

Metlakatla won't follow time change

Ketchikan — Leaders of a 2,500-member Native community in Southeast Alaska voted Friday not to go along with the rest of the state in the switch from four time zones to two this weekend.

Casey Nelson, Mayor of the federally recognized Metlakatla Indian community on Annette Island, about 15 miles south of Ketchikan, said that council members passed a resolution indicating they would go from Pacific Daylight to Pacific Standard time Sunday, but would not follow the rest of the state in converting either to Yukon or Alaska time.

"We're going back one hour, not two," Nelson said. "We're not doing this out of spite.

We're doing this because we do a lot of business with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Portland and for the safety of our children.

"By 3:30, it's almost dark when our children get out of school. It's in the best interests of our community that we don't make the change."

The state decided to make

the time zone changes to improve communications between business and government officials across Alaska who were separated by as much as four hours.

About 99 percent of the state's population will go to Yukon time early Sunday. The only exception will be the residents of four communities

in the western Aleutians who will switch to Alaska time.

Warren Sparks, a state Department of Transportation spokesman in Juneau who had been working with federal officials in coordinating the change, said the council's move does not set precedent.

"That's been done before by communities living in one

time zone who wanted to cross over to the time zone used by people in their major trade area," Sparks said. "If the (federal) Department of Transportation decides to exercise its regulatory powers in this case, it probably won't be until the next federal election where there could be some confusion at the polls.