

# Army Corps cleared to curtail Bethel erosion

The Army Corps of Engineers has been authorized to use federal emergency funds to curtail erosion at Bethel where the Kuskokwim River threatens the petroleum dock and land near Mission Road. Col. Wilbur T. Gregory, Jr., Alaska District Engineer, announced today that the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works has approved the district's request for emergency bank protection.

"This is the most serious erosion we've seen in Alaska for over a decade," said Gregory. "The emergency authorization allows us to get the work done before freeze-up. Next spring would be too late."

Governor Bill Sheffield declared the situation in Bethel a disaster beyond the city's ability to repair on July 10.

"I'm very pleased that we were able to arrange for this fun-

ding," Senator Frank Murkowski said. "The Corps of Engineers, Bethel city officials and the Alaska Congressional delegation were able to work together in this emergency in a way that demonstrates clearly that the old Alaska ethic of 'helping a neighbor in need' is alive and well. My thanks to everyone who has helped with this effort."

The Army's approval to use emergency federal funds means that the Corps of Engineers can spend up to the statutory limit of \$250,000 under Section 14 of the 1946 Flood Control Act as amended.

The Corps will award and supervise a contract to place approximately 1500 cubic yards of rock protection at the toe of the petroleum dock and at the end of the city's partially completed seawall.

To expedite the contract, the

Corps has already prepared plans and specifications. Under federal emergency authorization, the Corps can cut in half the time it usually takes to advertise to several days and the work to begin by the end of September.

Cost of the project is estimated at approximately \$330,000. The city of Bethel will pay costs above the federal limit of \$250,000 and will provide a supply of quarry rock. The Corps of Engineers will administer the contract.

Alaska's Congressional delegation worked at the Washington level to help expedite approval of the federal authorization.

"Senator Stevens is pleased that the Corps responded to the needs of the Bethel community and he hopes to secure additional assistance in the fiscal year 1986 appropriation process," said Bar-

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This issue begins Sealaska President Byron Mallott's "Thoughts of a Native Chief Executive." See page 9 for first installment.

# Army Corps

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bara Andrews, Stevens' administrative assistant in Anchorage

Gregory cautioned that the emergency work could not solve all of Bethel's erosion problems, but would give rapid protection to vital public facilities.

From his home in Fort Yukon, Congressman Don Young said, "I will continue to support, as necessary, the Corps' efforts in developing a permanent solution to stabilize the river bank."

Bank erosion is an occurrence

at Bethel, which is located on the north bank of the Kuskokwim River. This year, however, high water equal to a 7-to-10 year flooding event and concurrent river ice jamming caused severe scouring at the toe of the city's pipeline bulkhead near Mission Road and at the petroleum dock. With 4,000 residents, Bethel is the largest city in Southeast Alaska and serves as the principal commercial center for 48 villages and 16,000 people.

The city of Bethel began construction of a pipeline bulkhead in 1983 to combat the rapid erosion along the commercial district's streambank and the petroleum storage and transfer facility, but the project has not been completed.