

# CENTER STIRS WRANGELL

## Protests Bring Officials Fast; Wrangell Institute to Continue; New Job Corps Site Surveyed

Despite recent protests from citizens at Wrangell, Alaska that they did not want a 100-man job corps center located there, the community may get the center anyway at a cost of \$1.6 million.

Two officials of the Office of Economic Opportunity quietly visited Wrangell Thursday and assured the people there that that city's Wrangell Institute, a boarding school for 165 elementary students, will not be converted into the center.

Instead the two men looked over a new site, 3 miles from Wrangell on the highway, on which a job corps center could be built, according to Frank Mereusky, president of the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce, in a telephone interview with Tundra Times.

In a separate interview, Mrs. Doris Barnes, mayor of Wrangell, said the community became upset when it was announced in Senator Ernest Gruening's newsletter that

Wrangell had been picked for the job corps site.

"We have had Wrangell Institute since 1931; we think it is a wonderful, beautiful school and we are very proud of it and the children there. We were afraid they were going to close Wrangell Institute down and take over the facilities for the job corps center.

"In our opinion that would be a tragedy," she said.

Last week when the citizens of Wrangell thought that the facilities of the Institute would be turned over to the job corps, they placed several telephone calls to officials in Juneau stating:

- \* They did not want the job corps center. That they had gotten negative reports about them, particularly about a job corps center down in Oregon.

- \* That since the first job corps site selection team had visited Alaska, the community had procured another sawmill and at present was handicapped in terms of housing and school facilities.

A state official informed, the Wrangell citizens that the job corps program was not being coordinated with the state and that they should protest directly to the job corps section of the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington. This they did.

Thursday the job corps representatives quietly arrived by air at Wrangell and consulted with a committee from the chamber of commerce and other agency officials.

"It apparently was a misunderstanding."  
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# Proposed Job Corps Site . . .

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standing," Chamber President Mercosky said. "Since we have been assured we will not lose Wrangell Institute, and the job corps center would be in addition to it, we no longer have objection," he said.

In the meantime, community leaders in Fairbanks were quite "up in arms" over the reported recent actions. The first survey team for a site was made with the specific understanding that existing facilities

would have to be used and it was indicated that Wrangell would probably be picked because it was the only place that could afford facilities.

Now it appears that the requirement of existing facilities has been thrown "out the window" and still Wrangell is being given preference for the facility.

Adding fuel to the fire is the fact that the first job corps selection team would not even get out of a vehicle, to look over a prospective site off Fairbanks' Airport Road and was not very enthusiastic when Dr. William R. Wood, president of the University of Alaska, offered to donate a site near the University Campus.

The years are beginning to add up if it take you longer to rest than it did to get tired.