

# Education to oil exploration discussed at meet

Issues ranging from BIA education to the delayed oil exploration lease sale in the Norton Sound were discussed recently when the Association of Village Council Presidents and the Kawarek Corp. executive board of Unalakleet met for a joint regional meeting.

Also attending the meeting were representatives of the Maniilaq non-profit corporation of the NANA region to discuss vital issues that are facing the tribal governing bodies of each region.

The AVCP is the tribal governing body for the 5-6 villages of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

Ivan Martin Ivan, president of AVCP in Bethel, and Rose Ann Timbers, president of Kawerak, were very pleased with the wealth of information and constructive suggestions shared by all regional representatives at the meeting.

Ivan stated, "This is the first time the regional governing bodies have gathered together to share information on issues we all have in common, such as the initiative to repeal the subsistence law, BIA school closures, termination of the general assistance program, Coastal Zone Management and other major concerns."

A sense of unity prevailed as representatives, led by Chairman Xavier Atcherian of Chevak, discussed major issues. They also talked about the Outer Continental Shelf lease sales and the impact studies now being scheduled for the Navarin Basin sale.

All regions were extremely pleased that Commissioner John Katz of the state Department of Natural Resources has cancelled lease sale No.38, Norton Sound, which was scheduled for January, 1983. The lease sale tracts were pro-

posed for the mouth of the Yukon River and the eastern Norton Sound in the vicinity of Unalakleet. All expressed interest in working together to accomplish a delay of lease sale No.57 in Norton Sound this November.

Representatives also were concerned that the regions have not had proper time to prepare for the sale and they do not believe that industry has developed the technology to explore and produce safely any resources found there.

Ivan said he was optimistic on the chances of the lawsuit

AVCP has filed seeking to force the Bureau of Indian Affairs to reverse its decision ending a general assistance program for Alaska.

"We believe our legal position is sound and we are hopeful that justice will prevail and the program will be reinstated."

All region leaders were gravely concerned about the current welfare of the people who have been terminated from general assistance. Each region expressed fear that the basic needs of the people

served by the 40-year-old federal welfare program are not being met and causing them undue hardship. AVCP also charges that BIA violated the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 by ending the program.

The pool of information shared by the tribal governing bodies at the joint executive board meeting in Unalakleet will serve as valuable resources as they continue in their united efforts to solve the important issues that are now confronting all the regions.