

Kuskokwim village officials begin study of borough possibility

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The Association of Village
Council Presidents Regional

Government Study Steering
Committee met in Toksook Bay
April 14-15 to continue looking
at the feasibility of forming a
borough government in the

AVCP region. The Toksook Bay meeting was the fourth in a continuing series of work sessions and public meetings throughout the lower Kuskokwim region.

The study is being conducted by AVCP through a legislative appropriation to the University of Alaska. Acting AVCP President, Harold Napoleon, said the purpose of the study is to determine objectively whether a borough government is financially feasible and politically important to the region's 16,000 people. Napoleon is quick to emphasize this is not a first step to borough incorporation, but rather a fact-finding effort to see if a borough is desirable. Although funded through 1982, the steering committee intends to complete its reports by August in

time to hold extensive village meetings this fall.

The study was requested by resolution following an AVCP convention in Alakanuk in March 1980. Village council presidents expressed concern over proposed offshore oil and gas leasing activities, and the fact that no locally controlled government is in place to help guide proposed development. The resolution also noted the possibility of legislative actions which could force borough organization throughout the unorganized borough. AVCP leaders requested immediate legislative funding in order to locally determine regional government choices before something is imposed from outside sources.

Darbyshire & Associates has been hired to assist in developing the technical reports needed to complete the study. These reports will address such issues as:

- Does the region meet state incorporation standards? (That is, can the region become a borough if it wanted to?)

-What choices of borough government are permitted under state law; what powers and services would be provided?

-How would a borough enable the region to better deal with important economic and

development issues?

-How could a borough influence subsistence and land use activities throughout the region, particularly on federal and state lands;

-What are the likely costs of setting up and operating a region-wide borough?

-What are the effects on education and the REAA's?

-What happens to powers and responsibilities of first and second class cities?

-Where are the revenues which would support a borough?

-What are the potential tax burdens on individuals businesses, and landowners?

-What are the steps to borough information?

-If a borough is not financially feasible, what steps could the region take to amend state laws, or otherwise support regional government?

Steering Committee members are Chairman Eugene Peltola, Bethel; Vice-Chairman Glen Fredricks, KNA; Secretary-Treasurer Martin B. Moor, Emmonak; Phillip Guy, Kwethluk; John Guinn, Bethel; Lyman Hoffman, Bethel; Isaac Hawk, Eek; Henry Evon, Kwigillingok; Paul John, Toksook Bay; Peter Boy Scout, Chevak; and Moses Paukan, St. Mary's.