

Citizen Action Group warns of consequences of public apathy

BY KENT BRANDLI
From the Kodiak Times

In an open appeal for financial contributions and broadened community support, and with dire warnings of the consequences of continued public apathy, the Citizen's Action Group said it could still win its expensive and complex legal battle with what they term "phantom" villages claimed by Natives on Kodiak and Afognak Island.

About 35 persons attended the two hour public session, including two news reporters.

The group's leadership said it is now primarily focusing its attention on Woody Island. They said the possibility for a summary judgment in the case is good, but they are running out of funds, and "We're getting weary of pullin' it along with just a very few others..." Depositions from four former FAA employees dispute Native claims there, based on residency.

The legal battle centers

around requirements making villages eligible for certification under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

Seven of the eight villages questioned (Uyak, Uganik, Litnik, Anton, Larsen Bay, Bell's Flats, Ayakulik and Port Williams) were involved in what is known as the "Geselle decision." Judge Gerhart Geselle in Washington, D.C. overruled the Department of Interior's decisions which declared 11 villages in Alaska ineligible for certification under ANSCA. Of these 11 villages, seven were on Kodiak Island. Native leaders maintain Geselle's decision upheld the Bureau of Indian Affairs determination of eligibility.

The Department of Interior appealed this decision. The appeal was completed a year ago and a decision is pending.

The CAG has repeatedly stressed it has no argument with the eight "bona fide" villages not in dispute and the more than 800,000 acres of land they have selected.