

8 Welcome to 1986 Convention participants

Welcome to the 1986 AFN Convention! This convention edition of the AFN Newsletter contains an extensive summary of the key points of the 1991 legislation currently pending before Congress, highlights of our activities during this past year, and information about key items to be discussed during the convention.

There's no question that as we go into this convention, the status of the 1991 legislation is uppermost in people's minds. But whether the legislation passes before Congress adjourns, or AFN returns to Washington, D.C. next year to start the process again, our most heartfelt thanks go out to the three members of the Alaska congressional delegation and their staffs for their monumental work in bringing the legislation this far. Congressman Don Young, Senator Ted Stevens and Senator Frank Murkowski deserve our praise and our support for the work they've done on our behalf.

This convention also marks a special event for us all: the 20th Anniversary of AFN. It was 20 years ago this month that Alaska Natives came together in a statewide meeting to form one group, one organization

which could represent their views to Congress and to other political bodies. The theme of this year's convention, "20 Years of Integrity, Pride in Heritage, and Progress," reflects our feelings of pride in the accomplishments we've been able to achieve. A special slide presentation commemorating the first 20 years of AFN, entitled "The AFN Story," will be shown both during the convention and the Tundra Times banquet. We have also invited the first chairman of AFN, Flore Lekanof, and the past presidents of AFN — Emil Notti, Don Wright, Willie Hensley, Roger Land, Sam Kito, Byron Mallott, Morris Thompson and Frank Ferguson — to attend this year's convention so that we can fully recognize their contribution.

Aside from celebrating our 20th Anniversary and hearing the status of the 1991 legislation, other topics will be discussed: the restructuring of AFN to allow village participation in AFN and the report and recommendations from the Committee on Tribal Governments. Both of these reports were undertaken by AFN in response to resolutions passed by

convention delegates at previous conventions.

We will also hold elections for a new chairman of AFN for the 1986-87 year. This year's Co-Chairmen Oliver Leavitt and Glenn Fredericks have worked hard on your behalf and deserve your thanks. They have spent many long hours on flights back to Washington, D.C. to work on the 1991 legislation and on other issues.

A "first" for us this year are the President's Awards in Health, Education, Small Business and Housing. A special "Della Keats Healing Hands" Award will also be given. These awards provide us an opportunity to recognize our own people for the work they've done for us all in their various fields.

AFN's 1986 Citizen of the Year will also be announced during the convention. Roy Ewan, President of Ahtna and AFN's 1985 Citizen of the Year will help to present this award.

As you can see from the agenda and from this newsletter, there are many activities scheduled during this year's convention. This year seems to have gone faster than years past, but I feel that we've accomplished a



lot. I hope you will take the time to read the issues in this newsletter as well as the articles in this year's Annual Report. I encourage you to actively participate in the discussions to take place during this convention and to join us in celebrating the past 20 years of AFN, as well as our next 20 years together!