

Schedule of events for AFN resolutions announced

by Bob Koweluk

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Alaska Federation of Natives Chairman, Charlie Johnson, said the resolutions passed during the AFN's Special Convention on 1991 issues are in the process of being changed into draft legislation.

The resolutions and draft legislation will be sent to regional and village corporations for review and comment.

"Here's what's happening," Johnson said. "Already people are working on writing some draft legislation based on the resolutions."

"By mid-April to the end of April we (AFN) will send out not only the resolutions that we passed, but also the draft resolutions

to the village and regional corporations, both profit and non-profit."

"We will be asking them to comment on the draft legislations as well as the resolutions that were passed. These corporations will have 30 days to respond."

"After we get the corporation's response," Johnson said, "we'll have two to three weeks to rework the draft legislation and resolutions before we then send these to Congress, hopefully by mid-June."

This work which began after the AFN Special Convention will take approximately 60 days. The following is the schedule of events for the resolutions:

- AFN is presently developing draft legislation and work on resolutions passed at the March AFN convention

- By mid-April to end of April, Draft legislation and resolutions to be sent out to both profit and non-profit regional and village corporations for shareholders inspection and comment. The corporations have 30 days to inform Shareholders, discuss and make suggestions for changes or approve drafters as they are.

- AFN will have about two week since which to complete work on the draft legislations and resolutions.

- Completed draft legislation and resolutions to be sent to Congress hopefully by mid-June.

"It is very critical that we present legislation that is very clean to both the Senate and the House," Johnson said, "by that I mean legislation that does not have other legislation tagged on to it. This is one of our real concerns and the reason why we want to get our resolutions done quickly. If we present opportunities to other interest groups to add their Legislation to this, it just detracts the intent of our resolutions. Then our chances for passage (of these resolutions) get less and less, and our chances of getting what we want out of Congress gets less."

"There are chances for us, and we've done this in the past, for us to exempt lands from taxation, and we're certainly willing to do that," Johnson said. "Taxation is going to be a critical matter for Alaska Natives in the future. But for Native to address it at this point it presents the opportunity for Natives to lose the original intent of our eight resolutions," added Johnson.

This is why, Johnson said he was opposed to new resolution which presents taxation not because it present the idea of being tax exempt but because of the timing.

"It is a matter of timing that we need to be careful with," Johnson said, "and to present it (the taxation issue) now may complicate our resolutions and cause problems."