

Times Board votes Anchorage move

BY MARGIE BAUMAN

The State of Alaska has approved a \$115,000 private sale of stock effectively immediately, to keep the Tundra Times afloat in the midst of serious financial problems which have threatened its demise.

Barry Jackson, acting publisher and chairman of the board, announced the stock sale Thursday, saying it would be offered to the 12 regional Native corporations, 12 affiliated Native associations and about 25 of the larger village corporations. The Tundra Times is more than \$20,000 in debt, but Jackson and Thomas Richards Jr., who will resume his post as editor June 1, said they are confident that the newspaper will survive.

Jackson also said that the matter of moving the Tundra Times to Anchorage by January 1, as directed by a 4-3 vote of the newspaper's board April 25, is still an open question. "If the votes are there, I'm still going to vote to reverse it. If enough village and regional corporations buy stock and don't want to move to Anchorage, it won't move. The board will be responsive to village shareholders," Jackson said.

Richards noted, however, that the resolution to move the newspaper was very explicit and added that "I don't think that it would be changed on reconsideration."

Richards is returning to the Tundra Times after a leave of absence during which he served as a lobbyist for striking Wien Air Alaska pilots. During his absence, he maintained his role as president of the board of directors.

"We definitely have some problems here, but I feel I can't make a half commitment to the paper," Richards said, explaining his decision to return. "Once I made the decision, I felt good about it."

Richards said he felt the stock sale would be successful, though perhaps it might not reach maximum expectations. Funds from the sale would be used in part to invest in equipment more in keeping with the times, he said.

"There's been enough interest expressed so that I think there will be no difficulty in selling \$40,000 worth of stock," Jackson said. "However, we need \$80,000 to get us on our feet. It would be desirable to sell it all, to give us working capital to provide us with stringers, reporters and so forth," Jackson said.

The acting publisher added that the stock purchases at this time should be regarded as a contribution, rather than a straight investment. "(But) purchasers are also acquiring a vote in the Native movement, with the right to elect board members," he said. A move to allow cumulative voting, approved by the board April 25, means 20,000 shares of stock in the newspaper can now elect one board member. "But the tentative rule is to keep ownership down to 10,000 shares," Jackson said.

Richardson Leaving May 15

Jeff Richardson, who served as managing editor of the Tundra Times from August last year until January (when he was named acting editor), announced to the board his intention to resign several months ago; it will take effect May 15. In the interim between his departure and Richards' return, other writers and staff personnel will produce the newspaper.

At 24, Richardson has seen the Tundra Times through some exciting, but also very tense times and he said that despite the good and the bad of the newspaper, he has other interests he cannot pursue at the same time.

But he expressed confidence about the paper's future. "There seems to be a perception in some parts of the

Native community that the paper's absolutely essential and the support that we've gotten in the last few weeks is their acknowledgement that the crisis is here and that their support is required to keep it going on a weekly basis.

"That support does not necessarily connote total agreement with the Tundra Times on some issues, but a recognition that by and large the Tundra Times is the only existing statewide media that puts Native and rural Alaskans first," Richardson said.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE TWELVE

● *Tundra Times battles financial crisis*

University Law School, came to Alaska initially to work with the Alaska Legal Services Corp. and subsequently took her first plunge into journalism by starting a lively newspaper for and about Northwest Alaska.

Herman found the Caribou News well received, but finally halted publication because, despite community support, just about all the large and small tasks necessary for putting out the newspaper fell to her constantly. At the time of her appointment, Herman was working part-time as an announcer for Kotzebue radio station KOTZ.

A fulltime circulation manager is also being sought to fill the vacancy that will be created June 15 when Assistant to the Publisher Bill Ares leaves to form his own business. Ares has been in charge of circulation, advertising and distribution.

Question of the Move Remains

With all the staff changes afoot, the question still remains of just where the Tundra Times will be housed by Jan. 1 of next year.

Of the seven board members present at the April 25 meeting, only Jackson, Richards and Tanana Chiefs Conference executive Chris Anderson voted to retain Fairbanks headquarters. Board members Toni Jones, Bob Arnold, Alfred Ketzler and Karl Armstrong voted for the move, while Mac Davis, Murlin Everson and James Edenso were not present.

Eskimo artist and writer Howard Rock, Tundra Times editor and publisher from 1962 until his death in April 1976, strongly opposed the move to Anchorage, despite some protests from board members that the

paper would benefit financially. Armed with a far-flung team of reporters and stringers, including Richards in the Philippines and Washington, D.C., and Lael Morgan in villages throughout the state, Rock, from his base in a cluttered back office in Fairbanks helped unite Alaska Natives to secure a 40 million acre, \$1 billion land claims settlement from the federal government.

After years of financial struggle, Rock finally got the Tundra Times into the black. After his death, the picture changed for the worst again. At the same time, the pipeline boom has left Fairbanks, prompting new arguments for the move to Anchorage. Some board members, like Jackson, question whether the newspaper can retain its rural flavor in the big city but Richards said the resolution passed by the board is clear and he's prepared to honor it.