UA Readies Tiny Transmitters—
Ft. Yukon, Togiak Await 'Mini-stations' TV

COLLEGE—In six months, villagers in Fort Yukon and Togiak will know if television reception through "mini-stations" is possible in their areas.

Under an experimental project sponsored by the Alaska Educational Broadcasting Commission and conducted by the University of Alaska's Division of Media Services, tiny television transmitters will be installed in the two villages, "to see if we can get adequate reception throughout the villages," explained Dr. Charles Northrip, UA director of media services and project manager.

During the six-month experiment, the transmitters, on loan from the manufacturers, will be fed a television signal from videotape recorders in the villages' state-operated schools. Daytime programs and educational films used in the schools will be aired.

The aim of the project, Northrip says, is to discover if the dream of "rabbit-ear antenna reception throughout the villages" is a feasible one. Richard Dowling, chief engineer for the university's new educational broadcasting station, KUAC-TV, will test reception with a small portable television set, visiting the villages several times during the course of the project for these tests.

At present, television service in remote areas of Alaska is available only through cable hookups or through translation of television signals from major stations.

The cable hook-up system, although providing adequate service, is costly, and the two villages chosen for the experiment are too far away from existing television stations to pick up signals.

Through the "mini-stations," operating on 1-10 watts in comparison to the 10-100 kilowatts used by conventional television stations, villages may be able to receive regular TV broadcasts, either through the AEBC or a commercial venture.

"But we don't want to promote set sales until we're sure it works," Dr. Northrip notes. Upon completion of the experiment, due to get underway this month, further plans will be developed, using the experiment's results as guidelines.