

St. Paul to open bids for harbor project

The City of St. Paul in the Pribilof Islands will open bids for its \$28.6 million harbor expansion today in Anchorage, according to St. Paul officials.

The project is the final phase of a massive economic development project that will thrust the small village community to the forefront of the growing Bering Sea fishery.

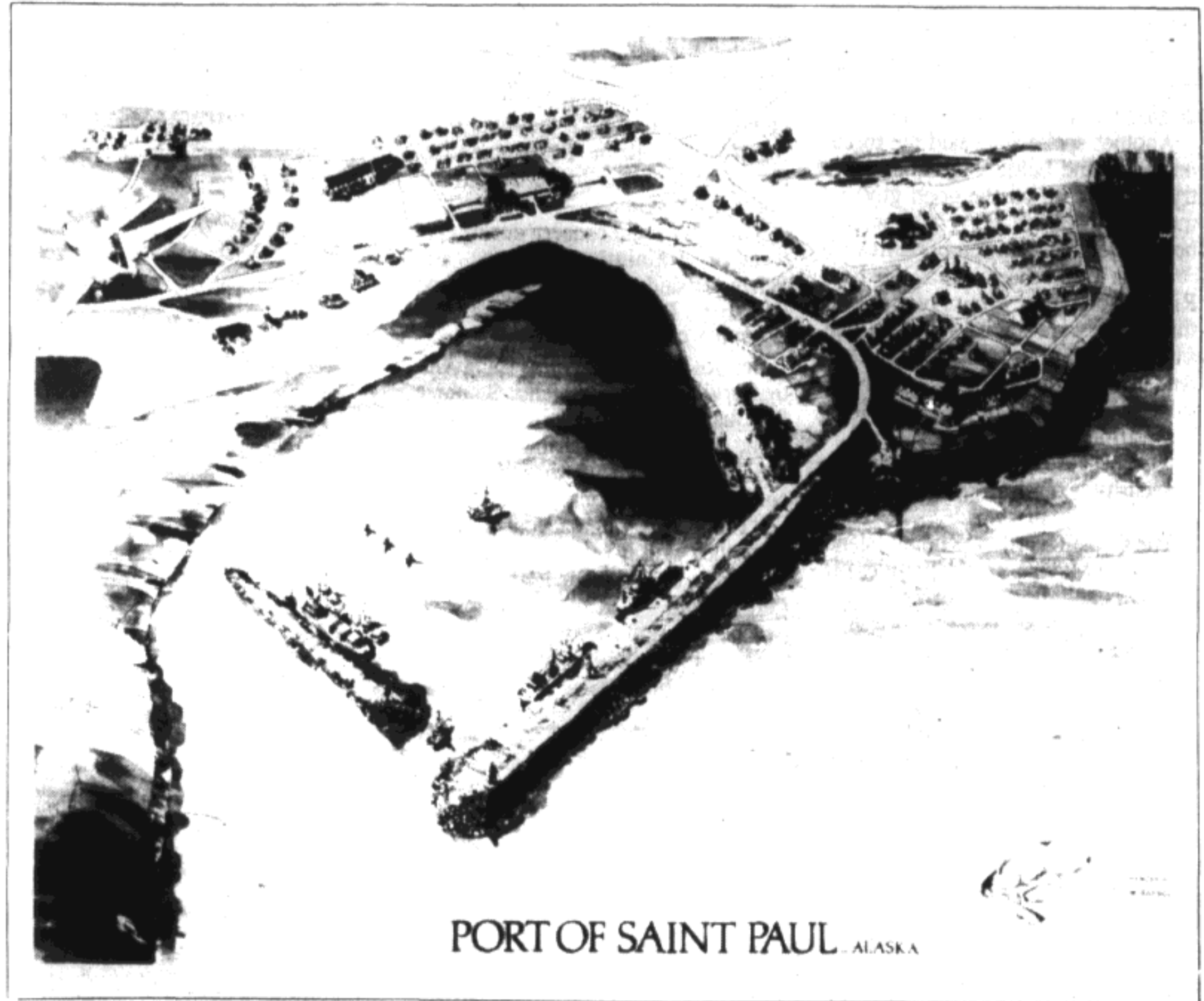


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The passage of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 — resulting in the "Americanization" of the Bering Sea fishery — accelerated the demand for a wide range of services to support the growing American fleet, making the development of an advance fishing base on St. Paul Island not only logical development, but economically feasible, too.

The harbor is expected to be near capacity shortly after completion in mid-1990 and will be providing services to 30 to 40 percent of the Bering Sea fishery market by the third year of operation.

The bids will be for construction of



The \$28.6 million harbor expansion project is expected to be near capacity shortly after completion.

a 1,050-foot breakwater, a 700-foot ocean dock, a 10-acre mooring basin with eight dolphins along a secondary 950-foot breakwater, a navigational channel large enough for turning and maneuvering by mid-sized vessels and navigational aids.

Bids have been sought from firms in Alaska, Outside and in the Orient.

The project, according to St. Paul officials, is ambitious.

Aleuts were first brought to St. Paul in 1787 to harvest the Northern Fur seals. They adapted to the new setting, and for 200 years they depended on the seal harvest for their livelihood until, less than six years ago, commercial seal harvesting was prohibited by the U.S. government.

The islanders have since turned to the one resource upon which they could base their economy: the sea.

St. Paul Island is located in the middle of the Bering Sea. The area is the home of the richest fishing grounds in the United States, estimated to hold 20 percent of the world's bottomfish. The closest fishery support base to the grounds, however, is a day and a half away, costing the industry an estimated \$5.2 million dollars annually in travel and time away from the grounds getting services.

The City of St. Paul has completed a series of civil projects to support the new economic development. Improvements were made to the existing port, and the island's utilities and infrastructure were upgraded to provide the services needed by the fishery.

Communications facilities have been expanded to provide direct service to vessels, and air transportation provides access to the island virtually year

round.

The islanders have also equipped themselves for the change. Through federal and state training programs, they have learned construction and industrial labor and support trades that were used on the civil projects. This training will allow them to participate in the labor force needed for the harbor expansion and fishery support services.

