

# MANY VILLAGES HARD HIT

Many of the villages on the Seward Peninsula coast were hard hit by the recent storms, and news from the Village Council of Unalakleet was received by Mike Harper, executive director of RurAl CAP.

They list the complete destruction of the Norton Sound Fishermen's building, the Native store warehouse and oil tanks, five homes and a Butler hut. Also damaged were 13 homes, about 10 storing caches, and eight businesses.

Signed by Village Council members, Frederick A. Katchatag, Sr., president; James Oksoktaruk, vice president, and Rita Ivanoff, secretary, the following report was sent to the Governor's office, the Congressional Delegation, and other concerned people.

Approximately 2 a.m., Nov. 12, the village of Unalakleet was struck by extreme high water and high winds, causing flooding of the lower west end of the village and surrounding low lands to the east. This was the worst flood to hit and was beyond our expectations.

The village was surrounded by water. The road to the old Air Force site washed out and the East-West runway was under water. There was a lot of debris to be moved before the road is to be in use again. The Butler hut was completely destroyed.

It was owned by the Village Council and rented to Alaska State Troopers and Family and Childrens' Services. The Weather Bureau Station was surrounded by water.

The FAA and BIA basements were filled with water. Approximately 12 homes were in salt water and moved badly. Some enough to lean to one side and causing cracks to open. The Native store losses were extreme—the warehouse, fuel tanks, and many other items.

Mayor Fred Katchatag, Sr., Pastor Don Erickson, store manager Kermit Oyoumick, Unalakleet Native Corporation manager Tim Towarak, along with several other men worked all day hauling groceries and staple goods to higher grounds, trying to save as much as daylight permitted. The BIA and Covenant High School were closed all day.

This one day the principals and teachers were moving like students observing the big and small damages caused by unexpected water flow and pounding high seas mixed with 18-inch thick broken Alaskan ice.

Many homes are in danger for the next storm. The entire community is in danger of future

flooding. The land on which the village is located is shrinking.

That itself is enough evidence to behoove all residents of Unalakleet to give a sober thought to relocate the village to higher grounds to save heartbreak for future generations. We have an option to consider either a sea-wall or relocation.

Repair and material losses are very costly and it is very heartbreaking to be homeless. It is very difficult and I have no words to remedy the situation. The month of November is no time for young mothers to tour the wilderness of the Northwestern coast of Alaska.

Relocation will not be easy. There will be a lot of disagreements when you think of leaving our year round supply of running water and highly maintained electricity sources. You may think it is foolish to leave. All these things will pass through many minds.

As mayor, I urge all people to pray each in your own way to God. Do something! Plan before it happens again. Each time it floods, the water is higher and higher (sinister). The extreme flooding caused the entire village to be surrounded by water.

Blowing winds, water contamination and power failure could have happened easily. Who knows? Maybe in the future, it may happen. Shouting and crying could be expected from OUR children. Before it is too late, I urge all village leaders and parents to give this relocation very deep thought.

We are requesting assistance for items and homes lost in the flood by those who have lost or damaged possessions.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered their time and effort in moving Native Store staple goods and helping all the private families.

We have a few more things to add to this report that were belated.

Several dogs belonging to Edna Eakon and Elmer Kotonagan were lost. Several boats, motors, fishing gear, etc., were lost in the flood, also.

We have approximately 20 men starting to work on picking up the debris and repairing as much of the damaged homes as possible, before the snow sets in.

We also failed to mention that the Butler hut also housed our village jail, and we must have it replaced as soon as possible.

We need a D-8 Cat, two dump trucks, and four big timbers very badly to help move about four homes that are still

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livable, but need to be moved. Or, if possible, to have the military come in to do the work with equipment.

Also, would the military be available to backfill the western half of the village during the summer months, since sewer and water is already installed there? We request that the Division of Aviation, BIA, Water and Sewer System be made available to help with the repairs.

Your immediate attention would be appreciated. Thank you.