

STATEWIDE IN ALASKA

Highlights: A 2.3 million dollar Skill Center is in operation at Seward. The facility is designed to serve the special needs of persons suffering from employment handicaps such as cultural barriers and lack of education or training. Some 500 to 700 unemployed and underemployed Alaskans are expected to receive training at the center each year. The facility is staffed by two guidance counselors and nine instructors plus an administrative staff, with the instructors drawn from industries located in Alaska. The first 60 trainees began their study of the operation and maintenance of heavy equipment on October 6. The center is funded from several sources including the Manpower Development and Training Act with the Federal Government providing 90 percent of the funds. As an additional benefit the center will pump an estimated one million dollars annually into Seward's economy.

Beginning in October, the Department of Defense is launching an all out effort to provide employment for 200 natives a year at military installations throughout the state. The training program, known as project HIRE, is being carried out under an agreement with the State Department of Labor, the United States Civil Service Commission, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Under the program rural residents will be recruited throughout the state. Recruits and their families will then be moved to various locations for employment in entry level positions in 50 job classifications. On-the-job training and remedial education will be provided where necessary to prepare recruits for permanent employment and career progression. The classifications involved in project HIRE offer a wide range of employment opportunities. These include: clerical workers, card punch operators, warehousemen, steamfitters, mechanic helpers, electricians, plumbers, draftsmen and engineering aides. Approximately 52 persons will be enrolled this month with the remainder of the positions scheduled for this year to be spread over a six month period. If the projects annual hire rate of 200 can be met, it will fill approximately 50 percent of the Defense Department positions that become vacant each year.

Alaska based companies should play a major role in the construction of the Trans Alaska Pipeline. Laying of pipe will probably be done by a few select large companies from outside Alaska who have previous pipeline experience. However, Alaska firms with experience in airstrip and highway construction and other types of work in the far North will undoubtedly get many contracts for work related to the main pipeline. Already Burgess Construction Company of Fairbanks has received a contract for the first leg of the pipeline access road. This road will ultimately run from Livengood to Prudhoe Bay. Some other Alaska Companies currently working on pipeline related projects are as follows: Alaska Geological Consultants of Anchorage who are performing offshore investigations at the Valdez end of the pipeline; R & M Engineering of Fairbanks did the design work for the first leg of the pipeline access road; Kenai Lumber Company of Seward is providing one million board feet of lumber for the building of pipe-racks in which the 48 inch diameter pipe will be stored as it arrives in Valdez.

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With a minimum of 17 major contracts to be let and many more subcontracts, numerous other Alaska firms will have the opportunity to share in the pipeline construction.

At least some of the employees now working for the federally owned Alaska Communications System will be given the opportunity of working for RCA when that company takes over the ACS next year. Sources within RCA have said that RCA Alaska Communications Inc. will retain "all qualified" ACS employees. It had been previously announced by the Air Force that the ACS would be treated as a base closure. This would mean that civil service personnel not being qualified or not desiring to work for RCA would be able to transfer to other federal jobs once the sale has taken effect.

According to a Texas based consulting firm, British Petroleum can expect to recover at least 4.8 billion barrels of oil from its leases on the Prudhoe Bay structure. This acreage alone comes close to equaling the 5 billion barrel East Texas field, the largest ever found in North America. The estimate refers only to primary production, as it is felt that oil removed by secondary or stripper phases would be too expensive to extract and send to market. Although no figures have been given, both Atlantic Richfield and the group of Mobil, Phillips and Standard Oil of California have also announced substantial finds of crude oil under land on which they hold leases.

The largest salmon catch in Bristol Bay's history is in prospect for that area during the 1970 season. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates that the total run will consist of 64 million sockeye salmon. Of these, better than 40 million should be taken by fishermen. A catch of 40 to 50 million salmon would almost double past peak years of 1917, 1938 and 1965 when sockeye catches ranged from 24 to 25 million fish. Although there are more than enough fishermen residing in Alaska to harvest the record catch, it is anticipated that processing facilities may have some difficulty. This comes as a result of the large volume of fish to be processed in a relatively short time. Because of this a research committee has been formed by the State to help plan for an efficient and orderly harvest of the record run.

According to the Bureau of Commercial fisheries, shipments of frozen halibut from Alaska into Seattle during August of 69 totaled 2.7 million pounds. This more than doubles the August 1968 figure. This increase comes as a result of unusually heavy landings at Alaska ports this year. Through July, Alaskan halibut landings had reached 9.5 million pounds compared with 1968 landings for the same period of 7.0 million pounds.

The 1969 Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim area salmon catch is already the greatest ever recorded for that area. With late season coho and chum salmon fisheries still underway preliminary figures released by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game show a catch of 708,600 salmon of all species. Although very little salmon is

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canned in this area, over 6 million pounds of salmon have been processed for fresh, frozen and cured markets. With the exception of king salmon, nearly all the catch has been purchased from domestic operators by Japanese firms for shipment to Japan. The catch comes as a result of declining dependence by residents of the area on subsistence fishing. If this trend continues it will be an economic benefit to residents of the area since in addition to being employed in the taking of salmon, residents will also find jobs in the processing of the caught fish.

According to preliminary estimates by the Alaska Travel Division, a record 107,000 tourists visited Alaska during the period from May to mid September. This is 10,000 more than the 97,000 who came to Alaska in 1968. Spending by tourists was \$30 million so far this year compared with \$29 million during the same period in 1968.

Employment:

Total estimated employment continued its seasonal decline, falling from 110,100 in August to 104,800 in September. By far the largest contributor to the drop was the food processing sector of manufacturing. Employment in this area decreased by 4,500 as the last of the major salmon processing operations were terminated. Services showed a drop of 200, reflecting the end of the tourist season. State and federal governments showed declines of 300 and 600 respectively as summer hire programs came to an end. Local government employment advanced by 300 over the month as schools throughout the State reopened. Air transportation showed an over the month gain of 400. A large portion of this gain can be traced to settlement of an airline mechanics strike which crippled Western Airlines during August. Construction advanced by 200 as work began on the first leg of the access road for the construction of the \$900 million Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Total estimated employment was 5.2 percent ahead of last years figure. This advance mirrored the increasing vitality of Alaska's economy resulting from the North Slope oil boom.

Construction rose by 1,600 over the year. In the area of heavy construction large projects including the pipeline access road played major parts. An additional contributor was the hiring by a major oil company of nearly 500 Alaska residents for construction work on the North Slope. In contrast with the rest of the country, building construction in Alaska is up over the year, as reflected by an employment increase of 600. Among the factors that have retarded the construction industry in Alaska and throughout the country are the Federal Reserves' tight money policy and the high cost of building materials. However, demands for more office space plus severe housing shortages in many parts of the State have caused building construction here to buck the national trend. This is especially true of the Anchorage area, where both building and residential construction are proceeding at a rate exceeded only during the earthquake reconstruction period in 1964.

Mining was up by 1,100 employees over the year, representing a 42 percent advance. As in previous months, this increase has resulted from continued heightened oil