

Sen. Stevens Calls for Federal Conference on Totem Poles

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Senator Ted Stevens has called a Federal conference which will be held April 1, to discuss preservation of Alaska's totem poles.

Stevens has invited the other members of Alaska's congressional delegation, Jane Wallen, Director of the Alaska State Museum; Dennis Demmert, President of Alaska Native Brotherhood, as well as representatives of the BIA, National Science Foundation, The Smithsonian Institute, National Endowment for the Arts, National Park Service and the Indian Arts and Crafts Council to join in the conference.

"Alaska's totem poles, magnificent examples of Northwest Indian Art, are in danger of extinc-

tion," Senator Stevens said.

"The poles dating back to the 19th Century are located in abandoned native villages in Southeastern Alaska. They are vulnerable to the moist and decay producing climate of the Pacific Coast, forest fires, and damage by vandals and souvenir hunters," the Senator continued.

The State of Alaska appropriated \$50,000 in February to assist in this project entitled "Alaska Totems: A Heritage in Peril." However, this sum is not enough to cover all the costs.

"Additional funds are needed to retrieve the 44 known totems from their old village sites to bring them to Ketchikan where land has been set aside for an In-

dian Cultural Center, to construct facilities to restore and display the poles, and to set up education programs using these artifacts," the Senator commented.

Senator Stevens warned, "This may be our last chance to preserve these rapidly disappearing artifacts and the historical accounts they tell."