

National CAP Program

"Continued advocacy for a federal commitment to anti-poverty programs is necessary before legislation will be passed that continues funds for RurAL CAP and its ten delegate agencies," reported Mike Harper, who was the lone Alaskan representative to the Community Action Agency convention in Houston, Texas on October 23-25.

Speeches were made by the past director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Alvin J. Arnett, who visited Nondalton and Angoon in April, and by Bert Gallegos, Acting OEO National Director, Also, by Governor Arch Moore of West Virginia, and by Barbara Jordon, member of Congress from Texas.

"Alaskans have indicated a preference for OEO to remain, if not as OEO, then as an independent agency that would allow as much flexibility and input from the target area low income people as possible," Harper declared, "and I carried that message to the leadership of this organization that will have a great deal to say about what is finally proposed in Congress.

"Right now, the funds that provide support for not only the people in RurAL CAP and Anchorage, but for many people in the regional centers such as Mauneluk in Kotzebue, Yupik-tak Bista in Bethel, and Copper Valley-Tanana Region as well as the seven others, will be exhausted December 31 and we will need a new piece of legislation to continue our funds beyond that.

"It is very important that village leaders, mayors of communities, of Chambers of Commerce, that have a public interest and support our program, contact only our own Congressional Delegation, but the leadership in Congress, emphasizing the need for OEO.

OEO is taking a very strong and active interest in the energy crisis as it affects the poor, and inflation with the disastrous situation that occurs, taking its toll on the very poor, and people with fixed incomes such as senior citizens.

Harper appeared on a panel and told of the emergency grant that RurAL CAP is administering in the Bristol Bay region for those hard hit fisherman who had virtually no income derived from the past two disastrous fishing seasons.

Harper, who is executive director of RurAL CAP, explained that the national meeting of Community Action Agency directors is an annual occurrence that offers an opportunity for people across the country to share ideas, express their needs, and provide input into the national trends, and even the legislation that directly affects the 23 million poor people in this nation.