

# AK Commercial Co. opens in St. Mary's

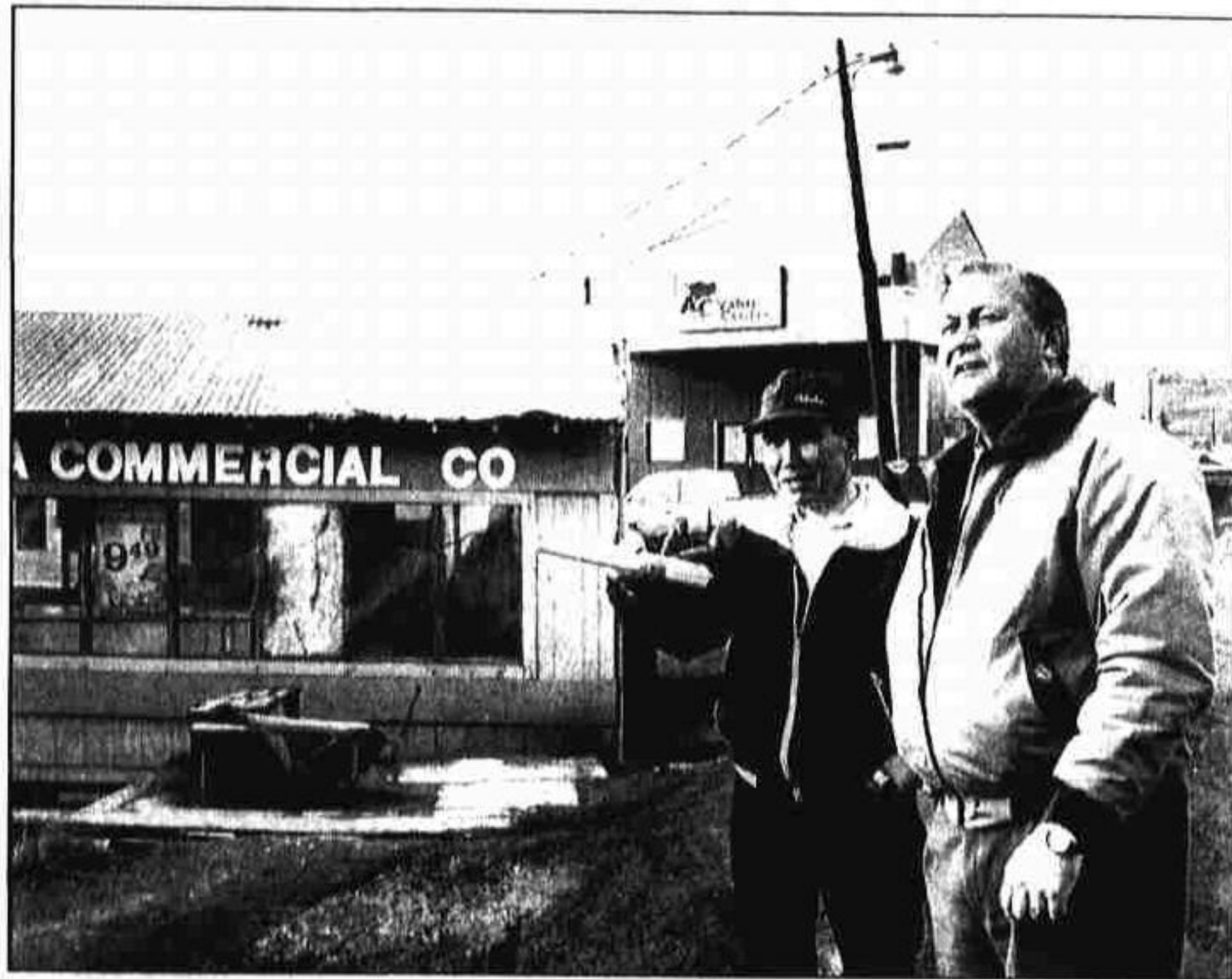
When Alaska Commercial Company hosted the grand opening festivities for its new, 10,000 square foot store in St. Mary's it drew crowds of shoppers from the entire region.

"It was great — we probably had over 500 people at the store on Saturday, and the population of St. Mary's is just over 400," said Jim Campbell, CEO of AC Company.

Food, general merchandise and apparel, large fresh produce and meat sections, and a self-service mini-delicatessen will provide greatly enhanced shopping for the area's approximately 2,000 residents in the six surrounding villages of Mountain Village, Pilot Station, Pitka's Point, Marshall, Russian Mission and Piamuit. St. Mary's, situated on a regal perch above the Adreafsky River, near its confluence with the Yukon River, is a commercial hub of activity for the area.

The new store is nearly twice as big as the old St. Mary's AC Company store. Both buildings are leased by AC Company from the St. Mary's Native Corporation. AC employs 11 people at the store.

Community leaders from Mountain Village, Pilot Station and Pitka's Point attended the grand opening of the St. Mary's store. "We invited people through-



Larry Mike, president of St. Mary's Native Corporation and Jim Clark, chief operating officer of Alaska Commercial Company stand near old and new site.

*Photo by Barbara Britch*

out the whole region," explained Campbell. "It was the neighborly thing to do, plus it gave them an opportunity to see our operations, and possibly think about an AC store for their villages."

The store was finished nearly two months ahead of schedule.

Sam Gaston & Associates was the general contractor.

Alaska Commercial Company, purchased a year ago by The North West Company, is undertaking an ambitious \$33 million, five-year expansion plan, which calls for the renovation of many of its ex-

isting 21 stores and the opening of an unspecified number of new stores. New stores were opened in Togiak, St. Mary's and McGrath during 1993. A new "Tomorrow Store" is currently under construction in Cordova and is slated for a 1994 opening.