loan Program to the village of Anaktuvuk Pass this winter. That program has been operating for two years in the urban areas of the State, but before the Borough's request it had never been officially administered in a rural village. Through the concerted efforts of the Borough Utilities Department and the State Division of Energy and Power Development (DEPD) the pilot program in Anaktuvuk Pass has proved successful and there are plans to include other villages. In those plans Nuiqsut and Wainwright are next in line.

The success of this program marks the North Slope Borough as a leader in the rural energy battle, according to DEPD Director Lloyd Pernela. "In this way your North Slope Borough has been very progressive . . . I wish all the Boroughs in the State were at this point," Pernela made his remarks while introducing the audit program to Anaktuvuk Pass residents this fall.

Under the Energy Audit Grant Program residents can have their homes audited for energy leaks by a State qualified auditor. The auditor calculates heat loss for the house then points out any places where energy leaks can be plugged. The homeowner can then use the auditor's recommendations to apply for a \$300 State grant for materials — insulation, caulking, weatherstripping, etc. — to carry out energy improvements.

\$300 doesn't sound like much on the North Slope. Freight costs cut its buying power tremendously when compared to prices in Fairbanks and Anchorage. This is where the North Slope Borough has stepped in to make the State's Energy Audit Grant Program work in Anaktuvuk Pass.

The Borough has agreed to pay the shipping and labor costs involved in making the necessary energy improvements. The result is warmer houses, lower fuel bills and some local employment.

Anaktuvuk Pass residents seem pleased by the Energy Audit Program.

"I think a lot of people are going to be happy with it," says Nunamiut Corporation President Riley Morry. "I think it is a good idea; a way to conserve fuel."

"It's a good program," agrees Harry Hugo. "It should have been done a long time ago while I was paying for

four barrels of fuel oil a month."

The Utilities Department's new Energy Planner Johnny Adams is involved in coordinating the State and Borough efforts. After passing a training program this fall, he became a State certified auditor. He joined State contracted auditors from Heat Loss, Incorporated in Anchorage in conducting the Anaktuvuk Pass energy audits and has scheduled audits in Nuiqsut this spring.

"Besides working on the houses, the Borough's efforts are on improving energy awareness. It's a process of education about ways to conserve energy," says Adams. An example of what can be learned comes from Anaktuvuk Pass resident Mark Morry. "I didn't even know they had gaskets for (electrical) outlets. That is where all the draft was coming from in my house."

The Energy Audit Grant Program has worked but not always with the greatest of ease. According to auditor Pat Shiflea the program was designed for places like Fairbanks and Anchorage and that administrative problems arise when it is applied to a rural area. The biggest example of that, he says, is the paperwork.

"For each audit there are ten pages of forms plus carbon copies of each . . . There are a lot of administrative costs in the program due to the paperwork the State requires . . . the paperwork alienates you from the people. It actually hinders you in meeting the objectives of the program."

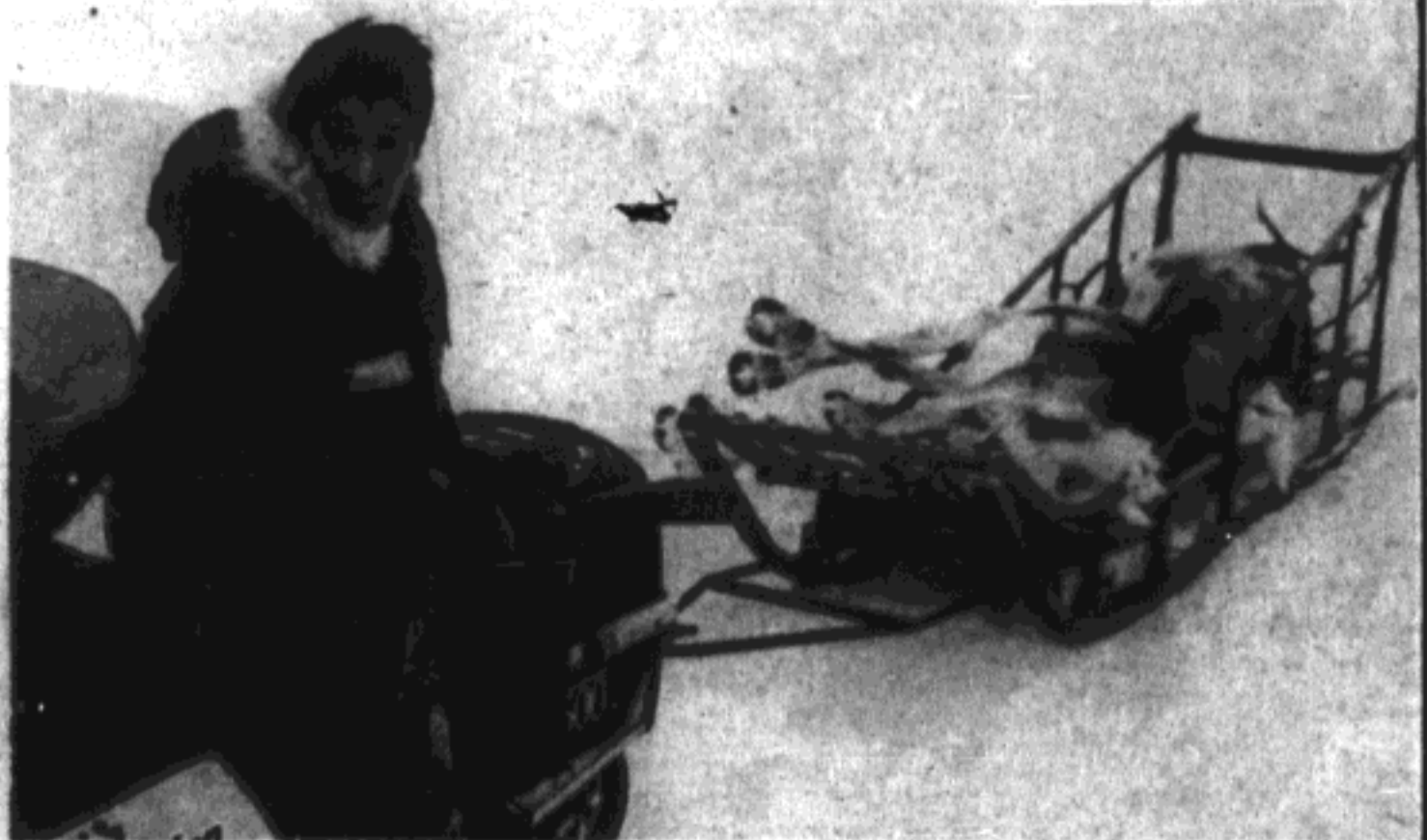
For every hour in the house doing an audit, there are two to three hours of paperwork, according to Shiflea.

Of course, another problem on the North Slope is that the Borough has to pick up the shipping and labor costs to make the program work. Even then, \$300 does not always meet the homeowner's needs. Amos Morry in Anaktuvuk Pass says that while \$300 helps, his house will need much more than that to be really energy efficient.

The auditors look to this year's State Legislature for changes that will make the Energy Audit Grant and Loan Program better suited for bush situations. In the meantime, by filling in the gaps the North Slope Borough Utilities Department is making the program work to warm up North Slope residents.



The North Slope Borough makes the Energy Audit Grant Program go by paying workers like Alfred Linn to install needed home energy conservation improvements.



"It's a good program," says Anaktuvuk Pass resident Harry Hugo about the pilot Energy Audit Grant Program. "It should have been done years ago while I was paying for four barrels of fuel oil a month."