

Native Recreation Center

Villagers coming into Anchorage to look for work or to find a friend may soon have a place to call their own - an Alaska Native Social and Recreation Center with which the Anchorage Native Community can also become involved.

In an emergency session Thursday, January 22, the Alaska Native Ministries of the Methodist Church asked Fourth Street activist Ronald C. Mallott to form a board of directors and draw up the initial budget for a non-profit downtown community center that would help rural Natives adjust to city life and help solve Fourth Avenue problems.

At the meeting, ANMC Chairman Esther Combs said that such a center has long been needed because the Native Community as a whole needs a social organization that it can take pride in and use to strengthen heritage in an urban society.

"Similar centers in the lower 48 really work because the communities take pride in them," Esther reported.

Kathy Hanson, a research specialist and spokesperson for the Coalition for Economic Justice, an Anchorage poverty research organization, told the ANMC that the Coalition would strongly support a Native Center because a 1978 poverty study completed by the Coalition showed that a center was definitely needed.

Anchorage Mayor Sullivan's blue ribbon panel on Alternatives to Misery also recently recommended that the Municipality

help to organize a welcome center for rural Alaskans.

The center, as it is conceived by Mr. Mallott, would be managed by a Board of Directors drawn from such organizations as the Alaska Native Brotherhood, the Alaska Native Foundation, the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., Rural Alaska Community Action Program, the State Department of Health & Social Services, the Native Board of Health (AN-IHS) and the Municipality Department of Environmental Health.

The Center would operate on a twenty-four hour basis and would provide

Temporary living quarters and/or housing for a fee to be charged according to current earnings.

Recreational facilities including rooms for pool tables, movies, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and cultural activities.

A child care center for downtown shoppers and those either employed or seeking employment.

A cafeteria providing breakfast, lunch, and dinner at a reasonable cost.

An employment announcement service.

An Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselor.

A social and welfare services counselor.

A confidential list of the names and addresses of Alaska Natives residing in the Municipality to help newcomers locate friends and relatives.

Natives in Anchorage and throughout the State would be allowed to use the facilities and services provided at the center on a membership fee basis.

Mr. Mallott, a former Health Planning Specialist for AFN, Inc.,

has agreed to become Acting Project Director for the center on a part time basis until a permanent Board of Directors is chosen.

During the 1980 Fall Semester, Mr. Mallott was a full-

time student of Business Management at Alaska Pacific University. Mr. Mallott plans to continue his studies in the future on a part-time basis because he feels that continuing education is vitally important for the economic development of Native affairs.