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Oil Firms Give AFN \$60,000 to Recruit for Oil Jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The three oil companies involved in the construction of the proposed trans-Alaska pipeline have given the Alaska Federation of Natives \$60,000 to identify and recruit

unemployed Alaskans for oil related jobs.

And in granting the money, the oil companies have pledged to do whatever is necessary to assure the hiring of Alaskans in

jobs related to the oil fields and oil pipeline.

This is the most important decision made by the oil industry affecting local hire since the industry has been in Alaska.

It was a direct result of the job conference held in Anchorage earlier this month called by AFN President Emil Notti and U.S. Senator Mike Gravel.

The Tundra Times learned

exclusively of this grant by the three oil companies—British Petroleum, Atlantic Richfield and Humble Oil.

Behind the decision is a story

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that has never before been told. A story in which a small native association waived its opposition to oil development in return for jobs for Alaskans and other guarantees.

On March 12, the Chugach Native Association adopted resolution No. 69-3, which asked the companies to cooperate with the AFN and the State of Alaska "to institute an on-going training program for the native and non-native people of Alaska in the oil industry and associated skills and trades immediately."

Supporting the resolution were Chugach Native Association leaders Cecil Barnes and Gilbert Olsen and AFN President Emil Notti.

Also instrumental in the program was Byron Mallott, a native leader from Yakutat who now serves as a special assistant to U.S. Senator Mike Gravel.

Senator Gravel himself flew to Juneau in March to meet with the AFN board and report on his talks with the oil companies about jobs and the land claims.

The agreement to give the AFN the money to survey the villages for people to fill the oil jobs was made at the job conference. It was not announced at that time because the AFN wanted to send the written contract to its new legal counsel, Arthur Goldberg, for final approval.

At the job conference, without fanfare or publicity, the oil companies agreed to do everything they possibly could do to see that Alaska natives were hired, and if they needed training for the jobs, that they were trained.

The \$60,000 represents \$20,000 from each of the three companies and was offered as a show of good faith by the industry.

The money was given to the AFN to help strengthen the statewide association and make it more valuable to all Alaska natives.

But it was made possible because Gilbert Olsen, Cecil Barnes and other members of the Chugach Association decided that they wanted to help the statewide native movement, and in doing so, to help their own people.

The Chugach Association

learned that the oil companies wanted to build the terminal or the pipeling in the Valdez area, an area covered by the associations protest.

After considerable discussion among themselves, the Chugach Association agreed on March 12 to a resolution that outlined its terms for release of the protest.

In its resolution the association said it "feels it has an obligation to the natives of Alaska and should not impede general legislation on the Alaska native land claims."

The main points asked in the resolution were:

1. Recognition for the Chugach Eskimos and Eyak Indians in the land claims legislation.

2. Certain technical agreements that improve and guarantee the rights of the Chugach Eskimos and Eyak Indians in any settlement.

3. Oil industry support for land claims legislation.

4. Proper conservation methods by the oil industry to protect the fisheries, wildlife and migratory birds.

5. A job training and job hire program for all Alaskas people, native and non-native.

The resolution received a great deal of work and study. It was finally approved at a meeting that lasted well into the night in Cordova. AFN President Notti went to Cordova especially for the meeting.

No publicity was given to any aspect of this to assure that the decisions would reflect the true feelings of all concerned.

Native leaders are known to feel that this is one of the most important moves to ever occur affecting native affairs. It means that the AFN and the principle of a single land claim settlement is strengthened and that with the help of a regional group the AFN was able to use its power to help negotiate an agreement with the oil companies that may mean hundreds of jobs right away.

Senator Mike Gravel, who played a leading role in helping all sides get together, said it was a "milestone agreement and it could not have occurred at a more important time—right on eve of the Senate land claim hearings."

"All Alaskans will be impressed," Senator Gravel said, "by the responsible leadership shown in this transaction, and the deep interest expressed by the native people for resource development and job opportunities for natives and non-natives alike."