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NSB Health Newsletter
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Sound villagers unhappy with lease agreement

By BILL HESS

Tundra Times

Although Alaska Gov. Bill Sheffield and Interior Secretary James Watt were reported to have come away smiling from their first meeting, held last week in the Nation's capital, Native leaders in Western Alaska expressed disappointment with the outcome of that get-together.

Watt refused to grant Sheffield the two-year delay which

he had sought in the Norton Sound oil lease sale scheduled for March.

Village representatives from the Kawerak and the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) non-profit regions meeting in Nome the week before had called upon Watt to delay the sale for five years, and requested Sheffield to sue the federal govern-

ment under provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act to ensure "lease sale compliance with local desires and needs" should the sale take place as scheduled.

Sheffield virtually ruled out the possibility of a suit when he announced that although he was not granted his hoped-for delay, he did get all of the stipulations which he had sought for the sale. He ex-

pressed satisfaction that he and Watt had met each other half way.

"That was the best deal we could strike," said Sheffield. He also expressed confidence the area around the Sound would be protected. "We met each other half way," Sheffield said. "America needs the resources, needs the oil and needs the income. The State of Alaska needs employment

and development."

Elsewhere, less optimism was expressed. Gene Peltola, the vice-president for AVCP, said regional leaders were extremely disappointed. The stipulations, said Peltola, addressed state concerns, but left the Natives in a weaker position than before.

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Hepatitis B battle plan outlined

By Ceceile Kay Richter

Tundra Times

A joint federal-state Hepatitis B immunization and control program will be delivered statewide beginning in March.

The program will likely begin in Bethel in March — before people start moving to fish camps — and spread to other Yukon-Kuskokwim villages after that, according to Dr. Stuart Rabeau, director of the Division of Public Health in the Department of Public Health in the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Rabeau explained the joint agreement during testimony before the House Health and Social Services Committee Hearing.

Under the agreement, the Alaska Area Native Health Service will screen all citizens in predominantly Native communities.

* The state will provide for laboratory testing of non-Natives and cover the cost of vaccinating non-Natives;

* The state has responsibility for administering the vaccine. If the Alaska Native Health Service is unable to provide necessary program people and activities in predominantly Native areas they will contract with the state to hire supplemental people.

The three-year agreement covers March 1983 through September 1986.

During that time, through a voluntary program, high risk individuals will be screened through blood-testing; carriers will be identified and enrolled in a monitoring program, and vaccinations will be provided to those considered susceptible

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Villagers from Mary's Igloo caucus during a short break in Bering Straits Native Corporation meeting.

PHOTO BY BILL HESS

BSNC villagers agree unity needed

By BILL HESS

Tundra Times

Unity.

More than 150 representatives from every village in the Bering Straits region got together late last month and decided that unity is what is needed to turn their regional corporation from a money-loser into a strong organization; one capable of protecting their financial and subsistence needs long past the year 1991.

The delegates, representing the village corporations of each of the Region's 16 villages, agreed that the regional board needs to be restructured to assure representation from the small and remote villages, as well as from the larger, more active ones.

The Bering Straits Native Corporation has had a rough time since its formation under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Business

decisions made in the mid-1970's have proved to be largely unprofitable. In its last complete fiscal year, the corporation lost \$3 million; the year before that, \$3.5 million.

Now, corporation president Charlie Johnson told those gathered, the Region has eliminated most of its liabilities and is reaching the break-even point.

Still, said Johnson, it will take widespread involvement

from all areas of the region to find real success. "We need to come together," Johnson said, "not only as villages, but as a Region . . . we are all the same stockholders. We really have to come together, unite, and address the problems this Region faces."

To do so, the regional board has developed a five-year plan which already appears to be improving the situation at Bering Strait.

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