

Alaska Commercial, UIC announce new Barrow store project

The chief executive officers of Alaska Commercial (AC) and Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation (UIC) finalized an agreement that paves the way for construction of a major new retail facility in Barrow. Edward Kennedy of AC and Max Ahgeak of UIC unveiled plans for a new 34,000 square foot store to be located at the busiest intersection in the Browerville section of Barrow. UIC is the Native village corporation for Barrow, and AC is that largest rural retailer in Alaska.

Construction has already started, with a completion date scheduled for August, 1998. The planned grand opening date is October 1, 1998. The total cost of the project will be almost \$9 million.

The new store will resolve the problem of inadequate parking that has plagued the existing AC store in Barrow. It will also provide greater convenience and easier access to shoppers by being a single story building, unlike the present store. "We respect the Elders in our community and are eager to build a new store where they can shop more easily," said Ahgeak.

"We are very pleased to be able to

grow with Barrow and UIC through this new store agreement," said Kennedy. "We are planning exciting changes that will give Barrow shoppers the best possible shopping experience, while supporting the unique lifestyle and cultural activities in Barrow." The new store will be split between 60 percent food and 40 percent general merchandise. It will also contain a food court, as well as a bakery and deli.

UIC will own the new store, and AC will operate it under a 20-year lease. The lease will provide UIC with a guaranteed base rent and a share of net profits. AC has been a tenant of the UIC-owned

"Stuaqpak" building in downtown Barrow for over 14 years. The existing store will be renovated into office space. AC will operate a convenience store in the renovated building.

UIC Construction will serve as the general contractor. Kumin Assoc., Inc. of Anchorage will serve as project architect, with engineering services provided by LCMF, Inc., a subsidiary of UIC. Bowhead Transportation, also a UIC subsidiary, will transport construction materials.

The project is expected to provide approximately 45 construction jobs and a projected construction payroll of \$3 million.