

St. George harbor cut from budget

By Linda Lord-Jenkins
Tundra Times

A \$3.4 million state appropriation for harbor construction on the island of St. George in the Bering Sea was cut by the free conference committee of the Alaska Legislature before the legislature adjourned.

But Flore Lekanof, president of the St. George Tannaq Corp., the for-profit corpora-

tion of the smaller of the populated Pribilof Islands, says he is still optimistic that that money might come to the island.

Lekanof, who has been negotiating with Gov. Bill Sheffield's office, said that Sheffield was given a \$20 million contingency fund by the State Senate. St. George is seeking to get its money from that fund.

St. Paul did receive an initial appropriation for harbor construction.

Lekanof said that "there are about \$34 million worth of requests for that money" from various state organizations but he feels confident that St. George will get it because of the governor's past commitment to the harbor project.

St. George and St. Paul

are being cut off from federal subsidized seal harvest at the end of this federal fiscal year on Sept. 30. The federal government proposes to give \$20 million to a non-profit corporation to help develop the fishing industry on the islands.

But that industry needs harbors to be developed on both islands and the state had hoped to appropriate \$10

million this year to start work on the projects.

Lekanof estimated that harbor for St. George would cost \$14 million and for St. Paul would cost \$35 million.

He said that he is somewhat surprised by the Legislature's decision not to allocate money to St. George because of its past commitment to the harbor project.

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Harbor funds cut in conference committee

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"In the past few years they've given us \$5 million and now when we really need it the most they cut us off.

"Logically it doesn't make sense to me that they should support the project for two years and now when we're ready to move, they let us down."

He pointed out that St. George has caught three times as much fish in this season as St. Paul has at 37,000 pounds caught in the past two weeks.

Lekanof said he hasn't been given any reasons by legislators sitting on the free conference committee for why they cut the money. The committee was chosen to haggle budget differences between the House and Senate.

He speculated that the decision was made because St. Paul has three times as many people living on it as St. George does "but when you are starting a business, population doesn't mean much."

"St. George is showing it can do the job and isn't letting

the lack of a harbor stop us."

The corporation will hold ribbon cutting ceremonies in mid-July to dedicate a new fish processing facility on the island.

"Harbor or no harbor we are catching fish. And this is a small island outfit. We have to bring them up on to the beach. It's cumbersome to do it, but we are.

"There is no doubt in my mind that we can create a fishing business in the Bering Sea."

John Greeley, assistant press secretary for Sheffield, said the St. George project is "high up" in the governor's list of priorities but he is uncertain if it will receive money from the "rainy day account," as the \$20 million fund is called.

Greeley estimated the amount of extra requests from that fund at more than \$55 million. He said there is a possibility that St. George may be allowed to await legislative appropriations in the 1984 session of the Legislature.



Public Television stations in the state will show a half-hour documentary on the 1982 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics during July. The documentary will show three times in Anchorage beginning on July 12. The first air time is 10:30 p.m. July 12; 8 p.m. July 14 and 3 p.m. July 15. Public television in Fairbanks, channel 9 will show the program on July 15. A spokesman for KAKM in Anchorage said the program will be made available to the statewide network and he advised local viewers to call their local public television station to see if it is available.