

North Slope senior citizens get driveways on their lots

BARROW — One of the projects under North Slope Borough Mayor George Ahmaogak's Resident Employment and Living Improvement — RELI — Program provides funding for the construction of residential driveways.

RELI Program crews, all locally hired residents, have been building driveways in North Slope villages since June. Now, thanks to a generous donation of gravel from the City of Barrow and SKW/Eskimos Inc., Barrow senior citizens are also receiving driveways.

The Barrow City Council is donating 12,000 cubic yards of gravel to the North Slope Borough RELI Program. This will allow driveways to be built at no cost to Barrow homeowners.

Arctic Slope Regional Corp. President Jacob Adams also was instrumental in obtaining the gravel donation. It was after discussion with Adams that SKW/Eskimos Inc. agreed to provide the gravel for the RELI project.

According to Roy Nageak of the North Slope Borough Public Works Department, 125 senior citizens' lots have been identified in Barrow and Browerville.

Low income lots also will receive priority, and the remainder of the gravel is reserved for other residential lots.

In addition to the priority given to senior citizens' lots, the RELI Program will focus attention on those lots most in need of a driveway. "It's most important that service vehicles, such as the water and sewer trucks have access to all homes," Nageak said.

Barrow City Manager Earl Finkler said the project stems from concern about keeping the streets clear of parked vehicles, which can endanger pedestrians and hinder traffic flow. He



said it was concern for safety, as well as the priority given to senior citizens and low income lots which prompted the council to approve the donation of the gravel.

However, Ted Alexander, North Slope Borough engineer, said because of the late start for the project it may be impossible to address the driveway needs of all Barrow homeowners this season. Lots missed this year will be completed during the next construction season.

Bilingual crews in Barrow are currently contacting senior citizens to explain the Barrow driveway project. Homeowners who want to participate in the project must sign a release, which allows the North Slope Borough access to the lot in order to conduct the driveway construction.

In North Slope villages, where driveway construction is ongoing, the local city council provides a priority list, indicating which driveways should be built by RELI Program crews. Village residents interested in receiving a driveway should contact their local council.

Those who want more information on any of the RELI projects may contact the RELI Program office in Barrow at 852-5337. *