

# justice resolutions advocate policy changes

Nearly one half of the resolutions passed at the 1976 AFN Convention (held in Anchorage October 21 - 23) proposed specific programs to improve the state's justice delivery system. Forty-six of AFN's ninety-one resolutions supported change in the way the state justice system deals with different justice needs ranging from alcoholism to court administration, to juvenile justice, to police protection, to the subsistence life way.

Some of the resolutions advocate long range policy changes

## Juvenile intake is high

By Sharon McConnell

In Sept. 1976, 181 juveniles were arrested or counseled in the Fairbanks Fourth Judicial District.

Some were referred or brought to the Juvenile Intake Officers. Dennis Gilmer, Juvenile Intake Officer, told the Project Now journalism class that the purpose of the Intake Office was to screen all juvenile cases that could go before the court.

Some juvenile problems include anti-social behavior, committing crimes such as burglary or theft, and domestic arrest.

The problems have increased as the population has risen. Marijuana use is a big concern, Gilmer said. Others include theft, truancy, and run-aways.

The intake Office does footwork and research for the court on their cases.

The officers take care of cases where the child is under 18. Juveniles 18 or older are treated as adults. If the juvenile is under 18 and commits a serious crime, was aware of the consequences of the offense, and is mature, the court could treat that person as an adult.

The State law requires students to go to school until 16 years of age. Truancy (skipping school) is a prevailing offense, Gilmer said. The schools will give a list of the students with repeated absences to Gilmer for counseling. The officers will probably ask the student about his family life, social activities, etc., to find out the cause of his absences.

The juvenile Intake Office, social service agencies believe juvenile problems would increase resulting in more crimes. With this office, juveniles learn more about life and its realities, and parents and children understand each other.

and increased research to develop comprehensive methods of dealing with such chronic problems as alcoholism, police recruitment and preservation of the subsistence life way. Other resolutions are the foundation for specific state legislation and administrative action necessary to accomplish more immediate changes in the justice delivery system.

Most of the AFN justice resolutions developed at the Kenai Conference was organized by AFN with funding from the State Department of Community and Regional Affairs and the Alaska Humanities Forum. The Bush Justice Conference brought some 100 representatives of rural Alaskan interests together with approximately an equal number of state justice system personnel.

The rural representatives to the Kenai Conference nominated and elected a new Bush Justice Implementation Committee to follow-up on the Bush Justice Resolutions. The seven members of the new Committee are as follows: Judge Roy H. Madsen, Kodiak; Frank Woods, New Stuyahok; Representative Phillip Guy, Kwethluk; Orie Williams, Nenena; Magistrate Ross Schaeffer, Kotzebue; Doug Modig, Ketchikan; and Gene George, Stevens Village.

After the Bush Justice Conference, the new Committee met for two days to review and refine the resolutions for presentation to the AFN Convention. After that, the AFN Human Resources Committee reviewed the resolutions before they went to the Convention Resolutions Committee and then the Convention floor. Most, but not all, of the Bush Justice Resolutions were approved by each of these committees and emerged from the Convention as AFN policy.

reviewed the resolutions before they went to the Convention Resolutions Committee were approved by each of these Committees and emerged from the Convention as AFN policy.

Four of the most important AFN justice resolutions relate to 1) Constables; 2) Rural Court Administrator; 3) Local Control; and 4) Juvenile Justice.

Resolution No. 76-5 supports immediate funding of at least 20 Constable positions statewide by the Department of Public Safety. The resolution proposes that the Constables be hired locally but be trained and paid by the state. The Constable would serve from 3 to 5 villages and act in support of village police in both a law enforcement and training capacity.

Resolution No. 76-1 supports funding of a Rural Court Administrator as part of the Alaska Court System. The Rural Court Administrator would be a voice for rural court judges, magis-

trates at the highest level of the court system administration. The new administrator would also be able to advocate on behalf of rural courts for necessary changes within the court system to make it more responsive to the judicial needs of rural people.

Resolutions No. 76-7, 76-8 76-9 all support changes in Title 29 of the Alaska Statutes to clarify and provide the power of cities and unorganized villages to make and enforce their own rules of conduct. These resolutions are intended to preserve the power of local communities to handle their own justice affairs in a more traditional manner than is likely under the state court, police and other justice systems. Any such local powers will be used in conformity to some basic principles of due process and constitutional fairness.

Resolution No. 76-14 through 76-20 support many changes in the state's juvenile justice system. The most important of these changes are passage of legislation developed over the last year to preserve cultural values for Native children when the state gets involved in their lives; and to provide local group homes and other juvenile facilities in rural area for children who do get involved in the juvenile justice system.

These are only a few of the resolutions passed through the Kenai Bush Justice Conference and the AFN Convention. The Bush Justice Committee will issue a report about February 1, 1977 which will describe each

resolution in more detail. These resolutions and possibly legislation drafted in reaction to them will also be reviewed at the Citizen's Participation Conference in Anchorage on December 11 and 12.

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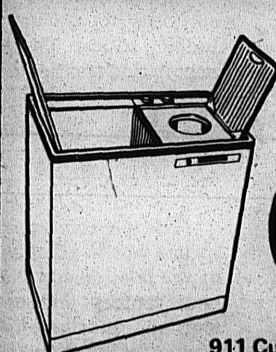
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