

OEO to Close RurAL CAP Dec. 31

In February, RurAL CAP received a notice from the Office of Economic Opportunity in Seattle that money would not be available after June 30, 1973 under Section 221 of the of the Economic Opportunities Act which is the section that funds community action agencies.

In some cases, and RurAL CAP is one of them, certain phase-out funds would be available to sustain the agency through December 31, 1973. At that time all operations would cease.

The President's budget message stated that, "... in addition to private money, State and Local governments may use general and special revenue sharing for these purposes."

In order to apply for State funds, RurAL CAP prepared an impact statement encompassing some of the past activities and future aspirations of the agency.

Some of the programs initiated under the anti-poverty program for rural areas have been Head Start, which now has 850 children in 38 villages across the State.

This was not only the first pre-school program in rural areas, but also is the first bilingual program, the first with paid para professionals in education and has the first local policy-making board.

It has the lowest cost per child ratio in the entire Northwest region, despite vast logistic extremes.

RurAL CAP also implemented an alcoholism program which utilizes local people as counselors in rural areas, with counseling at the village site, not in an unfamiliar urban setting.

The Vehicle Equipment Mobilization program, better known as VEMP, sent 40 pieces of heavy equipment such as D-8 and D-4 caterpillar tractors, trucks, etc. in villages and trained local people in their operation and maintenance.

The equipment was used to move villages, build and maintain airports and roads, construct boat landing ramps, haul fuel from beach areas to villages,

etc.

Emergency food programs were conducted, in which assistance was given to the State in distributing Food Stamps, and training the eligibility workers; experimental gardening projects were developed; a hot breakfast program was implemented; and a nutritional program which demonstrated preservation and taught values of food was successful in the villages.

The corporation which helps to organize co-operatives, the Community Enterprise Development Corporation (CEDC) was started by RurAL CAP. It is currently a \$3.2 million business employing hundreds of people in fishing, marketing, construction, etc.

Other activities of RurAL CAP include helping the Alaska Village Electrification Co-operative (AVEC) to organize; operating two pilot Parent-Child Centers (PCC) involving 80 families, utilizing all local staffs.

Also, sponsoring Alaska Legal Services Corporation; operating a youth program in Seward and one in Mt. Edgecumbe High School; funding a skin sewing operation in Nome, and others.

The agency also provided testimony and information in the Sea Mammal hearings, the air transportation hearings, and helped with proposed legislation in education, social services, health, etc.

RurAL CAP's main consideration has been that poor people would actually decide the emphasis and direction, and to that end, Regional Development Corporations were established which have served as quasi-borough governments in the rural areas, have trained rural people in financial management, corporate board structure and responsibilities. Native Land Claims Act, land selection and planning and other areas as requested by their region.

The most significant and lasting impact RurAL CAP has brought to Alaska in undoubtedly the human resource development over the eight years of its existence.