

# Alaska Village Initiatives recruits to clean hazardous wastes

Forty-five rural Alaskans have signed up for training and certification in the clean-up of hazardous materials, but another 85 positions are yet to be filled. Alaska Village Environmental Manpower, Inc. (AVEM) hopes to have 130 recruits signed up by mid-May. Classroom and field training will follow this summer. After the training, the 130 people will be available to work in rural Alaska on hazardous waste clean-up projects and to perform emergency spill response, inspection of waste storage sites and supervision of village projects that involve the handling and storage of hazardous waste.

"Our goal over the next two months is to find up to 10 residents in 15 different Alaska villages who are interested in receiving this training," said Chip Franke, chief executive officer of AVEM, a rural environmental personnel company formed last year.

Villages involved in the initial recruitment campaign include

Bethel, Aniak, St. Mary's, Emmonaak, Kotlik, Nome, Unalakleet, St. Michael's, Nome, Kotzebue, McGrath, Fort Yukon, Naknek, Unalaska/Dutch Harbor and Dillingham.

Within the next month, Franke and another AVEM trainer will travel to each of the villages, meeting one-to-one with people interested in participating in the program. Classroom training will take place in May and June. Those completing the class will then do hands-on remediation work at various clean-up sites in August and September. AVEM has already identified 33 sites that need cleaning. It hopes to complete those clean-ups over the next two years, at the same time using the sites for field training. While recruits learn clean-up techniques, they will also learn how to respond to an emergency spill and how to prevent environmental problems before they happen, such as how to install fuel piping correctly or how to put contain-

ment barriers around fuel tanks. Once their training is complete, AVEM hopes to offer its trained village manpower to environmental remediation contractors who work in rural Alaska.

"By 1996, our goal is to make sure that Alaskans are handling their own environmental management and clean-up projects, and that villages have residents who understand hazardous material handling," said Franke.

Another goal AVEM has outlined for the future is to help provide village governments and corporations with professional engineers, geologists and biologists who can help local people assess their own environmental needs.

For more information about the recruitment campaign or to sign up for training, contact AVEM's Anchorage office at (907) 263-9851.

AVEM is a rural environmental personnel company

formed in 1994. It is a division of Alaska Village Initiatives (AVI), a non-profit membership-based company dedicated to improving the well-being of rural Alaska communities, families and indi-

viduals. Formed in 1969, AVI's goal is to assist rural communities in creating their own visions for the future and to take back the responsibility for making these visions a reality.

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