

# Tyonek family must pay for electricity

One of two white families who are living in Tyonek against village council wishes will have to start paying for electrical costs on Jan. 1 but another family which was labelled "destitute" will not have to make the payments.

Don and Bernie Puckett must begin paying monthly electrical bills of \$100 to \$200 for electricity which has been provided free by the village to village members for years.

Fred Slawson and his family will not be asked to pay the bills according to their attorney Lewis Gordon.

The council decided last month to begin charging all non-members for electricity as a "conservation measure."

Electrical fees are still provided to white teachers living in the village.

The electricity ruling stems from the eviction case pending

in U.S. District Court in Anchorage in which the Tyonek Village Council is seeking to evict the Slawsons and Pucketts from the homes they are renting from village members. The suit was filed against the two white families and their landlords in mid-summer.

Village council leaders contend that the home-owners were granted their houses by the village council which paid for the structures with money earned from the sale of Cook Inlet oil leases by Tyonek.

At the same time that grant was made the village passed an ordinance prohibiting anyone who is not a village member from residing or staying in the village longer than 24 hours without village council approval.

The Pucketts sought and received council permission in the fall of 1981 to rent and

stay in the housing until the close of the 1981-82 school year in May. Mrs. Puckett is a secretary at the school.

According to the suit in federal court, the Pucketts were asked to leave after the school year was over but they refused because Mrs. Puckett wanted to keep her job. Her husband, a former employee at Tyonek Timber had lost his job and was unable to find other work.

Slawson, who also lost his job when Tyonek Timber cut back, will be able to continue receiving free electrical service. Gordon said the decision on who must pay was based "on the relative financial condition of the two" families.

Gordon said that U.S. District Judge James Fitzgerald allowed Slawson to receive the utilities free until he can make a final ruling on the merits of the entire case