

Village leaders see chance to fill unmet needs

Seventy-seven village corporations, at the invitation of the Alaska Native Foundation (ANF), met prior to the 1979 Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) to discuss common concerns.

The village corporations represented at the meeting organized a steering committee that will plan for a statewide village corporation convention, to be held no later than February of 1980.

Larry Merculieff, the chairman of the board of the Aleut Corporation, and President of the St. Paul Island native corporation, said of the ANF-sponsored meeting that "it became clear that many village corporation

problems and issues were not being addressed."

He stressed that "village corporations do not feel that anyone is at fault. AFN is involved in D-2 (a section of the 1971 Native Claims Settlement Act) and regional corporations are involved in organizing as corporations. The village corporations understand that."

He further stated that there is no way for AFN to consult with village corporations as a whole. "And so it was felt that village corporations as a whole should have input, and this would help AFN get a vehicle anytime they would want to consult with vil-

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● Villages work toward unity

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Other than calling for the creation of a statewide association, the village made a number of requests in the resolution.

They asked for a village corporation panel to be allowed to lead a discussion on their concerns during the ANF convention. A change

was made in the convention agenda to provide for this on Saturday.

They also recommended that village corporations begin to organize into associations in various geographical areas. Such associations are already established in at least two of the areas.

The villagers further re-

quested that the Alaska Native Foundation (ANF) give supportive services to a steering committee working on proposals for forming the association, and that ANF begin to look for money to support the group's first statewide convention.

ANF has agreed to help

coordinate and give support to the steering committee's efforts.

Village corporation delegates and presidents who participated in the meeting felt the steering committee would meet in December, and that the desired timeframe could be met so that the village corporation asso-

ciation may become a reality by February.

Frustration with the current situation and serious intent to do something about it was indicated in one portion of the resolution. The villagers declared, "Village Corporations demand participation at all levels of decisions that affect them."