

# ***Operation Mainstream Future Uncertain***

The future of Operation Mainstream, a federal program that provides money for community improvement projects and, at the same time, useful job training to villagers, is a little uncertain at the present time.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Operation Mainstream was administered in Alaska last year by the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP).

The contract for the program, running from March 1, 1969 to Feb. 28, 1970, expired Saturday and all projects were shut down.

According to John Shively, deputy director of RurAL CAP, the state has control over the money for the program and has not yet decided whether RurAL CAP will again be named as sponsor.

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# Mainstream . . .

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The State itself could take over the program, which has an annual budget of about \$180,000. A decision on the matter is expected this month.

In the meantime, Shively explained, RurAL CAP is keeping its staff members who worked on the project and will be ready to begin work on 15 or 16 projects if it receives the program.

The agency was fully aware that the contract expired Feb. 28, he explained, and had planned in advance to wind up all projects by that date.

In briefly explaining the program, he noted that between 300 and 400 people received training during the past year as a result of it.

The money, he continued, went directly to the villages and they decided what kind of village improvement project they wanted to finance with it.

Some of the results were new community halls, a tramway near Baird Inlet, bridges at Goodnews Bay, and a telephone network at Copper Center.

The village pays for the supplies with money received from RurAL CAP and hires local people to do the work. Their salaries are also paid by the U.S. Labor Department.

As a result, the village is improved and the villages received training that can be used in other jobs.

In most of the villages, there are not many jobs, the spokesman for RurAL CAP said, so after the project is completed many of them are again without jobs.

But, he continued, RurAL CAP will have an employment record for him, and, when he needs work elsewhere he can use these records as a reference.