

4 Native Arts Groups Open Store at Nome

Four Native arts and crafts organizations opened their own retail store in Nome this week—and according to the sales, are already an unqualified success.

“The Eskimo House” displays and sells Native hand-crafted items and art pieces produced by members of the four organizations.

Participating in the venture are the Northwest Skin Sewers Co-operative, Nome; Sunarit Associates Co-op, King Island Villagers, Nome; Ki-Kit-A-Meut Arts & Crafts Co-op, Shishmaref; and Inupiat Arts & Crafts Inc., Teller.

Soapstone sculpture, already highly popular, along with ivory carvings, block prints, and wooden masks are the speciality of King Island Sunarit group.

Inupiat artisans are providing ivory jewelry, carvings, and skin sewn products.

Shishmaref's Ki-Kit-A-Meut

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contributed reindeer horn dolls, ivory items and skin-sewn crafts, while the Northwest Skin Sewers produced high quality mukluks, parkas, vests, kushiks, and novelties.

One corner of "The Eskimo House" features a small museum of old Eskimo parkas, boats, tools and utensils donated by members of the crafts groups.

Carol Piscoya, manager of the new store, says that both Alaska Airlines and Wien Air Alaska tour busses make daily stops at The Eskimo House.

The idea for the store resulted from a joint meeting of the four groups this spring to discuss marketing possibilities.

"We simply decided we could market our products just as easily ourselves," a spokesman said, "and buyers could be assured the items were authentic."

Total cost of opening the new store was \$14.

"That covered the paint and brushes," Mrs. Piscoya said. "Tony Krier, a Nome businessman loaned us display cases and a cash register, and members of the arts and crafts groups donated their time to fix up the building."

Clifford Weyionana, manager of the Ki-Kit-A-Meut did much of the capentry work.

Others helping in the necessary renovations were Morris Kiyutelluk, also from Shishmaref, Gabriel Payenna and Charles Koykuluk from Sunarit, Tommy Menadelook from Teller, and Myrtle Johnson, Northwest Skin Sewers.

The oogruk skin sign for the store was made by Mrs. Robert Baldwin, a VISTA volunteer in Nome.