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# Villages work toward unity

## Plans made for statewide village corporation association

A statewide association for Alaska Native village corporations will be formed in February, under a plan set forth by a gathering of Native village representatives in Anchorage last week. Seventy-seven delegates from village corporations created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 unanimously adopted a "Resolution for the creation of statewide Village Corporation unity" in a meeting held just before the annual convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN).

Village delegates pointed to "many problems and concerns in common" and "the need for unity is we are to survive in the corporate world." The villagers agreed that they needed a common voice to speak for their concerns.

The plan calls for a steering committee to develop proposals for consideration by village corporation representatives during a statewide convention to formally organize the association "no later than the first part of February, 1980." The corporation delegates, mostly village corporation presidents, said they were aware that "village corporations have had little or no voice as a group and as individual entities in decision making processes that affect them directly."

Villagers were firm in their desire to create a statewide organization specifically to address the problems and concerns of village corporations. "There is presently no means for voicing Village Corporation concerns and problems in common at the federal, state, or AFN level," they noted. Their resolution also stated that "AFN and regional corporations cannot and should not act to represent Village Corporations without expressed authority from Village Corporations."

# ● village corp. vehicle

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lage corporation concerns. The feeling is such an association would work closely with AFN and ANF."

Sam Demientieff, President of the Interior Village Association, hopes that the final report of the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission, which strongly recommends financial and technical assistance from the federal and state governments, and moral support from AFN, be honored.

Demientieff stated that a resolution was passed at the AFN Convention calling for federal and state financial and technical support for the next decade. He added that village corporations "want to get organized to help themselves."

Needs and concerns that the village corporations and leaders have identified include, but are not limited to: technical assistance delivery; identification of technical assistance needs; resource pooling; discussions of land problems; alternatives to the municipal form of government that is required by the Settlement Act of 1971; legal issues and questions; exchange of information between village corporations; conveyance of news to government agencies and regional corporations and native organizations; and a monthly

business newsletter that will inform corporations on statewide corporate news and day-to-day business.

Merculieff emphasized that the 77 village corporations that are already involved want to make the association "as demo-

cratic a forum as possible for full participation by any village corporation that wants to support the idea and get involved. We don't want it dominated by any particular influence, we want it to be the village corporation vehicle."