

Heavy Equipment For Villages Lands

The ship Linden Wood Victory arrived in Seward last Thursday noon with 21 pieces of heavy equipment for Alaska's villages.

The Military Sea Transport Service vessel sailed from Japan with the equipment about 15 days ago. The long-awaited heavy equipment was obtained for the villages by Rural Alaska Community Action Program under a military surplus acquisition project originally sponsored by RurALCAP and the Office of former Sen. Ernest Gruening.

Announcement of the scheduled arrival of the ship was made this week by Larry Brayton, director of RurALCAP, and Tim Smith, director of the surplus acquisition program for RurALCAP.

The heavy equipment includes 10 D-4 caterpillars, eight D-7 caterpillars, one grader, one dumptruck and one reefer van, or self-contained freezer unit on wheels.

All the caterpillars and the reefer van are slated to go to various villages. The dumptruck and grader will be retained by the agency and loaned out to villages for specific projects.

Most villages slated to receive the equipment have indicated they will use them primarily for work on airport runways and roads not funded by the Department of Highways and for moving buildings and logging operations, Smith said.

Approximately 60 persons from villages expected to receive the equipment and from villages already possessing such equipment.

They will attend another 10-week session Oct. 6-Dec. 12 in Seward for a more detailed mechanic's course.

The training session is being funded by a \$204,000 grant from the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. RurALCAP arranged for the training in connection with its acquisition project.

The equipment will stay in Seward for the initial training period. It is scheduled to be shipped to the villages May 24 via the Air Force Operation Cool Barge, a logistic supply barge for DEW line and White Alice stations. The transportation is being provided free.

Work on the surplus acquisition program began last summer and the equipment was originally expected to arrive in Alaska in October of 1968.

But complication and red-tape in getting written authorizations from the many federal agencies involved held up the program for more than six

months.

The program was funded by a \$46,000 congressional grant to the Office of Economic Opportunity and in turn to RurALCAP. The grant paid transportation costs for getting the equipment to Alaska.

Top-level agencies involved in the program, however, included the U.S. Office of Education, the U.S. Labor Department, OEO and the Agency for International Development, who had possession of the surplus equipment.

Earlier this year, RurALCAP also obtained equipment under this program from military sites on the western coast of the United States. Included in that acquisition were five refrigeration units, some armored cable, two jeeps and 26 generators which have been given to the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative for electrifying villages.

Five 65-foot Army T-boats, now on their way to Alaska, were also obtained from the west coast under this same program. The boats were acquired and outfitted by the Community Enterprise Development Corp., a delegate agency of RurALCAP, for use as tenders in fishery cooperative operations.

All military surplus equipment attained through the program is considered on loan to the villages.

Villages slated to receive caterpillars are:

Alakanuk, Elim, Unalakleet, Copper Center, Kwethluk, Tuluksak, Kotlik, Hooper Bay, Kake, Kasigluk, Quinhagak, Kipnuk, Larson Bay, Kivalina, Buckland, Kwigillingok, Tununak, and Kalskag.

The village slated to receive the reefer van is Kivalina.