

# RURALCAP's ACTION REPORTS

RurALCAP



Partners for Progress  
with Alaska's Communities

The weekly newsletter of the NON-PROFIT, PRIVATE CORPORATION  
which serves rural Alaska in the battle against poverty in our state.

An information and education function of Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.



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## Fire Truck, With Equipment, To Help Control Destruction

The village of Klukwan is getting a fire truck of its own. The truck is arriving in response to a telegram Klukwan sent to Mrs. Mary Gange, director of Operation Mainstream in RurALCAP May 12.

The truck will have 6-wheel drive, and is a flatbed which will be converted to a fire-fighting truck through the installation of special equipment.

Klukwan needed the fire truck to keep down the losses due to fires. The nearest fire station is a Volunteer Fire Station in Haines, some 22 miles distant. After

sounding the alarm to this station, it would take possibly from 40 minutes to an hour for them to respond. By which time, the burning building was often beyond saving.

The Haines Volunteer Fire Department belongs to the City of Haines and is not obligated beyond their city limits, but has helped fight fires in Klukwan as much as possible.

The Haines volunteer firemen will do the converting for Klukwan by installing a water storage tank on the bed of the

truck. The pump has already been installed. The Haines firemen are giving this service on an in-kind basis for Klukwan, Mrs. Gange said.

In the past ten years Klukwan has lost three lives and 25 homes. Additionally, 20 homes were damaged including two tribal houses containing valuable artifacts. One authentic Chilkat blanket worth \$5,000 or more and an authentic Chilkat head-dress worth \$3,000 were lost in the fires. Also Chilkat boxes, corner posts, etc., which have a great value in relation to their size, authenticity, etc. Many of these artifacts were lost in the two tribal house fires, according to Mrs. Dorothy Fossman, superintendent of the Klukwan Tribal House.

The fire-fighting problem has been further complicated by ancient and rotten water pipes, many of which leak. Also, the water supply in Klukwan is very low, Mrs. Fossman noted.

The Red Cross at one time had to replace a number of homes in Klukwan due to complete destruction by fires. In the winter months, when most fires occur, many of the hydrants are frozen as the temperatures get down to 35 below zero. Having the water tank on the truck will solve this problem because the truck can be kept in a garage.

Presently the only method of extinguishing fires in Klukwan are the few fire extinguishers, garden hoses and water from bathtubs or any available source. Water pipes are ancient and rotten and the hoses are leaking. Also the water supply in Klukwan is very low, according to Mrs. Fossman.

The obtaining of the fire truck should help resolve Klukwan's loss of life and property by the destruction of fires.



Foundation work begins in Klukwan to re-build a Tribal Community House where villagers can display their arts and crafts. In the photo above workers are laying logs for the new foundation.



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## Klukwan Begins Rebuilding Tribal Community House

A great deal of in-kind work is being contributed by various agencies and Klukwan villagers to construct a Tribal Community House in replacement of the two Tribal Houses destroyed by fires.

The project is a community project under the administration of Bureau of Work Training Program, Dept. of Labor. The Tribal Community House will be used for holding meetings, potlatches, various social activities and a place for tourists to visit and purchase authentic arts and crafts.

The villagers anticipate adequate parking facilities for all social functions held. The State Dept. of Highways has completed grade work on the lot and has hauled gravel and laying for the parking area. A big 100 x 100 foot square lot has been cleared, leveled and graveled, contributed by Clarence Hotch; and the big timbers and cants for the foundation are measured and ready for placement on the site. Some of the cants have been hauled from as far as 22 miles away.

Various types of heavy equipment is on in-kind loan to Klukwan residents for this project and the men working under the Bureau of Work Training Program seem to gain momentum at each achieved accomplishment, according to Mrs. Mary Gange, Operation Mainstream director in the RurALCAP Central Office.

Steve Hotch, coordinator of the project and all the people of the village have been preparing for the beginning of this project, said Mrs. Gange. "I am proud of their progress under their many unfortunate 'incidents,'" said Mrs. Gange. This was in reference to the many fires and an outbreak of Hepatitis in the village.

Klukwan now has a commitment from Alaska Area Native Health Service

to assist in another project of installing a water treatment facility on the existing water system. PHS will instruct and train villagers in the operation and maintenance of the equipment.

The materials and equipment are on the site and Robert Crum, sanitary engineer of PHS, is conducting the training.

Klukwan villagers fear the word *Fire*, which usually denotes loss of life and complete destruction of a structure, said Mrs. Gange. The villagers will soon not have to fear a fire, as they have received a converted fire truck. (See related story)

Mrs. Gange said, "It appears that this tribal facility will be the turning point our people in Klukwan need to alleviate the despair they have been forced to accept."



Dedicated workers have put in foundation logs for their new Tribal Community House. Mrs. Dorothy Fossman, Tribal House superintendent looks over the progress, and admires the work.

## Water, Sewer For Bethel

Braund Corporation of Anchorage has been awarded a contract to build water and sewage facilities for the new 200 unit housing project in Bethel.

The project is being funded by the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The money is authorized under the Indian Sanitation Facilities Act, Public Law 86-121. The contract award was for \$784,847.

Braund was the sole bidder for the contract, when bids were opened on May 21 by the Office of Environmental Health of the Public Health Service.

The contract calls for all outside work to be completed by December 31, 1969 and for the system to be operating by the end of April 1970.

In addition to the PHS funds, \$241,000 is being provided for the project by the U. S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

The system will service houses produced by the Bethel pre-fabricated house factory. There are presently 65 houses completed. The factory is fully staffed.

Nome is being considered by some government agencies as the site of a housing project similar to Bethel.

RurALCAP's ACTION REPORTS welcomes news items and reports on Community problems, special projects and progress in all parts of rural Alaska where the war against poverty is being waged. Community workers are urged to send reports on any items of interest to this paper at the address listed on page four.

# Bad Deal At The Trading Post



(Reprinted from Newsweek Magazine)

More than 50% of America's farm products today consists of plants used by the Indian before Columbus planted his flag. They include beans, chocolate, corn, cotton, peanuts, potatoes, pumpkins, tobacco and tomatoes.

To combat illness, the Indian has given us arnica, cascara, cocaine, ipecac, oil of wintergreen, petroleum jelly, quinine and witch hazel.

Botanists have yet to discover, in 400 years, any medicinal herb that was not used by the Indian. That's what *they* gave *us*. Here's what *we* have given *them*:

High infant mortality rate. Short life expectancy. Dependency on handouts. Loss of pride. Much illness. Unemployment as high as 80% in some tribes.

The 600,000 remaining American Indians are struggling to hang on to the lowest health, education and economic rungs in American life. Somebody better do *something* before those rungs collapse.

Remember, you're up there somewhere on that ladder yourself.

[Published with the hope it will remind some Americans of their basic responsibilities. For reprints, and for suggestions on what you might do about this problem, write: Director, Responsibility Series, Newsweek, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.]

## Elections To Incorporate Cities

Special elections are scheduled on June 10 for the proposed incorporation of Kivalina and Togiak. The villages must incorporate as fourth class cities to participate in the Alaska Village Electrification Program.

Voters in each village will elect a five-member city council. In addition, voters in Kivalina will cast ballots on the question of a two percent sales tax.

Candidates for council in Togiak are Stanley Active Sr., Albert Bavilla Sr., Robert T. Blue, Benjamin Coopchiak, William P. Coopchiak, David Kasak, Nick Nicholai and Anuska Ann Togiak.

In Kivalina, candidates are Enoch A. Adams, Sr., Russell N. Adams, Amos Hawley, Bob T. Hawley, Raymond Hawley, Winona Hawley, Clarence Kennedy, Jerry Norton, Dennis Swan and Joseph T. Swan.

Under Alaska statutes, the villages will gain many things if they become fourth class cities. These include the ability to

acquire and hold real and personal property needed for the government. A fourth class city may also make and change ordinances, rules and regulations. The city may also levy and collect a general sales tax.

Fourth class cities may also plan for and provide water, electricity, sewage disposal and fire protection, and may make contracts for such public services.

## Defendants Helped

Governor Keith H. Miller will appoint a Public Defender Attorney to fill the first established Public Defender Agency post in Alaska for the next four years.

The Public Attorney will staff his agency with attorneys as well as investigators and clerical personnel to assist him. The services of the agency will be available to a defendant if he is unable to pay for his own defense without undue hardship.



Mrs. LaVelle Alexander

Mrs. LaVelle Alexander, former editor of Action Reports, left RurALCAP May 21 due to her husband's rotation from the U. S. Army in Alaska. Captain Alexander will be going to Vietnam and Mrs. Alexander decided to return to California where she would be close to her family. She had been with RurALCAP since August, 1968.

## Gets Post Office

Northern Commercial Company of Seattle will build a new post office in Unalakleet.

A \$47,000 contract for the work was given to the company by the Post Office Department. Work will be completed by October.

The building will have 1,344 square feet of space. A parking space measuring 2,400 square feet will also be provided.

The Post Office will pay \$3,420 a year on an eight-year lease. The contract includes option clauses totalling 20 years lease.

## Opening Bureau

The first of a series of inter-agency full-day orientation meetings on the new Office of Child Development was convened last week by Richard E. Orton, Associate Director of Head Start and Jule M. Sugarman, Acting Chief of the Children's Bureau, HEW.

Briefed on the programs currently operated for the benefit of the nation's young children by different arms of the Federal Government, were more than 200 Washington and regional staff members of OEO, HEW, the Dept. of Labor, and the Dept. of Agriculture.

Head Start, along with ten new Child Development Regional Offices, will report directly to the HEW Regional Directors, according to Jule Sugarman.

The directors in the field, for the first time, have a line authority over programs. HEW plans to fund Child Development programs through OEO's Community Action Agencies.

## \$4.4 Billion Food Bill Proposed

"Standardization of welfare payments, federal cash grants or child allowances should be used to increase people's ability to purchase food," said a Bureau of Budget task force.

A working draft with figures, dated May 6, was designed as "a point of departure for discussion and improvement," and was part of a six-month study by an interdepartmental Budget Bureau group for the Urban Affairs Council.

The Budget task force has estimated it would take \$2.9 billion more than the government is now spending on food programs to assure an adequate diet for the poor.

President Nixon has recommended a \$270 million boost in the food stamp program for the coming fiscal year and a \$1 billion increase the following year.

The analysis of the task force shows the spending on food programs of about \$1.5 billion a year, including \$340 million spent on food stamps, would have to be almost tripled by adding another \$2.9 billion in some form. The statistics show some 20.8 million Americans are below the poverty line of \$3,000 a year for an urban family of four.

The draft calls for several proposed changes for federal food programs but added: "No claim is made that the list is either exhaustive, original, or in any way competes with the President's program."

The changes include putting food stamp payments on the installment plan, establishing emergency loan programs to help the poor pay for stamps, and establishing standards to insure "that all poverty families are eligible."

The plan also suggests introducing the commodity distribution program "at least

on an interim basis, into the 480 counties and cities now without a food program" and use of federal funds to help states extend food programs into new areas.

In a very broad statement the task force said, "If progress in reducing the number of poor were to take place at the same pace in the future as it has in the recent past, poverty (as presently defined) would be eliminated entirely by 1983. But this is probably an overly optimistic prediction."

## Have Close Interests

Alaska Governor Keith H. Miller expressed pleasure on the notification of the decision of the Japanese government to establish a consulate for Alaska in Anchorage, and that the action has been approved by the United States Government.

"Alaska and Japan have many common interests," the Governor said, "and the opening of a consulate here will certainly prove a service to those interests and draw closer the ties between our people."

"The development of Alaska is dependent in many ways upon her good relations with Japan," the Governor said. "The effect of a consulate here will be to improve the already good relations between us. This is a happy event, indeed."

The consulate opening is scheduled for January, 1970. Alaska presently has representatives from Sweden, Germany, Finland, Norway, Paraguay, Great Britain, Denmark and France. But, no consulate has ever been established for them in Alaska.

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