

AVCP votes to rejoin AFN; elects president

by Geoff Kennedy
for the Tundra Times

BETHEL — Representatives of villages of the Association of Village Council Presidents took action earlier this month to rejoin the Alaska Federation of Natives and to make Myron Naneng president of the nonprofit organization.

AVCP, along with Tanana Chiefs

Conference, had pulled out of AFN in the fall of 1987, and AVCP is the first to rejoin.

Julie Kitka, AFN president, congratulated AVCP delegates on their decision to rejoin AFN.

"Contrary to other accounts in the media, AFN was present at the AVCP meeting and listened with great interest

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to the concerns raised in the debate over the resolution to rejoin AFN.

"I conveyed to the Native leaders present in Mountain Village our appreciation for the opportunity to further understand their concerns," she said.

Kitka said Native unity is "vitally important" now.

"We share many common threats and issues," she said. "We will work together and be stronger because of it."

Naneng won the presidency of the organization at the annual meeting in Mountain Village.

He got 28 votes from the 44 participating villages at the conference. Mike Williams and John Paul Jones each got six votes and Joe Chimegalrea, four.

Naneng became acting president after Gene Peltola resigned after five and a half years as president.

The victory was Naneng's second this month. He also won a seat on the Bethel Advisory School Board.

"I intend to work with the elders and use their advice as my strength," he said during his acceptance speech. "I know that experience is a good teacher. It gives the test first and the lesson later. I ask you for your prayers and support."

At the meeting Oct. 10-12, Robert Beans Sr. and Al Aguchak also won seats on the Executive Board. Johnny Thompson and Andrew Brown were named to the AVCP Housing Board of Commissioners.

Resolutions passed by AVCP included:

- Directing the AVCP to negotiate its return to AFN.

- Requesting that AVCP and the Calista Corp. hold their annual meetings at the same time and in the same place each year.

- Supporting the designation of the Platinum and Goodnews Bay areas a critical habitat to protect fishing there.

- Opposing the proposed expansion of the Wood Tikchik State Park.

- Supporting the Bethel-based Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group and urging that it be granted management status, not merely advisory status, in determining fishing seasons and opening.

- Reaffirming that customary and traditional subsistence uses be incorporated in any federal subsistence management plan.

- Directing AVCP to help get necessary funding for tribal ordinances governing children's and families' needs; for winter and summer trail markers and channels for Tuntutuliak, Kongiganak, Kwigillingok and Kipnuk; for erosion control assistance; for multi-purpose community villages and clinics; for airport and navigational lights; and for sewer and water systems.

- Supporting a community fish processing plant for Akiak.

- Urging school boards to hire teachers with competence in working with parents to develop self-discipline in students.

- Urging family nights and family activities at home.

- Urging compulsory education in water safety and survival.

- Urging a college education program for Yup'ik and English writing and speaking programs.

- Opposing increased freight and transportation costs.

- Reaffirming the tribal status of Native villages in the region.

- Establishing at least two regional spirit camps.

- Reapportioning election districts to conform to the "commonality of needs and families in the region."

- Approving a Yukon Kuskokwim Tribal Council constitution.

- Honoring retiring board member Louis Bunya.

- Supporting training and study in infant and early childhood education throughout the region.

- Urging the 1990 overall economic development plan for the region.

- Urging the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corp. and the Indian Health Service to coordinate efforts to bring competent health professionals to the region.

- Requiring teachers to develop familiarity with Yup'ik culture and language through compulsory college courses.

- Thanking Mountain Village for its hospitality in hosting the annual meeting.

AVCP also presented:

- A leadership award to Peltola for his five and a half year presidency.

- A special award to comptroller Lee Olsen.

- A spirit mask to keynote speaker and retiring Sen. John Binkley, R-Bethel.

- The Employee of the Year Award to Realty Specialist Martina Campbell.