

'Sivuniigvik' dedicated

By Linda Lord Jenkins

Tundra Times

Dedication ceremonies were held April 8 for the Inupiaq Ilitqusiut Spirit Camp, "Sivuniigvik" which means place where you can plan.

The camp, which is located 40 to 50 miles east of Kotzebue, has been open and used since Dec. 8 of last year, said NANA Regional Corp. President John Schaeffer but religious dedication ceremonies weren't held until earlier this month.

The camp is located on the site of last summer's youth camp sponsored by the NANA Inupiaq Ilitqusiut.

The camp buildings include six cabins, a meeting room/training center which can hold more than 100 people, quarters for staff people, a large kitchen and storage and generator buildings, says Schaeffer.

The camp is run by NANA's Inupiaq Education Foundation which has donated some of the money needed for construction. Other money came from a state bond issue as part of a recreation and parks legislative bonding bill and from the City

of Kotzebue and Maniilaq Association.

The camp is being used by almost any area group that needs it, said Schaeffer. Last week the Kotzebue Senior High School 1983 graduating class went out on a retreat to do some thinking about the future and for some recreational activities such as cross-country skiing, said Schaeffer.

He and other NANA board members interested in Inupiaq Ilitqusiut were leaving Friday to speak to the group.

Small groups, boards, organizations and other groups meet there, said Schaeffer. Some people do staff training there and many kinds of youth groups have used the camp, he said.

Last summer young people attended week-long youth camp sessions at the camp where they learned traditional skills and held retreat-like discussions of the Inupiat Ilitqusiut movement.

While the camp is administered by the NANA Inupiaq Education Foundation, it is actually run by the Regional
(Continued on Page Five)

Elders to run spirit camp

(Continued from Page Four)

Elders Council which selects Elders to staff the center on a rotating basis.

The first two Elders to staff the center are Elders Council Chairman Billy Sheldon and his wife, Elizabeth, said Schaeffer.

The Elders are caretakers of the camp and provide important guidance to the many groups who meet there to discuss important regional affairs or to contemplate the significance of graduating from high school.

Schaeffer said the Elders' presence has been very beneficial to the NANA Regional Corp. board of directors which now holds all board meetings at the camp.

The camp's location allows board members to devote full attention to their board duties instead of being distracted by the busy atmosphere of Kotzebue, said Schaeffer.

And, again, the presence of

Elders provides good guidance and information to the board members, said Schaeffer.

"It's great for an organization like ours to conduct business in a quiet place," said Schaeffer.

The Youth camps which will take up a good portion of the camp's summer time "teaches youth what they need to learn here and in the future," he said.

Schaeffer said the camp is not a culmination of the Inupiaq Ilitqusiatic goals by any means but merely "one aspect in what we consider regional support for the Inupiaq Ilitqusiatic program," said Schaeffer.

He said he believes that this camp will be the only permanent camp in the region but there is a good chance that other temporary camps may be established throughout the region as needed.