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no. 8
February
12, 1997

Tundra TIMES

THE VOICE OF NATIVE EXPERIENCE

\$1.00

Volume XXXVI, No. 8 • Wednesday, February 12, 1997 • Anchorage, Alaska



Mt. Edgecumbe High School's current Business Management students stand in front of the school.

MEHS celebrates 50 years

by Lucille Kugzruk and Mariah Bowen

It all started in July of 1946. Papers transferring property on Japonski Island from the U.S. Navy to the Alaska Native Service were signed by President Harry S. Truman. The property was to be used as a new boarding school and sanitarium. The Alaska Native Service provided, and was responsible for, the education of students in 120 village schools, five hospitals and three boarding schools. Work on a new school and sanitarium began soon after the property was handed over to the ANS. Building officials reported that four years would be needed to remodel the existing facility into a boarding school. The existing Army airplane hangar underwent

major renovations, enabling it to be used as a gymnasium with classrooms and a student store. The old Army barracks were remodeled and enlarged to create suitable housing for Mt. Edgecumbe's students. By February 1947, due to the severe weather and the failure of heating boilers in the boarding facilities of the Eklutna Vocational School, Mt. Edgecumbe was forced to open early; it had been only six months since the ANS had been given claim to the property.

Mt. Edgecumbe employees were given 15 days notice to prepare for the arrival of nearly 100 tuberculosis patients and 450 Native students, ranging in age from 10 to 18. Upon their arrival, facilities were in makeshift condition, but they made do with what

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Access feud erupts, Native lands at risk

by Tundra Times staff

Was it just a big misunderstanding, or a major parting of the ways over policy?

According to state officials, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has raised the stakes and fired a new round in the long-simmering debate over how states may assert right-of-way claims to cross federal lands under Revised Statute 2477. A memo signed by Babbitt last month outlines the department's philosophy regarding such claims, and specifically rescinds an old approach adopted during the Reagan administration.

Eventually, disposition of an estimated 500 claims for recognition of access routes across federal lands will have profound—and potentially devastating—effects on Native villages and subsistence hunting and fishing areas.

State officials seemed both angry

and surprised; they felt they had an implicit understanding that there was room for the state and federal governments to negotiate on some of their differences over procedures and criteria for recognizing right-of-way claims. Now, they see the memo as a gauntlet that must be taken up to protect the state's economic interests.

Generally, the posture of the Clinton Administration on right-of-way claims by states has been more restrictive than preceding Republican administrations. Efforts by Babbitt to draft new RS 2477 regulations in 1994 ran afoul of Alaska's Congressional delegation. Members of the delegation persuaded their colleagues to block further work on the regulations.

In the memo, Babbitt explains why the policy was put into writing: "States ... asserting that ... rights-of-way ex-

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Subsistence fish regs out

The Federal Subsistence Board has released draft proposed federal subsistence fisheries regulations to its ten regional advisory councils for discussion during meetings this month. The Board will consider regional council recommendation prior to publishing proposed regu-

lations for public review. It is uncertain when the Board will publish proposed regulations, however Congress has prohibited the publication and implementation of final regulations prior to October 1997.

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SJC, ANEC cosponsor Native education forum

Sheldon Jackson College and the Alaska Native Education Council will co-sponsor the third annual Higher Education Forum on Alaska Native Education to be held Feb. 19-23 in Sitka on the historic Sheldon Jackson campus. The theme of this year's forum will be Alaska Natives and Oral Traditions in Education and will focus on developing new ways to bring oral tradition and storytelling into curriculum and classroom methodology.

Who should attend?

Educational administrators, classroom teachers, Alaska Native educators, School Board members, students, future teachers, all those interested in bringing Native

Ways of Knowing into the classroom.

What will be happening?

Storytellers from around the state will present some of their legends, historical knowledge and information. They will share their experiences in bringing this form of knowledge transmission into classroom situations and make recommendations to teachers and educators on how to improve on the use of oral tradition. Teachers, educators and students will meet in small group to discuss the use of oral traditions and how to incorporate this methodology into their lesson plans as well as how to systematically change the way formal educational structures and

institutions view storytelling. Educators will develop specific recommendations to present to school administrators, school boards colleges and universities.

Dr. Kenneth Cameron, president of Sheldon Jackson College, hopes that this year's forum will continue the themes '95 and '96 Higher Education Forums by focusing on the continued need for college and universities to create environments where Alaska Native students can succeed. "The best foundation for a good life is a good education," said Cameron, "so I believe that the education institutions of this state need to find relevant ways to

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