

Conference to discuss successful village alcohol programs

by **Bob Koweluk**

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Community development is the theme of a Rural Providers conference sponsored by RurAL CAP and the Alaska Village Alcohol Information League.

The conference to be held at Tyonek, May 2,3 and 4, is open for all workers providing direct services to people in village alcohol treatment programs statewide.

AVAIL President Robert Sam said the Rural Providers meeting

will end two days before the Annual School of Addiction Studies. The annual school sponsored by the University of Alaska Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies is held in the hopes of attracting more substance abuse workers. It will be held May 6-10 in Anchorage.

"We hope our theme: community development, will encourage villages to take more responsibility in dealing with alcohol and drug abuse," Sam said. This year we're asking people from the villages to take a real active role in the conference. Last year's conference was presented by professional people from urban areas. People in the villages

felt that AVAIL should sponsor a meeting to present their substance abuse workers with a village perspective and ownership.

"We'll be discussing programs that are working in the villages," Sam said. "Some examples are the Villager to Villager, an alcohol action program in the Norton Sound Region. Natural Helpers and the Spirit Movement are examples of statewide programs. The Spirit Movement began as a way for Native people to go back to the old ways free of alcohol and drugs; where people are proud of who they are by bringing out the positive aspects of their lives.

There are answers and solutions to village substance abuse problems, Sam said. "So often you hear negative things such as alcoholism, rape and suicide from

such places as Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome or Tyonek. There are programs that are working in the villages, and we hope to get this information out to more people."
