

# **OTZ telephone receives regional authority**

**From our Juneau Bureau**

JUNEAU — The Alaska Public Utilities Commission has granted permanent authority to OTZ Telephone Cooperative of Kotzebue to service the entire NANA Region in Northwest Alaska. The three-year-old Cooperative last year received \$3.35 million from the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) to begin an extensive building program in eleven villages of the region. Alex Hills, president of OTZ said that the first \$700,000 was released by the REA and that the OTZ building program, already begun in most villages, should be complete this fall when equipment installation can begin.

The OTZ plan will bring complete local exchange service to Kotzebue and the NANA region which will be tied in to the RCA long-line system providing residents with services taken for granted by people in the urban

areas.

APUC Commissioner Marvin Weatherly said, "It's a first in the state from the standpoint of the Commission to give authority to a company for an entire region." The action has prompted Interior Telephone to file with the APUC plans to serve the Bethel region, Weatherly says.