

Three Bush Villages Apply For OEO Funds for Projects

Three villages in remote Alaska areas are on their way toward bettering themselves, through use of programs outlined in President Johnson's War on Poverty.

Huslia, Koyukuk and Wainwright have applied for funds available through anti-poverty programs to carry out selected village improvement programs.

Plans call for a complete electrical generation and distribution system for Wainwright, which presently has no electricity, a complete move for the village of Koyukuk, threatened by floods on the lower Yukon River, and a new community building for Huslia.

NOT WAITING

Men at Huslia, on the Koyukuk River, are not waiting for the money to come from Washington.

They're already at work, cutting ~~logs and~~ hauling peeled logs for the new building from cutting sites east of the village to a nearby slough, where the logs will wait for

spring and high water to float them to the village itself.

"The building project at Huslia is unique in that this will be the first time the OEO has financed the construction of a public building in this area," said Flore Lekanof, Office of Economic Opportunity Co-Ordinator in Fairbanks. "It's possible that we may get pilot-program financing for it. The closest example to this that I can recall is at one village in southwestern Alaska, where OEO

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funds were used to move a building from one site to another."

Huslia residents will plan, design and build the new building by themselves, with no outside help. Only workers constructing the log community center itself will be paid from the \$10,000 OEO grant asked for. Men who are now cutting trees are volunteers.

\$10,000 WANTED

The \$10,000 grant will cover mostly labor costs in building the one-story log center, designed to be 40' x 60'.

The labor crew will total 10 men; 1 foreman at a salary of \$800 a month, 2 carpenters at \$640, and \$400 for 7 laborers.

Work is expected to last three months.

Many volunteers—men who are offering their services without pay, are also involved in the project. A local resident with accounting experience has offered to act as a timekeeper-accountant, the owner of a Huslia trading post has volunteered his Caterpillar bulldozer and himself as equipment operator, and 21 men are acting as loggers to cut and haul logs to the slough, from where they will be floated to the building site.

The application for funds for the planned building came through that village's Community Action Group established under OEO sponsorship. George Attu, well-known dogmusher from Huslia, is Chairman of the group as well as Chief of the village.

WAINWRIGHT

The village of Wainwright, with almost 400 people, has no electricity. The only generator in the village is a power source for the Bureau of Indian Affairs school there

that supplies power for the school complex only.

Villagers at Wainwright have reportedly been offered a 20KW diesel generating unit from a nearby U.S. Air Force DEWline station, but generators themselves, a building for the unit, plus power lines, utility poles and installation costs are expected to be financed through an application for OEO.

The installation of the system plus labor would require financing to the point of \$36,000—\$9,000 for the labor costs in running power lines, building the power shack and installing equipment.

The remaining \$25,000 would be used in purchasing equipment needed.

GENERATORS

Wainwright's neighbor, Pt. Barrow, 150 miles to the northeast, may come to that village's aid with a sale of two generators for an as-yet undetermined price. Reportedly, the price could range between 3 and 5 thousand dollars.

The two generators would come from Barrow utilities, Inc.—Barrow's community-owned power company.

Wainwright's system, once built, would be self-supporting through the sale of power to villagers. Although the Bureau of Indian Affairs is presently generating its own electricity for the school, that agency had indicated its interest in buying from the village power co-op and saving itself the headaches and expense of maintaining a separate power source.

OTHER PROJECTS

Although the power project is in the works at present for Wainwright, electricity isn't the only improvement ambitious villagers there want to

bring.

A water well is needed. At present, Wainwright people have to cut ice from nearby fresh water lakes for a supply of drinking water, like in many other Arctic communities.

A well drilled there could solve the problem of carrying in ice. Even though the little Eskimo community sits on the shoreline near salt water, a well drilled onshore would be likely to hit a good fresh water supply.

Similar wells have been drilled at St. George and St. Paul, on the Pribilofs, with success.

COAL INDUSTRY

Another resource Wainwright people would like to develop is productive use of coal-fields near the village.

People there have used the coal—which is laying in open veins on top of the ground—to heat their houses for years. Soft coal (Bituminous) deposits are 7 miles from the village, while hard coal (Anthracite), which burns better, has to be transported from 15 miles away.