

Gravel Seeks Village Affairs Authority

U.S. Senate Candidate Mike Gravel emphasized the importance of Native participation in all programs designed to improve conditions in Alaska's rural villages.

Gravel, recently returned to Anchorage from a tour of Southeastern Alaska towns and villages, said, "The fact of the matter is we need the help of Alaska's Native poor before we can spend one cent on them."

The candidate called for formation of a Village Affairs Authority, a body which he said would be composed of federal, state, and local agencies with Native leadership to organize and oversee these problems.

"Most of our attempt to reach poverty-stricken villagers are haphazard, uncoordinated, and unplanned," Gravel said. "And—more importantly—they are often done without real knowledge of Native needs."

The Village Affairs Authority with its combined agencies approach and its Native participation would avoid the duplication, inefficiency, and neglect that have occurred in the past, the Senate candidate explained.

"What we want is a planned, orderly, systematic way of deal-

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ing with the critical problems of our village people," Gravel said. "The Village Affairs Authority would cost no more than what we are already spending, and it would do a much better job in the long run."