

# TC CHOOSES HONORARY CHIEF

## Famed Andrew Isaac Elected Traditional Chief At Conference

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW

Meeting in Fairbanks March 14-16, the Tanana Chiefs Conference voted to create a sharper division between their increasingly skilled new business corporation, DOYON, Ltd. and the original Tanana Chiefs, an historical, cultural, and tribal organization of the interior Athabascan Indians.

DOYON, Ltd. will function as the profit-making arm, carrying out the practical functions of land claims implementation, and land and resource development while Tanana Chiefs continues to serve as the social-service, humanitarian, non-profit branch of the combined Native entity.

For the past year, the officers of Tanana Chiefs have doubled as the officers of DOYON, Ltd., the corporation created under terms of the Alaska Native Land Claims Act. Following the restructuring, those officers will now devote their time exclusively to land selection and development and investment of the monies that will be received under the Act.

Remaining in office as head of DOYON, Ltd. is State Senator John Sackett of Galena. Other board members and officers are Tim Wallis, Lucy Carlo, Melvin Charlie, Jimmy Huntington, Ronald Sam, Mike Harper, Wally Peter, and Pat Frank.

The delegates then selected a whole new slate of officers to run the now separate Tanana Chiefs. Young leadership came to the foreground with the election of Mitch Dementieff, 20 year old chief from Nenana, to the post of President of the Tanana Chiefs.

Spud Williams of Fairbanks was chosen vice-president, Eddie Bergman of Allakaket, treasurer, and Harriet "Hussy" Wulf of Shageluk, secretary.

Elected to the board of directors of Tanana Chiefs were Al Woods of Tok, Don Honea of Ruby, Tom Drake of Fairbanks, Donald Peter of Ft. Yukon, and Richard Frank of Minto.

The new youth-oriented board will be placing education high in their list of priorities, gearing toward the transition from an "outsider" — directed village school system to one which is a reflection of the needs and culture of native people with full local control.

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# Honorary Chief...

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After voting to split the two organizations, the delegates heard a proposal by Ernest Holmberg of McGrath to create a new position over both organizations, that of honorary and traditional chief.

Holmberg said the proposal would "make unity between the the two corporations.

"All through this convention," he said, "we have been looking for unity. I want to see a native thing that has been happening for ages and ages past, not with corporations but where we could have a native leader to signify leadership."

He discussed his concept as a triangular structure with the two corporations, Tanana Chiefs and DOYON, Ltd. as equal corners and at the apex of the triangle, the traditional and honorary chief sitting on both boards to contribute the wise leadership of an older leader.

The Conference delegates unanimously elected Andrew Isaac, Tribal Chief of the United Crow Band, to the new position of Honorary Chief of the Athabaskan people.

Andrew, speaking to the delegates, said, "The hardest name is that of 'Chief'."

He reminded them that the Tanana Chiefs represent the idea of Indian law in Alaska.

"You young generation," he said, "have to get money, have to get grants. Long before you were born, we didn't worry about the cold, about the moose, about the trapping."

Andrew was in favor of the restructuring of the two corporations. "it is my thought that they should come together." But he cautioned, "You have to work together, talk together, live together, everybody work together."

"One thing that's for sure," he warned, "be kind to one another. Don't push too hard."

Thus while they geared up two corporate structures for the highly complex game of land selection, federal regulations, multi-million dollar lawsuits, banking and investment, and

resource development, the Tanana Chiefs also returned to a value system that pre-dated all, listening to the wisdom of their older chiefs who have seen many plans rise and fall, come to season and disappear like the snow in spring.

In the three day session, the Conference dealt with many issues, some of which were:

- Village incorporation and land selections
- Native allotments
- Federal revenue sharing for villages
- Boundary disputes with Arctic Slope and Copper River
- Enrollment procedures and deadline
- Subsistence hunting legislation.