

Cook Inlet may buy Wrangell Institute

From Wrangell Sentinel

Cook Inlet Region Inc., one of the major native corporations in Alaska, is considering possible purchase or trade for the Wrangell Institute property.

An official of the regional native corporation's Anchorage office would only confirm, "We are considering it — we are doing some planning, but no major planning" on possible uses for the institute property.

He would not say what possible uses are being considered for the institute.

The corporation "has no commitments" to obtain the land and buildings on Zimovia Highway, but the official did report "use studies" and "cost studies" would be done on the institute.

He said local property taxes and purchase or trade price from the federal government to obtain the land are two major economic considerations to be studied.

The institute was to be put up for auction in March by the federal General Services Administration (GSA), but that action has been "temporarily delayed" by Cook Inlet's interest in the site, explained a GSA official.

The native corporation official said a January, 1976, amendment to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act would allow Cook Inlet Region Inc. to purchase or trade its land for "excess federal lands," such as the institute, outside of its regional corporation boundaries.

Ken Lindebak, of the GSA property division office in Auburn, Wa., is handling disposal

of the institute land and buildings. He confirmed that interest in the site by Cook Inlet Region Inc. has halted GSA plans to auction the property by sealed bids.

"We're the disposal agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on this property," he said. When the regional corporation this month "expressed interest in acquiring the property," he

said, the bid advertising was held up.

He said the institute property to be auctioned is listed in GSA records as 140.3 acres and 21 buildings. Some land already has been given to the city for recreational use, he said, also noting that the institute's sewage treatment facility, too, was given to the city of Wrangell, free by the federal government.