

Bradner Predicts Satellite TV For Three Communities in Fall

WASHINGTON,—State Rep. Mike Bradner last Friday expressed confidence that an experimental program for television communication by satellite into three isolated Alaskan cities could be operational by late fall.

The program would bring educational television into Kodiak, Nome, and Fort Yukon, as well as upgraded telephone services, and would supply 24 hour telephone communication to Fort Yukon for the first time.

Bradner said a state delegation and members of the Alaska Congressional Delegation met with officials of COMSAT, RCA, NASA, and the Public Broadcast Corporation on Thursday and Friday.

Among the state delegation in Washington are Commissioner of Education Cliff Hartman, Charles Buck, State Directors of Communications; Ed Glotfeldt, City

Manager of Nome, Bon Schick, of the Nome School Board, and Bradner, representing the legislative Council.

Bradner said the final program will probably follow fairly closely a proposal offered by Senator Mike Gravel to use an existing NASA satellite ATS-1 on an experimental basis.

"Both RCA and COMSAT seemed in agreement that all parties concerned would benefit from a period of experimentation in Alaska with telephone communication by satellite," Bradner said.

"The pilot program for Kodiak, Nome, and Fort Yukon would in essence provide a shake-down period, and enable the state, COMSAT, and RCA to be able to adequately assess the cost and technical feasibility of utilizing satellite's almost immediately to build a bush communications system.

Bradner continued: "One of the greatest benefits of using satellite is the fact that television can be bounced off the satellite and back to small rural villages.

"This would allow specialized educational TV to be brought to rural school children, and give them a look at the broader world," he added.

Bradner also said that approximately \$350,000 was available to Alaska under the Public Broad-

casting Act, and that in the pilot program a ground station from the Phillipines would be relocated to Alaska. In addition, receiving antennas would have to be installed at Kodiak, Nome, and Fort Yukon.

"This equipment is fairly expensive," Bradner said, "but all parties to the experiment would absorb these costs as a consideration of the valuable experience gained.

"We need a knowledge and experience with satellite communications as ultimately this will enable us to determine our needs and timing in moving into such a system."

Bradner said if the project was to be carried out a great deal would depend on the state government in getting adequate administrative machinery going on short notice.

The Fairbanks legislator said that Robert Van Houte, Alaska Education Association executive director, had been with the delegation in Toronto, and that he had expressed strong support of the experiment.