

Groundbreaking for New Bethel Hospital is Scheduled for Monday

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new, \$36 million Bethel Comprehensive Health Facility at Bethel will commence Monday, June 20, at 5:30 p.m., the Indian Health Service announced last week.

Completion of the 50-bed hospital project in Southwest Alaska is targeted for 1980.

Invited guests at the groundbreaking include members of the Alaska congressional delegation, the Governor, IHS Director Emery Johnson, Association of Village Council Presidents board chairman Eddie Hoffman, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation president Joe Lomack, Bethel Native Health Board president Alex Nick, and Alaska area Indian Health and Bureau of Indian Affairs representatives.

Hosting the event will be the Bethel Service Unit Native Health Board. A potlatch featuring King Salmon and Eskimo dancing will follow the ceremonies.

The new hospital will be a complete, self-contained regional medical facility, according to IHS officials.

Services are to include general medical and surgical patient care, including adult and pediatric care, dental care, full obstetrical care, ambulatory care services, and full support labora-

tory and radiology services.

The hospital will be built in phases, funded by yearly allocations through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Site work has been started.

Some 15,000 residents in 56 villages of the lower Yukon and Kuskokwim region, nearly entirely Yupik Eskimos are served by the Bethel Service Unit of the Alaska Area Native Health Service. In addition to medical services provided directly by IHS staff, Community Health Aides and Community Health Representatives from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, an

Alaska Native corporation, provide paramedical health care in the region's villages.

Hoffman Construction Company, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, with branch offices in Anchorage, is responsible for construction management of the Bethel complex. Contracts for site work, pile driving, steel erection and precast floors have been negotiated with the Aleut Corporation and Walsh and Co.

Because of perma-frost conditions, the structure will be built on pilings and will utilize refrigeration and temperature monitoring systems.