

*Deemed They Could Hurt Subsistence Lifestyle—*

# NANA Board Chairman Charges Corridors Inadequately Planned

By MARGIE BAUMAN

KOTZEBUE — Board chairman Robert Newlin of NANA Regional Corporation charged Jan. 22 that land corridors for Northwest Alaska were proposed on the basis of inadequate planning and insufficient data.

Newlin told Bureau of Land Management representatives conducting the hearing the proposed corridors were all duplicative, based on speculation concerning resource availability and that they could have a damaging effect upon the subsistence lifestyle of the area.

A majority of the Eskimo people populating the 11 villages of Northwest Alaska depend on subsistence to feed their families. While the income rate of some families has improved substantially over the past couple of years, others depend almost entirely on subsistence.

When the BLM announced a hearing on the proposed transportation and utility corridors, therefore, representatives of each village turned out to protest the plan.

One BLM official said privately that he agreed with the majority viewpoint that the corridors were unwanted and unneeded, "but that's not the point," he said. "They're going to build them anyway."

Proposed routes through the Arctic of concern to Northwest Alaska are routes 1 (Lisbourne-Koyuk), 2 (Pet 4, South), 3 (Lower Kobuk Valley), and 4 (Prospect-Lost River). Speculative use for the four corridors ranges from oil and gas pipeline to highways and railroads.

Northwest Alaska Eskimos fear that the North-South corridor proposed from Navy Petroleum Reserve 4 to the Ambler area and the entire corridor from Kotzebue east through the region to the Interior could split the large Arctic caribou herd — a major source of food for this area.

"The danger of spillage from pipelines is well known, of course, but for the NANA villages, a major spill in the Kobuk or Noatak rivers could wipe out, even if 'only' for several years, about half the subsistence economy," Newlin said. "Fundamentally, we can see no reason for setting aside these corridors at this time. They are all duplicative and they are all based on speculation concerning resource availability," Newlin said.

"The North-South corridor from Pet 4 duplicates the East-West corridor from Pet 4 to the Alaska Pipeline. Both east-west corridors in our region duplicate one another, so at most only one is necessary, assuming there is any reason for an east-west corridor, and we don't think there is," he said. "The corridor from Lisbourne area south to Kotzebue could as easily and sensibly go coastward from Lisbourne to Wainwright through Wainwright to the pipeline," he said. Newlin also charged other corridors would simply be more suitable and that the BLM ought to revamp its plans.

He noted that proposed corridor No. 1 is supposed to serve for oil and natural gas as well as a coal slurry operation, although, there is no indication that coal could economically be slurried from the area.

"As concerns oil and gas, we feel that a connection to Pet 4 and the Alaska pipeline would be more economically feasible. Consequently we oppose corridor No. 1," he said.

NANA opposed proposed corridor No. 2 south from Pet 4 into Northwest Alaska on grounds that oil and gas can be moved out of the Arctic Slope area by the east-west corridor north of the Brooks Range. "We can see no reason at all to run a pipeline south and then east to connect to the existing Alaska pipeline," Newlin said.

The Noorvik businessman continued that corridor No. 3's prime purpose, to move Arctic Slope oil and gas to transshipment points also seemed groundless as long as there was an Alaska pipeline.

"Since we oppose No. 2, there is no use for No. 3 to connect Kotzebue to Pet 4," he said. The secondary proposed use of No. 3 — to serve copper deposits in the Upper Kobuk — is not substantiated except by allegation," he said. "A road system would be utilizable only part of the year," he said.

Corridor No. 4 also came under attack as "unnecessary," since the corridor north of the Brooks

Range should be used for this purpose." Newlin added that "the lack of known recoverable oil and gas deposits in our region makes No. 4 unneeded. If port facilities on Seward Peninsula are to be used, it is difficult to see the need for a link from those points all the way to Fairbanks," he said.

A number of individuals and representatives of area village councils also testified, the majority voicing blunt concern that these corridors would cut off the main source of their food supply.

If the people were critical of the proposed corridors themselves, NANA President John W. Schaeffer was also critical of the lack of advance notice on the hearing themselves.

Because of the effect the proposed corridors would have on the area, NANA spent a considerable amount of time making sure all villages in the area knew of the hearings, Schaeffer said.

The BLM said a total of 325 news releases on the corridor

hearings were sent out January 15, to news media, local government officials, conservation societies and other private interest groups. In villages having little or no access to print or other media, however the announcements went unnoticed.

A radio newsman en route from Nome to Fairbanks shortly after the Nome hearings Jan. 23 said hardly anyone showed up; that nobody had known about the hearing.

A BLM spokesman who was there said "the Nome hearing was somewhat of a disaster. We don't know if it was them not knowing or if they didn't care," he said.

The BLM scheduled corridor hearings at Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kotzebue, Nome, Bethel, King Salmon and Dillingham.

Those who wish to submit testimony, but are unable to attend the hearings may do so until February 14. Testimony should be mailed to the Bureau of Land Management, 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

## Nome Drama . .

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re-enactment exactly 50 years later, to the hour.

Joe Redington Sr. began the race at 11 p.m. Monday after a banquet presided over by Jack Coghill, mayor of Nenana. The race started in spite of the fact that not all of the relay legs had mushers to run them.

In lieu of serum, the teams will be relaying 1,000 back-stamped envelopes carried by train from Anchorage to Nenana.

One of the original mushers, Edgar Nollner Sr. is running one of the relays this year, from Whiskey creek to Galena. Other survivors include Edgar Kalland of Kaltag and Harry Pitka, Billy McCarty, and Charlie Evans, all of Galena.

## Governor . .

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area favor the state. If not, the state may expect less than half the projected amount.

Hammond also responded somewhat favorably to a suggestion that the State of Alaska consider appropriating money to cover malpractice insurance for doctors presently having increasing problems obtaining such insurance in return for an over-all decrease in health care rates.

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