



## RurAL-CAP

## ACTION REPORTS



Mailing Address: Drawer 412 ECB

Telephone 279-2441

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

## RURAL-CAP REPS. MEET IN JUNEAU

More than 70 rural representatives from all across the State met in Juneau on March 24-25 to take a look at legislation that has been proposed by the 60 persons who served in the Alaska State Legislature. More than 200 individual bills were examined, commented upon, and then ranked according to the impact that they would have on Alaska's areas.

The bills were broken down into seven broad categories including Health and Social Services, Education, Communications, Local Government, Fish and Game, Bush Justice, and Housing and Community Facilities.

At the end of the two-day session, Phil Smith, RurAL CAP Director, commented, "This is undoubtedly the best legislative conference that I have ever attended. Rural delegates worked very hard to establish these legislative priorities in previous conferences; now, we have worked very hard to determine the quality of legislative response to concerns that have been expressed earlier."

Adding to the comments were a broad cross section of rural representatives, all of whom felt the two-day session was a complete success.

In the field of Health and Social Services, Chairman Frank Peterson from Kodiak indicated that his group's primary concerns included passage of a Day Care bill which would provide \$1.2 million to assist low income people in paying for child care so they can go to work.

"We feel this was a major priority," stated Peterson, "and we are happy to see that the bill has already passed the State Senate."

As expected, Education was of

primary concern to many of the delegates at the conference. The Education Committee, chaired by Gordon Jackson, Executive Vice President for Human Resources at AFN, concluded that Senate Bill 35 which would establish regional education attendance areas in place of the present State-Operated Schools structure, was of a very high priority.

"Certainly the time to bring education closer to the people that it is serving is at hand," said Jackson.

Other legislative proposals that received a high priority from the conference were bills which would provide a state dollar matching fund to federal Head Start funding, a bill which would establish a vice president for rural and Native affairs at the University of Alaska and provide for a post-secondary educational outreach system, and bills which would establish a community education commission within the Department of Education.

Eric Eckholm, administrative assistant to State Senator George Hohman, chaired the meeting on Communications. He reported that the group endorsed the idea of expanding the Governor's Office of Telecommunications to include responsibility for the Educational Broadcast Commission, as well as the Division of Communications (presently in the Department of Public Works).

He reported a number of on-going activities in the telecommunications field and indicated that, with the apparent total reliance on RCA no longer necessary, we can now start working as a state to solve our own telecommunications problems.

In the field of Local

Government, Chairman Dick Whittaker from Ketchikan (Whittaker is Chairman of the SEACAP Board of Directors) indicated that the major priority of his committee was passage and implementation of Senate Bill 136. This bill would establish a local government commission to study the unorganized borough for possible sub-division into smaller governmental or administrative units.

"It is essential that this bill pass the legislature, especially if SB 35 (the SOS Bill) passes," said Whittaker. "A very real concern exists throughout the state that a new regional structure for SOS not turn into merely a system of regional State Operated Schools. This bill will provide the incentive for establishing local government which will have a wide variety of governmental powers in addition to education."

Other government priorities that the conference dealt with included raising the state revenue sharing for fire protection from \$5 to \$15 and changing the revenue sharing allocation formula so that a community would receive a \$10,000 base amount, plus \$27 for each individual within the community. This would assist many of the smaller communities who must now rely only on their population base to receive state-shared revenues.

Trefon Angasan, Jr., Director of the Bristol Bay Native Association, shared the committee meetings on Fish and Game concerns. It was the general consensus of the committee that the controversial commercial fisheries entry law not be repealed; rather, it was felt that certain amendments were in order and the legislature was urged to

hold hearings and to come up with these proposed amendments this year.

Also, the committee gave a strong endorsement to a bill by Representative Nels Anderson that would require the showing of an affidavit by trophy hunters indicating that the meat from game animals had been properly disposed of.

The Bush Justice Committee dealt primarily with a bill which would establish seven judicial districts, in place of the present four. This is a controversial bill, one that is opposed by the court system (which would prefer to realign some of the boundaries of the present districts).

However, according to Frank Flavin who chaired the committee, "it is our feeling that judges should be closer to the people they serve and should be accountable to those people. Under the present system, a retention election for a judge does not really give the rural areas touch power over whether or not the judge should continue in his position."

"Establishing seven judicial districts will bring this whole process a lot closer and will therefore, we believe, establish the means by which justice for rural Alaska can begin to happen."

Other justice bills receiving endorsement were a bill which would allow a non-incorporated community to vote on whether or not to renew a liquor license, a bill establishing a community legal assistance grant program, and two bills which would extend the period of time that people had to comment on proposed changes in transportation and public utility tariffs from 30 to 45 days.

Finally, the Housing and

Community Facilities Committees under the chairmanship of Jackie Dailey, RurAL CAP Deputy Director, met and established a high priority for a bill that would allow the formation of regional electrification authorities.

Also endorsed was a bill that would establish a two million dollar revolving loan fund for bulk fuel storage and product purchase for small communities (this program would be patterned after the present RurAL CAP Energy Grant program).

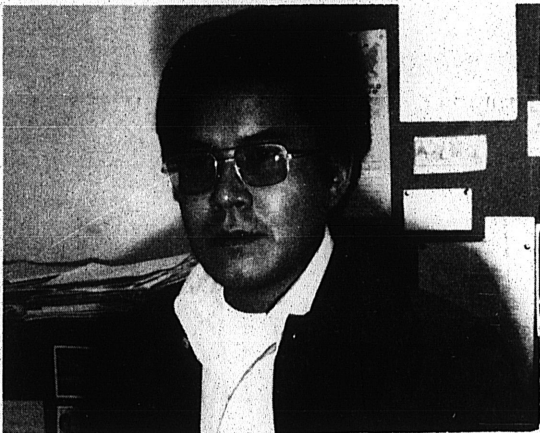
Commenting on the committee meetings, Dailey said, "We also were shown a group of bills that had not yet been introduced pertaining to rural housing. Our hope is get these, and to generate enough comment on them to guarantee that the rural position is well represented when the legislature debates these proposals."

In addition to the committee work outlined above, conferees enjoyed a no-host cocktail party Monday evening at the Baranof Hotel and listened to speeches from Representative Tom Fink (who has since resigned his position in the legislature) and Representative James Huntington.

Dick Whittaker also instructed all of the delegates to retain the spirit of community action when they returned from the conference:

"It's going to be our job when this session is completed to go back out and tell the people in our regions and in our villages what took place at this conference and to generate information for the legislators throughout the rest of this session."

The overall feeling of the conference was that that is exactly what will happen.



TED CHARLES

## Regional Director at Tok

The Upper Tanana Development Corporation has recently hired Ted Charles as regional director. The Tok based office will serve six villages that were formerly under the RurAL CAP Copper Valley-Tanana Regional Development Corporation which has since merged with the Copper River Native Association.

The Board of Directors for the Upper Tanana Development Corporation are Carl Charles from Dot Lake; Betty Thomas of Tok for Tanacross; Charlie David, Sr. from Tetlin, and John Summar from Tok. Ken Baker from Northway, president of the board, has been very active in the formation of the new

corporation.

Charles was born in Tanana, spent grammar school years at Dot Lake, and went to Ben Eielson High School. He has also attended the University of Alaska.

The new director is interested in helping villages in the Tok region with problems brought about by the pipeline impact, one of which is an increase in crime. He said that the State is hiring a constable for each village in the Tok area. Other problems include alcoholism, housing and the fact that pipeline hiring is taking so many people from the villages. He plans to work with village residents and learn their priorities.

No newcomer to regional development and planning, and a

About 35 Senior Citizens in the Copper River Region attended the first luncheon for elderly, held at the Copper Center Community Hall, March 19, 1975. The luncheon was co-sponsored by C.R.N.A.'s Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) and the Copper Valley Aging Program.

The elderly citizens enjoyed an abundance of food, including moose stew, baked salmon, salad, Indian pudding, chocolate cake, and ice cream. The moose was donated by Fish and Game, and the ice cream was donated by the Copper River Cash Store. Volunteers cooked and prepared the food.

1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students from the Copper Center School's Bilingual Class sang songs in the AHTNA Dialect and attempted a few steps of Indian dancing.

Following the childrens presentation, Harry Johns Sr., Tenas Jack, and Andy Brown, all of Copper Center, jumped up and gave a spontaneous lesson on how the dances should be properly done.

member of the Village Council, he is a past president of the United Crow Band, and previously worked with the Doyon Corporation for several years.

His favorite pastimes include hunting, fishing, and basketball. He is married to Darlene Summar of Tok.

## Activities Bring Young and Old Together

Not to be outdone, three women at the luncheon also danced for the children. The women were Walya Hobson and Virginia Pete of Tazlina, and Ruth Johns of Copper Center. Dancing is an intrinsic part of the Traditional Native Culture.

One objective of the Aging Program is to provide activities for the elderly, that bring them back into the mainstream of society. The luncheon was an attempt to bring the elderly together, and the

interchange between the old people and the young people provided an opportunity for the old people to pass some of their heritage on to their younger counter parts.

Eileen Ewan of Gulkana is the Director of the Aging Program, and Thea Smelcer of Tazlina is in charge of the Rural CAP Program. Both of them termed the luncheon as a huge success and plan to hold similar activities in the future.



ENTERTAINMENT EXCHANGE