

# St. Marys' alcohol gone, police calls drop

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The number of police calls and problems in the village of St. Mary's have dropped radically in the two-and-one-half months since the village council passed an emergency ordinance banning

the possession of alcohol in the village.

The village passed the emergency 60-day ordinance at the start of fishing season in the hopes of preventing boating accidents caused by fishermen who had been drinking, said village mayor Moses Pauken.

He said the village had not had a large number of alcohol-related accidents in past fishing seasons, but he said the older people in the village decided they wanted to prevent as many as they could from occurring.

He said the ordinance late last month was extended for another

60 days and the village of approximately 500 people will vote on a permanent ban on alcohol in the November election.

Under terms of the ordinance, air carriers have agreed not to import alcoholic beverages to the village even when asked by private citizens.

Pauken said the ordinance has "worked out real well."

Alaska State Trooper Sgt. Glenn Godfrey, who is in charge of village troopers in the Bethel area, said his two St. Mary's-based troopers have remarked on

(Continued on Page Three)

# St. Mary's alcohol ban

(Continued from Page One)

the relatively quiet nature of the community since the ordinance has passed.

While no statistics have been submitted, Godfrey said his men have remarked repeatedly that all types of problems which are related to alcohol have dropped. This includes a variety of problems, Godfrey said.

"Prior to the ordinance, they reported they always had some type of contact with alcohol-related incidents," he said. This could include inebriated persons going to the troopers homes to complain about family matters, other minor infractions a more serious problem such as domestic disturbances, public intoxication and other problems of violence.

Godfrey said that the villages

of Marshall and Pilot Point also went dry a short time ago but he said the effect of their decision hasn't been measured by the troopers because there are no troopers in those villages.

Under Alaska statute, villages have the option to vote to make their town ban alcohol if a petition is signed by town members. The petition is submitted to the village council or to the state division of elections and an election is set up to determine the wishes of the majority of the community.

While the villages have had the option of going dry for more than one year, there had been no established procedure for holding an election to vote on the matter. That "enabling" legislation was passed during the 1981 legislative session.