

Chukchi Eskimo to carry sobriety pledges in Iditarod Race



Edger Nollner, Sr. of Galena signs the sobriety pledge last year for the Alaska Federation of Natives Sobriety Movement. Nollner is the last surviving member of the original 1925 Serum Run to Nome.

Tundra Times file phot by Greg Nothstine

Chukchi Eskimo Nickoly Ettyne, 31, of the Chukotka region of Russia has agreed to carry the Alaska Federation of Natives Sobriety Movement (AFNSM) "Iditapledge (I-did-a-pledge) for Sobriety" signatures to Nome in the 1995 Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

Ettyne first raced in the Iditarod in 1991 after racing in the 1991 Kanik 200 under the auspices of Joe Reddington. This will be Ettyne's second Iditarod sled dog race. Ettyne currently resides in Willow, AK.

The "Iditapledge for Sobriety" commemorates the origin of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race in which a diphtheria serum was rushed to Nome in the 1920s, just in time to cure the diphtheria epidemic.

AFNSM's sobriety signatures represent the serum of "commitment" needed to help cure the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs across the state.

The Sobriety Movement has begun inviting Alaskan businesses to participate in the "Iditapledge for Sobriety" by asking them to pledge a dollar for every one of the 1,049 miles of the 1995 Iditarod trail. All contributions received are tax deductible under the umbrella of the AFN Foundation, a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization.

"The Iditapledge for Sobriety is an important fund-raiser," said Wilson Justin, chairman of the Sobriety Movement. "Not only that, it is the sincerest way we can

honor those who support our goals. What better way to do it, than letting their names travel on a trail in a race whose roots run deep in Alaskan history, a race which saved lives."

Ettyne replaces veteran dog musher, Mike Williams, Akiak, who has become known as the "Iditarod Musher for Sobriety." This year, Williams is taking a hiatus from the Iditarod race to train a new group of sled dogs.

Contact Greg Nothstine, coordinator of the AFN Sobriety Movement at (907) 274-3611 or by writing AFN Sobriety Movement, 1577 "C" Street, Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 to make your contribution.