



RurAL-CAP

ACTION REPORTS



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Changes in food stamp program

Head start contest held

Head Start Centers throughout Alaska have been participating in a volunteer contest. The central office in Anchorage sent out forms to each center in October stating that the center with the most volunteer time spent in class would win \$500 in April. It was decided in November to count not only time spent in the class, but time spent fixing up the building, hauling supplies, setting up bingo, cake walks, bake sales, movies and articles donated to the center. The forms sent out were to be returned to Anchorage at the end of every month with the name of the person doing the donation, the time spent (or value received) and when they did it.

Almost each of the 32 centers responded. The donations were as varied as the locations of the centers. Some people put lots of time in the class, some donated whole or half caribou, some did alot of fixing up of their building, and some centers had bingo once a week. The interesting ways people participate in their Head Start centers is remarkable!!!!

All of the time and effort was greatly appreciated by the children of the centers, the staff, and the Anchorage staff.

In February, an article was put in the Gobbly Guk stating that the center raising its total hours the most during that month (February) would win a prize for that month alone of \$50 to be spent on books, records or play equipment. Stebbins and Hooper Bay won the prize, and are now in the process of deciding what to do with their prize.

Now that the contest is over it is clear that 30 prizes could have been given. Everyone worked so hard in Head Start! The first prize of \$500 was awarded to Kake for a total of 1,612 hours given to their center from October to April. The second prize of \$200 went to Haines for 1060 hours of volunteer work. Both centers deserve a special thank you. Head Start firmly believes



GAMBELL HEAD START PROGRAM

that if a pre-school program is to work the adults in the child's life must show an

interest in that child's growth. This contest has been one way to foster this interest.

Winterization monies cut

Following a quick trip to Washington D.C. last week RurAL CAP Director Phil Smith sadly reported that the anticipated \$1 million of Home Winterization monies had been significantly reduced by Community Services Administration's (CSA) Washington headquarters.

The headquarter decision was based in the fact that only \$11,000,000 was available nation-wide, instead of \$22,000,000 originally anticipated by the U.S. Senate. Sen. Ted Stevens (R. Alaska) had mandated that CSA spend at least a million in Alaska; however, a House/Senate Conference committee reduced the total by one-half, thereby forcing CSA to do like-wise to Alaska's share.

"Of course we're bitterly disappointed" said Smith after meeting with Stevens, CSA's National Controller Tom Rollins, and CSA Region Ten Director John Finley in Stevens' Washington office." But we must realize that there are many poverty-stricken people all over the nation."

RurAL CAP's Director of Rural Energy, Mary Stachelrodt, commented, "If we have known this when the money was first appropriated, we wouldn't have gone so far in our

planning." RurAL CAP Board approved state-wide distribution of the funds at their Juneau meeting in February. "Now we have to re-think all over our criteria" Mrs. Stachelrodt continued.

The RurAL CAP Executive Committee is to meet in the near future to decide on the most effective distribution of the funds.

Meanwhile, RurAL CAP staff are proceeding with Winterization activities in the Cooper Valley, Tok, and Chignik areas. "This hurts our total effort and, to an extent, our credibility" said Smith. On the positive side, I'd say that we can count on a big share of the FY-77 monies. CSA is certainly aware of our severe situation up here."



When driving, watch for pedestrians who step out from between parked cars.

"Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old." Kafka



Some people believe that if you sleep with your closet door open, it's bad luck!

RurAL CAP expresses serious reservations about intent, timing and content of Pres. Ford's proposal

The Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) expressed serious reservations about the intent, timing and content of President Ford's proposed changes in the Food Stamp Program.

In a letter to the director of the Food Stamp Division, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Executive Director Phil Smith questioned whether the President's action was politically motivated and said the proposed regulation changes have thrown "the food stamp reform issue directly into the arena of presidential electoral politics."

The Ford administration recently proposed a series of sweeping reforms in the national Food Stamp Program. The changes, made by executive order, will take effect June 1.

"The changes will have a tremendous impact on the program here in Alaska," said Smith. "Some families now receiving benefits will no longer be eligible; others will receive fewer coupons which will cost more money; and everyone getting food stamps will have to deal with more restrictive regulations on reporting income and looking for work."

The major changes in the program, as proposed by Ford, are as follows:

Definition of Income: The current method of determining income by anticipating how much will be made in the next month will be changed to averaging the actual income during the last three months. According to Smith, this will mean that there will be a three month waiting period after the loss of steady income before a household will be eligible for food stamps.

Standard Deductions: The current method of determining "real income" through itemized deductions (rent, utilities, child care, medical costs, etc.) will be replaced by a standard deduction of \$125 for each family. According to Smith, this will mean that every family which has actual expenses over \$125 will be penalized the amount over that figure and many families will receive less

stamps due to this provision.

Poverty Guidelines: The present income levels for food stamp eligibility will be lower to what is known as poverty guidelines under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. This will mean that approximately 250-300 Alaskan families currently receiving food stamps will become ineligible due to being over income guidelines, according to Smith.

Monthly Income Reports: Every food stamp recipient will have to report their income on a monthly basis or they will be declared ineligible.

Job Searches: Every food stamp recipient will be required to actively search for work, in addition to the current job registration.

"Obviously, these proposed changes will not benefit low-income people in Alaska or anywhere else in the nation," said Smith. "It is interesting to note that at the time of President Ford's action, the subject of food stamp reform was before Congress and moving steadily toward resolution."

"Yet the President, at the same time that he is facing conservative Ronald Reagan in the primaries, proposes sweeping reforms by executive order," said Smith. "It makes one wonder whether he was motivated by political concerns or a genuine desire to make the Food Stamp Program a more effective program for the People."



Very crisp bacon may be eaten with the fingers, say etiquette experts, but bacon with any vestige of fat must be cut with fork or knife and eaten with the fork.