

Contracting conference set

WASHINGTON—Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, today announced he will sponsor a conference February 16-17 to bring together representatives of federal agencies with Alaska regional corporations on the subject of federal contracting.

Gravel said that "Congress, as author of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which created the regional corporations has the responsibility to ensure that these corporations have an equitable opportunity to compete in the economic market."

The conference was requested by the board of the Alaska Federation of Natives because of reoccurring problems arising from federal contracting procedures.

Gravel said interest has been expressed in three broad areas: legislation and law affecting minority/Indian contracting with the federal government; contracting procedures and requirements; and provide an opportunity for the regional corporations to present their capabilities to federal contracting officers.

The SBA Surety Bonding program was designed to assist small businesses by providing a 90 per cent federal guarantee of the bond required to bid for a construction job. In order to participate in this program, the business must be recommended to SBA by a bonding company.

In the past five years, Gravel said, only 12 Alaska minority contractors have participated. Some of the corporations are still having considerable difficulty in obtaining the bonding necessary to compete in the construction trade, he added.

"While Alaska Native corporations have made considerable inroads in the area of establishing themselves as viable business concerns, there are still major unresolved problems," Gravel said.

He expects to invite members of the Federal Regional Council in Seattle and other federal officials, staff members of the House and Senate Indian Affairs Subcommittees and representatives of the American Indian Policy Review Commission to participate in the conference

(Continued on Page 5)

Corporation contracting ..

(Continued from Page 1)

with representatives of the Native corporations and other Alaska minority contractors. He will continue his planning efforts with the Native corporations.

"These corporations have been developing admirable business capabilities, but still are confronted with Federal contracts continually being left to business firms located outside Alaska," Gravel said.