

Job corps center in jeopardy

From the KADIAK TIMES

Chiniak is no longer under consideration as a potential Job Corps center for the State of Alaska, Harry Carter of the Alaska Federation of Natives, AFN, announced. AFN was the operational contractor for the Chiniak project, which got underway well over a year ago. Carter called by the Governor's office, regarding the possibility of setting up a Job Corps center in Alaska, told Kadiak Times federal government officials at that meeting said Chiniak, owned by Koniag, Inc., and Village Corporations in a joint venture, is out of the question as a potential Corps site and that before a Corps center could be established in Alaska the State would have to prove there is a need for one in a comprehensive detailed demographic presentation, showing there are enough Alaskan students to maintain a center at full scale operation in Alaska, said Carter.

The government representatives pointed out there are a number of Corps centers in the

Pacific Northwest that are operating at low capacity, continued Carter, adding that Corps agents said it would be more economical for the government to bring youngsters in Alaska and put them in Job Corps centers in the lower '48.

Carter cited unavailability of housing and transportation problems as reasons why Chiniak has been precluded as a possible Job Corps center in Alaska.

Carter said that some interest has been shown in setting up a Job Corps center at the former Wildwood Air Force station at Kenai. "The AFN position on the entire matter is that there is a sufficient population base to sustain an operation in Alaska," said Carter. "We do need a center, without regard to where it is or who the contractor is."

Karl Armstrong, executive Vice President for Koniag, told Kadiak Times that during the next few months a disengagement period will involve the federal government's withdrawal of the Chiniak area where for over

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a year Job Corps conducted preliminary studies in order to prepare the area for full operation, which was scheduled for spring of 1980.

Currently, Koniag and Village Corporations are discussing with the State Division of Parks and Recreation the possibility of making negotiations which would place the area in the hands of the State through a purchase or land exchange with the Native corporations, said Armstrong.

Armstrong surmised that the federal government had spent nearly \$2 million in preparing Chiniak for its anticipated Job Corps operation.

He added that the site, which at one time was used as an Air Force tracking station and a Navy security communications base, accommodates one of the "finest garages on Kodiak Island," and that "There's reason to believe the other departments of the State are looking at the Chiniak facility."