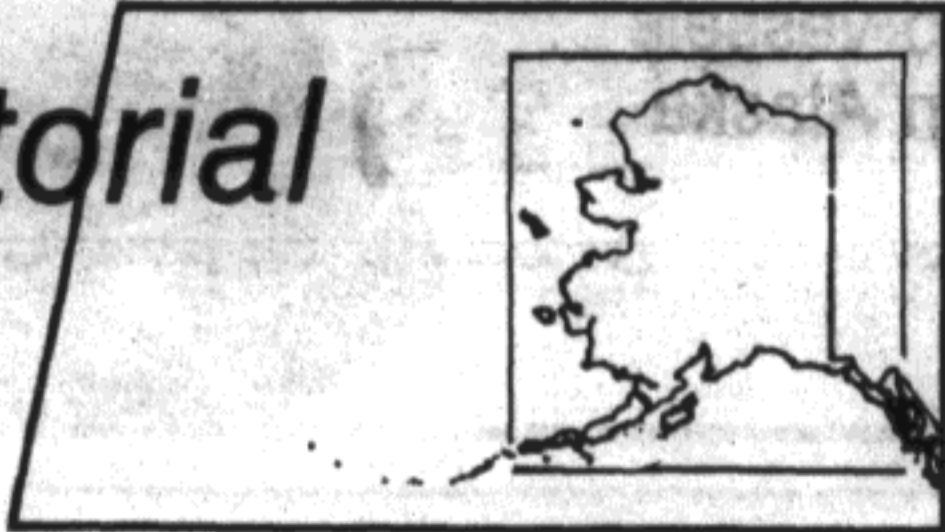


Editorial



Chenega struggles with spill

People trying to battle the effects of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill have swarmed into the village of Chenega, swelling the tiny community to more than three times its normal size.

The village has about 80 residents, and these people now find themselves in the impossible situation of trying to understand just what the meaning of this catastrophe will be for them and their families.

The village's plight is particularly painful because this is a community that was totally destroyed by the tidal wave accompanying the 1964 earthquake. Many of the villagers were killed in that disaster, and the buildings had to be abandoned.

But these are a hearty group of people, and even though they didn't really have a "home" for about 20 years, they never gave up trying to rebuild their village. They succeeded several years ago, and people have been moving in ever since.

Today, however, they find themselves wondering just what the future holds. Will there be wildlife for subsistence? What will the people do if they can't depend on the land and the waters?

These are nagging questions, and they must be addressed by state, federal and industry officials involved in this oil spill.

There are others who are affected by this spill just as much as the people of Chenega. We urge officials to keep in mind the human tragedy of this event. And we particularly urge them to remember that for the Native people of Prince William Sound, this is an area that has been the home of ancestors before ancestors.

Exxon sounds very generous when it says it will pay for the damages. Although this tragedy has left us with many doubts about oil industry claims, we want to believe company officials are sincere when they say this. We are concerned, however, that they do not understand the commitment they are making.

Certain things appear to be damaged irreparably by this oil spill. We won't know for some time what the effects are. But we are certain that money alone will not solve the problems, nor will it ensure that the industry is ready next time.

