

# Natives Asked to Cooperate with UA on Unique Research

FAIRBANKS — People in Alaska's villages will be asked to cooperate with University of Alaska social scientists in a unique research program that may become a model project to encourage court reform

throughout the nation. New court procedures will be developed based on traditions of Alaska's native Eskimos.

Stephen Conn, associate professor of law, and Arthur E. Hippler, associate professor

of anthropology, both with the university's Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, will be co-investigators in the project, which will get under way on July 1.

"There are many other

minority groups in the United States whose social and cultural patterns are at odds with the traditional American system of justice," said Conn. "These cultural differences have contributed to widespread failure of our judicial system among these peoples.

"The unique thing about the situation in Alaska, however, is that here members of the judicial system encourage changes to adapt the courts to the needs of the people," he said. "In other areas, judges and lawyers seem to feel that the people should adapt to the system; the courts are reluctant to change traditional procedures."

According to Conn, the National Science Foundation awarded \$70,000 to support the 18-month project because of the interest and cooperation of Alaska's Supreme Court, including Chief Justice Jay Rabino-witz and the late Chief Justice George Boney.

The new procedures will be tested in Alaska's rural courts, and the foundation hopes that the University of Alaska project will help to develop new legal methods, and that it might become a model for the nation.

Conn and Hippler have pre-

viously cooperated with Alaskan courts, correction officers, attorneys and police to acquaint them with the effect of cultural differences upon the successful performance of their duties.

They have done extensive research in the area of bush justice and cultural alternatives in law and correction, and have recently prepared reports on traditional law ways of the northern Eskimo and of the Athapascan Indian, and the relationship of these ways to contemporary problems of bush justice.


"This project gives us a chance for a practical application of our theories," said Conn.

"Possibly the village councils will be used to advise the judges who impose sentence. The social and legal problems that we have here in Alaska are also national problems; we are hopeful that we can find better ways for the state legal system to relate to problems stemming from cultural difference."

## Award to Improve Bethel Airport

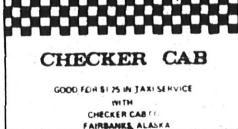
JUNEAU — The state has awarded a \$298,275 contract for improvements at Bethel airport, Governor William A. Egan said today.

The project, let by the Public Works Department to Arndt Brothers of Homer, Alaska, consists of earth moving and site preparation work for the first stage of construction of a 1,230 foot taxiway, a 165-by-995 foot apron extension, and an access road. It is scheduled for completion in December.



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