

# Research project to improve reading education programs underway

A comprehensive research project designed to improve reading education programs in Alaska got underway July 16.

Dr. John Stamm, director of the South Central Regional Resource Center at Anchorage, signed the prime subcontract with the State Department of Education at Juneau to implement the project.

Present for the contract signing were Marilou Madden, director of Education Program Support, and Eula Ruby, director of the Right to Read program. Ruby co-authored the proposal that led to funding from the National Institute of Education.

A four-state consortium, including Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon, applied for and received \$1,053,000 in NIE funds. Each state will perform its own study.

The purpose of the project is to identify reading problems and to select and install programs to meet the unique needs of the local school districts.

Participating districts in the project's first phase are Kenai Peninsula Borough and Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Local project coordinators are Bruce Demond in Matanuska-Susitna and Jim Hall in Kenai.

## Mid-route earth station to replace White Alice system

By BETSY BRENNEMAN  
Staff Writer

Construction is underway in Barrow on a mid-route earth station to replace the facilities of White Alice and improve long lines communications between Barrow and the rest of the state.

The new facility is being built by RCA Alascom, which took over lease of the White Alice system on July 1 and is one of 21 such improvements slated for construction over the 27-month period of the lease. Other sites scheduled as priorities for immediate construction are Kotzebue, Dillingham, and Adak.

The RCA/White Alice agreement is in addition to the current RCA/State of Alaska project of constructing 100 small earth stations in communities that have had no long distance telephone capability. Under terms of that agreement, RCA Alascom and the State Office of Telecommunications have already installed 20 small earth stations and engineers are now at the sites of the next 50 to be completed this year. By 1977, the final 30 are expected to be operational.

Unlike the small earth station project, the mid-route stations are going in where long distance capability already exists under White Alice, but is unable to handle the amount of traffic generated by the community.

In town last week for the first RCA Alascom Board meeting in Fairbanks, public relations head Lou Custrini explained that this new agreement is important to both RCA and the public because the two former systems, military and commercial, have now been consolidated into one.

The advantages, according to Custrini, are that RCA now can do whatever is necessary to improve existing systems which are experiencing traffic overloads. They will either rebuild, phase out, or build new facilities. Congested traffic over an entire area can also now be rerouted to circuits that are not used as frequently.

The RCA Board meeting was Willie Hensley's first as a new member of the board of directors since accepting the post last month. Rural communications programs and construction schedules were reviewed and discussed at the meeting with no important changes in current plans being announced.

Lou Custrini reports that there are now five times as many phone calls made in Alaska as five years ago when RCA purchased the system from the Air Force. He also feels that his company's "reason for being" is to provide a service that brings Alaskans together and breaks down the

separated, isolated pockets of the state. As part of that service, Custrini says that a new Alaska Marine Directory is, at the printer's end and will be available in the next few weeks.

Although the issue is unresolved as to who and what will be televised over the small earth stations now only used for telephone communications, Custrini predicts that by 1982, the governor will be able to get on television and talk to every village in the state.

He calls the small earth station project a "pioneer program" that is being watched closely all over the world and that "the name of game is to put in as many stations as quickly as possible where they will satisfy the most need." This means that there will probably be more stations when the first are completed.

Even though the project started out as a tug of war between the state and RCA, Custrini reports "a spirit of accord" now prevails with the state acting as supervisor and manager and RCA as builder of the system. The state appropriated \$5 million, or approximately 40 per cent of the cost with RCA providing the rest.

The program's two goals, to provide long distance phone capability and a "simplex" emergency medical communications system, were initially plagued by equipment problems which Custrini says have pretty well been resolved. Although each station is capable of the emergency medical system, only one is operational between Anchorage and Bethel because details are still being worked out with PHS.

The biggest remaining and ongoing problem is that of rural power. As Custrini says, power is usually provided through the school, but what happens when school is out and BIA is gone? Another pending question for RCA is what to do after the present interim use of RCA satellite, Satcom II, expires. An AT&T satellite may be put to use but it is still not decided which is better for the Alaska signal given cost and technical factors.

Lou Custrini says he is enjoying his public affairs job

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**PARTICIPATING IN THE CONTRACT** signing ceremony were, from left to right, Marilou Madden, director of Education Program Support, Dr. John Stamm, director of the Southcentral Regional Resource Center at Anchorage, and Eula Ruby, coordinator of the Right to Read program.

—Alaska Dept. of Education photo

because his department is the direct interface between the company and the public. He says he can see and help determine the impact of RCA Alascom on people's lives and has a certain sense of pride being "at the

heart or conscience of the company."

With FCC permits being the only factor stopping ground-breaking for this year's 50 small earth stations and work going on for the new RCA/White

Alice agreement, Custrini admits there are problems and that the system is not perfect. But he still hopes that as the telephone has become part of the American home elsewhere, it will be just as much a part of the Alaskan home someday.



Dear Fellow Alaskans:

This is an invitation to responsible persons or organizations to submit a statement on one or more of the 1976 General Election ballot propositions. As you may know, my office is responsible for publishing an Election Pamphlet for distribution to each registered voter prior to the November 2 General Election. This pamphlet will include information on the candidates, bond questions and ballot propositions. Each ballot proposition presented in this pamphlet will include a neutral summary, a statement by persons or organizations supporting the proposition, and a statement by persons or organizations opposing the proposition. Although I have already contacted the major opponents and supporters of these measures in the legislature, I am asking the help of other informed persons or organizations in submitting additional opinions.

Each statement must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than 500 words. Due to the review procedure and printing deadline, I must request a postmark deadline on this material of August 13.

A selection process will result in the printing of one supporting statement and one opposing statement for each ballot proposition. The author's name (and organization, if applicable) will appear in the Election Pamphlet.

The 1976 General Election ballot propositions are:

### CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

1. SCS CSHJR 11—Amending the Constitution of the State of Alaska to provide for consideration of vetoed bills. (1975)
2. SCS CSSS HJR 39 (Resources)am S—Proposing an amendment to the Alaska Constitution, establishing an Alaska Permanent Fund for certain proceeds derived from non-renewable resources. (1976)
3. SJR 45 am H—Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska relating to the disposal or lease of state land or interest therein. (1976)
4. HJR 73 am S—Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska relating to state aid to private educational institutions. (1976)

### INITIATIVES

Proposition No. 2—"An Act repealing the limited entry program for commercial fisheries."

Proposition No. 4—"An Act authorizing an advisory vote by the qualified voters of the State of the creation of a unicameral legislature by the State, and providing for an effective date."

Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions regarding these statements. Materials should be sent to:

**OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
POUCH AA  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811**

Sincerely yours,

*Lowell Thomas, Jr.*

**Lowell Thomas, Jr.  
Lieutenant Governor  
STATE OF ALASKA**