

# RurAL CAP to host statewide meeting on subsistence

In order to address Alaska Native concerns about proposed changes to federal legislation, the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP, Inc.) will coordinate a statewide meeting on subsistence in Anchorage, Feb. 15-17.

"Our Board members represent Alaska Native villages, and they are very concerned about amendments being proposed to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act by Senator (Ted)

Stevens," Jeanine Kennedy, RurAL CAP's executive director said. "They feel that the amendments as proposed could weaken legal protection of subsistence hunting and fishing in rural Alaska.

"RurAL CAP has worked for over 30 years with Alaska Native villages," said Kennedy, adding that villagers rely on subsistence gathering activities to bolster local economies. "The Board feels that village people will need adequate time to learn what specific amendments will be proposed and why, and then they should have time to determine if they can reach a statewide consensus for appropriate action."

The meeting, called the "Subsistence Roundtable," will be held at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. The roundtable format will allow a more detailed discussion of subsistence issues than the busy agendas of other statewide conferences allowed in 1996, according to Kennedy. The meeting agenda contains presentations from state and federal representatives as well as Alaska Native leaders.

"Villagers who continue to depend upon hunting and fishing for physical, economic and cultural survival need to be able to receive complete information, ask questions and discuss options for protect-

ing their way of life," said Kennedy. "We expect several hundred people to attend the roundtable."

Vernita Herdman will serve as conference coordinator for RurAL CAP. Invitations have been sent to several hundred Native organizations, including village and IRA councils, ANCSA corporations and natural resource associations. Interested person can contact Herdman in Anchorage by calling 279-2511. People living outside Anchorage may also call Herdman at 1-800-478-6343. Those with Internet access may address e-mail to Herdman at [vernitah@ruralcap.com](mailto:vernitah@ruralcap.com).