

# Bethel Community Services offers low-income housing program

Bethel Community Services Inc. (BCS) has embarked on a pilot program to provide low-cost energy efficient housing to a needy Bethel resident and single mother, and is seeking donations to complete the project.

BCS is a non-profit organization which provides social services to the residents of the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta region. In response to the extensive housing problem in its community, officials with BCS began looking for a way to provide housing in a cost effective manner.

The (government) housing programs available are not affordable

and not energy efficient," says Jerry Haines, a BCS director and coordinator for the project. Haines explains that the state is building new housing in Bethel for those who qualify under state and federal programs and there's state mental health funding available for others. "But no one is reaching the homeless or those living on containers," Haines said. "Sometimes the community has to get together and help those who are not being helped.

Haines is referring to those people in Bethel who can only afford to live in shipping containers or crates heated by electric ovens.

"If we can provide a house at a reasonable price, at a cost where they can live in it on Social Security or Medicare, why not put these people back into the community instead of putting them on welfare," he said. "We've combined all of the latest technology to make housing affordable. We don't need to spend \$225,000 to house these people."

So far *Imperial Manufacturing of Portland* has donated a 24-by-29-foot prefabricated, super insulated panelized building, and from Anchorage, *Spenard Builders Supply* has donated the doors and windows, *Heat Alaska, Inc.* has donated air exchange systems, and *Pro-*

*fessional Estimating Services* has donated estimating services.

BCS is looking for a carrier to ship materials from Seattle to Bethel this summer and is seeking additional donations of materials to complete the project.

BCS has selected a Yupik single mother with developmental disability as the recipient of this first home. She has been a client of BCS and has shown ability to make it on her own with just a little help, Haines said. BCS plans to help this woman make a successful transition from the packing crate she currently lives in to this modern home.

We hope to build some self-esteem in this woman and give her and her child a better chance to live a normal life," said Jerry Haines, a BCS Facility Director coordinating this project. "We're striving within our means to create a better living environment for this woman. We've accepted this challenge and we're asking for support from others."

BCS hopes to have the home fully functional this summer. Those interested in the pilot program should contact Jerry Haines at BCS at (907) 543-2840.