

Porcupine Commission wants generators out

Native leaders from Gwich'in communities firmly rejected continuing use of RTG's (Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators) at an Air Force site at Burnt Mountain in a recent meeting. The generators provide power for a seismic station used to monitor compliance with nuclear test ban treaties.

The Alaska Porcupine Caribou Commission (APCC) recognizes the importance of the site but insists an alternative source of power must be found if the site is to remain in Gwich'in country said in a

letter to Sen. Frank Murkowski.

"Those generators should be removed immediately and replaced with something dependable that our people know is safe," says Gideon James, tribal chief.

The public became aware of the nuclear generators this fall when a forest fire threatened the site and prompted a formal notice to the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The APCC decision follows 10 days of discussions in the communities after a high profile recent visit

by the U.S. Air Force to convince the communities of the importance of the site and the safety of the generators. Community leaders toured the site and meetings were held in Fort Yukon, Arctic Village and Venetie.

The RTG's at Burnt Mountain use Strontium 90, a highly radioactive material that is considered "high level waste." There is currently no disposal site that will accept them says the Caribou Commission.

"We have to think about the long term. The government thinks this is

empty land, but to us it is our backyard. They worry about the next 30 years. But we have been right here for thousands of years. Our re-

sponsibility is not counted in years. Our people will be here for a hundred genera

Continued on Page Twelve

• APCC wants alternative energy

Continued from page 1

tions to come," says Jonathan Solomon, Commission Chair.

The APCC represents Arctic Village, Beaver, Birch Creek, Canyon Village, Chalkyitsik, Circle, Fort Yukon, Stevens Village and Venetie on the management of the Porcupine Caribou herd and the land they use.

