

# CIRI plans \$19 million venture

Officials of Cook Inlet Region Inc., and Cablecom-General, Inc., a Denver-based national cable-TV firm, have announced the signing of a joint venture agreement and have filed with the Alaska Public Utilities Commission for authority to operate a 35-channel, \$19.3 million cable television system in the Anchorage area.

Roy Huhndorf, president of the Cook Inlet Region, Inc., and Dr. Gerhard A. Cahill, Cablecom-General's vice president of finance and treasurer, said the agreement signed recently in Anchorage calls for the creation of a joint venture called Cook Inlet Cablecom. The 35-channel family-oriented cable programming will cover a variety of subjects, including entertainment, sports, news, religion, education and public access. The three commercial and one public broadcasting stations now operating in Anchorage would also be included under the proposed cable system, they said.

"We believe our proposal offers the ultimate cable package for the Anchorage and Eagle River communities," said Huhndorf and Cahill in a joint statement. "And because our agreement calls for a shoulder-to-shoulder, fifty-fifty partnership in Cook Inlet Cablecom, it would combine the technical and business expertise of a leading national cable company with the local knowledge of community needs supplied by the area's Native regional corporation."

Huhndorf noted that Cook Inlet Region's proposed investment would be profitable to stockholders while providing Native training and employment opportunities. Plans call for Alaskan Natives to receive Outside training with existing Cablecom-General cable-TV systems now operating in nine states.

One of five companies currently seeking cable authority in Anchorage, the Cook Inlet Cablecom venture extensively reviewed the Anchorage market in order to design the most comprehensive cable package possible for area residents, according to Cahill.

The effort spent in preparing the proposal has paid off, according to Huhndorf and Ca-

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hill. "Our \$19.3 million cost estimate for the entire project, for instance, is more than double the amount proposed by the other applicants, and we feel it's

a much more realistic figure for the necessary capital investment sufficient to wire a market in excess of 70,000 households.

The Cook Inlet Cablecom officials also point to a projected

boost for the Anchorage economy that would be generated by the expenditure of \$19.3 million in labor-intensive construction work.

As proposed by Cook Inlet Cablecom, the company would charge \$25 for initial installation and a basic monthly charge of \$14.95 which would include all channels except two reserved for premium programming, movies and features. The optional channels would be available to customers either on a mini-pay basis at \$5 per month (for P and PG rated features) or a full-pay basis at \$8 per month (for P, PG and R rated features).

The Cook Inlet Cablecom officials emphasized that their cable proposal is family oriented and does not include X-rated movies. They also noted that the 24-hour cable television programming would provide extra television viewing for Anchorage's shift workers.

Huhndorf and Cahill are confident that Cook Inlet Cablecom's proposal will provide not only substantially more television viewing value for the dollar, but satisfy the need for strong, broad based local involvement and decision-making instrumental to the successful operation of a cable-TV system.

In addition to CIRI's 2,800 Anchorage area stockholders, Cook Inlet Cablecom will receive community input from a 14-member Community Advisory Board.

Cook Inlet Cablecom filed its application with the APUC last week, which is expected to hold public hearings on Anchorage cable authority sometime in the near future.