

Editorial



Yup'ik exhibit sets precedent

The Coastal Yukon Mayors' Association is sponsoring an unprecedented exhibit of Yup'ik artifacts in Mountain Village Nov. 10-12.

The artifacts, collected from the region by Sheldon Jackson between 1890 and 1900, are from the permanent collection of the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka.

What makes this exhibit so remarkable is that most of the 117 articles to be shown have never been seen by the population of people for whom the artifacts are most relevant.

We applaud the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka for supporting this exhibit by allowing the artifacts to be shown in Mountain Village. More especially we give our strong support to the Coastal Yukon Mayors' Association. Putting together an effort such as this requires a lot of time and money, and members of the mayors' association have worked long hours to raise the money.

Among the many grants that have been made are a \$5,000 grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts to sponsor a dance festival in conjunction with the exhibit and a \$6,000 grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum to sponsor the exhibit.

In addition, private organizations have contributed cash to the effort, including Azachorok Inc.; Beaty, Draeger & Troll; Express Fuels-Nenana Fuel Co.; National Bank of Alaska; Alaska Village Electric Cooperative; Lower Yukon School District; Security Pacific Bank; Anpac Fisheries; Yutana Barge Lines; and the Andreafski Townsite Women's Club.

Markair is providing transportation of the exhibit from Anchorage to St. Mary's, and other organizations are assisting in travel for some of the dance groups.

Most of this collection is attributed to the village of Old Andreafski, located on the Yukon River between the present day communities of Mountain Village and St. Mary's. Both are coordinating the event.

Sponsors hope this project will instill in young people pride in their Yup'ik traditions, as well as give them a vision of a future in which they can remain Yup'ik and still survive in a changing world.

Much has been made by the media of problems caused by alcohol abuse in the region. Not nearly enough has been made, however, of outstanding projects such as this exhibit of Yup'ik artifacts.

We hope other groups and communities will consider similar projects and that other museums will cooperate as fully as the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka.

