

AVCP Plans Special Convention

The Association of Village Council Presidents, the Bethel-based non-profit regional corporation representing the 56 villages in the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta, announced today that a special convention will be held in Alakanak on March 25-27.

The purpose of the special convention, the largest meeting the villages have ever seen, will be to discuss issues of concern to the villages and their residents, issues that will affect them into, and beyond, the 1980's.

One issue of immediate concern to the AVCP is the planned leasing and drilling of offshore lands adjacent to the eleven coastal villages whose culture and livelihood is attached to the Bering Sea. Carl Jack, President of AVCP, says that the villages must determine their position on this issue and act accordingly.

Jack further says that the outcome of oil exploration and extraction of oil, if found, will have a potentially devastating impact on the lifestyle and culture of the majority of villages. Jack further states that this is one issue which cannot be ignored, and one which must be met firmly with the protection of the villages being the primary consideration.

Another issue the convention will discuss is the question of the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta villages incorporating a borough to represent their common interests. The borough is the only form of "regional"

government provided for by the State Constitution.

Attending the convention will be three representatives from each village and representatives from various state and federal agencies involved with the development of Alaska's Continental Shelf. Attorney General Avrum Gross will also address the convention on the issue of Native subsistence hunting and its apparent conflict with the State Constitution.

Federal agencies with control over hunting and fishing have also been asked to clarify the federal governments responsibilities to the Alaska Native, as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act has purported to have "Extinguished" the aboriginal rights of the Alaska Native.

Carl Jack says that this is the most important meeting in recent memory as it will determine the course the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta villages will take well into the 21st century.