



From left to right, IRHA Executive Director Melvin Charlie, Board Member Ernest Holmber (McGrath), Board Chairman Jonathon Solomon (Ft. Yukon) and Board Member Andy Jimmie inspect new Nenana log homes built by Wilderness Builders.

—Photograph by LUCI ABEITA

A first with logs —

Interior Housing Authority completes successful Nenana housing project

By LUCI ABEITA

A housing project built on firsts recently became a reality

in Nenana. Twenty of the first log houses to be built through the Department of Housing and

Urban Development (HUD) were completed. The project was the first time 100% local material

and predominately local labor were used.

(See NENENA, Page Eight)

● Nenana housing project completed by IRHA

(Continued from Page One)

HUD's Deputy Director of Development Jack Smody pointed out, "The real amazing part of this project is that if it hadn't gone, the city would not have picked up over two million dollars for sewer and water to serve the whole city."

Smody spoke November 14 at an open house luncheon held in Nenana. At that time, Jonathan

Solomon, Chairman of the Board of the Interior Regional Housing Authority, presented the new home owners with the keys to their houses.

Wilderness Builders, Inc., a subsidiary of Toghotthele (Nenana's village corporation), cut logs for the project from their 17 mile logging operation. The logs were hauled to their lumber mill where they were peeled and the

houses constructed. The homes were then taken apart piece by piece and rebuilt on the buyer's lots.

"I always wanted a log home. It's good to use Native products—they last longer," said new home owner Henry Ketzler Sr. Ketzler's sons were employed through Wilderness Builders to do the log work on their father's house.

Ray "Snook" Jensen and his wife, Mae, were one of the first families to move into their house. They did all the interior work and had the house hooked up to their own sewer and water. Snook said, "It all turned out pretty good."

IRHA Executive Director Melvin Charlie commented, "Log homes are the going thing. We've been told in the villages, if we're

not going to build log homes, don't come back."

IRHA is proposing to build 10 log houses in the villages next summer: 40 in Nulato, 17 in Kaltag, 25 in Tanana, and 20 in Northway.

Smody stated, "It's a credit to ourselves that we've started to recognize the desires of the people to obtain houses compatible with their lifestyles."