

# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ACT MEETING

## Anchorage Meeting Discusses Decisions Made in Wash.

On September 3, Mary Stachelrodt, Director of Rural Energy for RurAL CAP, attended a meeting in Anchorage on the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act. The following are Mary's comments:

Decisions made in Washington, D.C. without thought or consideration of the adverse effects on rural Alaskans was demonstrated when a Civil Action 660/73 was declared in July.

RurAL CAP has been administering an Emergency Fuel Loan Program. Out of 12 villages assisted with loans, 10 villages had to have the fuels flown in by charter. Other statewide communities that found other sources of funding had fuel flown in. Those fuels were heating, gasoline, Blazo, kerosene, and propane.

In the Fort Yukon area, there are four villages: Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Arctic Village, and Venetie, that rely on their supply being flown in from Fort Yukon by Air North. These are charters by request. There is very heavy dependence on gasoline for subsistence hunting and fishing all year round.

In the NANA region, the reindeer herding project depends on fuel flights during the grazing movement. Sno-go's have to have gasoline for herding. Deering had fuel flown all last winter. Selawik, is the same. Ambler is dependent on Blazo, kerosene to be flown in in five gallon containers.

Shungnak and Kobuk have a mounting problem. Winter supplies (fuel included) were enroute by way of Yutana and got stuck on a sand bar. The only way to get supplies out is by air. Tanana is again concerned because the local store will not be dealing with gasoline or heating fuel sales. Individuals will have to fly in fuel in the case of shortages. Countless examples for charter fuel flights can be named, Region by Region.

My main concern — having dealt with the rural villages, and not just with the fuel shortages, but communications, transportation and the mail system are bad and very slow.

How will Toksook or Nightmute be able to get a waiver to meet the emergency fuel situation if they have to go to Bethel to the local FAA and file for an exemption.

They in turn make an appeal to some decision makers in Washington, D.C. who deliberate over the situation and make a determination and in the meantime a lot of time is lost and Paul John or James Charlie can't go seal hunting or fishing because his snowmobile is out of gas and the village has no supply.

Other suggestions would be:

- 1) Blanket exemption of Alaska air carriers.
- 2) Blanket exemption of Alaska air carriers flying into villages with no other means of access.
- 3) Delegation of authority to exempt air carriers to Chief of FAA in Alaska, especially on emergency exemptions.
- 4) Blanket exemption of fuel flights and carrying ammunition in Alaska.
- 5) Automatic approval of initial applications under these regulations, subject to later rejection (to allow immediate deliveries rather than a three-month delay).

Local decisions should be able to be made on the spot. The Department of Transportation could have the prerogative to investigate.