

HB

251

2

Amendment to HB 251

Add A definition of "Educational" to:

"include cultural, instructional, informative
and documentary" programming.

#1

Amendment to HB 251

p. 3, l 4

After: "project"

Add: " ON A weekly basis "

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
 Title: Powers and Duties of the Alaska
 Public Broadcasting Commission
 Sponsor: Ellis, M. Davis, & Brown
 Requestor: House HES

Agency Affected: Education
 BRU: Education Program Support
 Components: Instructional Technology
 Support

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Mary Hakala Phone: 465-2800
 Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 3/29/89

Approved by Commissioner: William G. Demert Date: 3/29/89
 Agency: Education

Distribution (by preparer):
 Legislative Finance
 Legislative Sponsor
 Requestor
 Office of Management and Budget
 Impacted Agency(ies)

Report of the
Senate Special Committee on School Performance
Fifteenth Alaska Legislature

**HELPING SCHOOLS SUCCEED
AT HELPING ALL CHILDREN LEARN**

Senator William L. Hensley, Chairman

Senator John Binkley

Senator Ken Fanning

Senator Jim Duncan

Senator Jan Faiks

Bob Arnold, Project Director



January 1989

Notes on the role of broadcasting in instruction in Alaska, based on a memorandum from the Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission, September 16, 1988; "The Future of State-Supported Broadcasting in Alaska," Larry L. Pearson, 1987; "A Report to the Alaska Legislature in Response to Intent Language regarding Telecommunications in the FY88 Operating Budget," December, 1987, and a review of RATNET minutes, 1986-1988.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING

1. In FY 1989, the State appropriation for public television station operation is about \$2.5 million; these funds, supplemented by other funds, are used for the operation of four PTV stations serving about 80 percent of Alaska's population. Three stations are controlled by locally-elected boards; the fourth is operated by the University at Fairbanks.

2. For 25 years instructional television has been shown to be effective in presenting content of specific courses, in providing experiences not otherwise available, and in motivating students to learn.

2. No instructional television is carried in Juneau; Bethel carries 2 1/2 hours weekly, Fairbanks carries almost 5 hours weekly, and Anchorage carries 25 hours. Community-controlled stations are required by regulation to provide free time for instructional programming provided by local schools.

3. Nine programs for children and youth are available to stations for out of school viewing this year. In addition to the well-known programs such as "Sesame Street," they include programs to stimulate enthusiasm for learning reading ("Reading Rainbow"), for mathematics and problem solving ("Square One TV"), and for science and technology ("3-2-1 Contact"); other programs are dramatic works or discussions dealing with issues facing pre-teens and adolescents.

4. General PTV programming is often suitable as a supplement to classroom instruction in science, history, government, and other subjects. It can be the subject of homework or, when allowed, be taped for classroom use. Print materials are available for many such programs.

5. Alaska's 15 public radio stations (supported by state appropriations of about \$4 million) are sources of information and news for their listeners, but carry no instructional programming. Several stations carry programs in languages other than English.

6. Elsewhere in America, telecommunications technology is widely and effectively employed in addressing issues of

schooling -- teacher in-service training, interactive coursework for students at remote locations, teleconferences, and so on. Such uses were made of the LearnAlaska network until funding for its operation was deleted in 1986.

7. The Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission is located (by law) within the Department of Administration. The nine members of the commission are appointed by the governor for five-year terms.

THE RURAL ALASKA TELEVISION NETWORK

8. During this fiscal year, the State appropriation for the Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNet) is about \$2.6 million. Of this amount, \$2.2 million is payment to Alascom for the use of its satellite and ground stations.

9. RATNet provides television service to 248 communities, 121 of which have no other television service (about 18,000 persons), and 41 of which have no radio service (about 4,400 persons).

10. Programming on RATNet is preponderantly commercial television -- news, weather, sports, and entertainment. It does, however, carry a few PTV programs such as "Sesame Street," "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood," and "3-2-1 Contact."
(Two recent weekly schedules are attached.)

11. There is virtually no instructional use made of RATNet during days or evenings, even though the legislative intent (FY 1987) was that "RATNet and Learn/Alaska be combined on one statewide network managed by the Department of Administration." In 1987, the consultant to the House committee on telecommunications said the RATNet directors refused to return to the pre-Learn/Alaska format of daytime instructional programming and evening entertainment. He said, "...they have considered instructional programs during the day on a case by case basis and have expressed unwillingness to make a regular day-time slot available for instructional programs."

12. RATNet's policy guideline on this subject is that "Instructional programming is considered to be consistent in quality with network programming and will be assigned on a time slot basis."

14. Currently, the Department of Education uses the satellite for transmission of programs between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. (for eight weeks each year) for recording by school districts for their later use. The department also has been authorized to use five hours this year for "Talkback," special presentations affording students the opportunity to ask questions.

13. The department's request for one hour daily, four days a week, for transmission of a course in Japanese for up to 15 districts for this school year was rejected by the RATNet board.

14. RATNet programming is determined by a 17-member board made up of 12 representatives of Native non-profit corporations, two appointees of the governor, and one representative each from the Department of Education, public broadcasting, and the University of Alaska. There are no fixed terms.

-----Comments-----

a. Given the achievement levels that are implied by test scores in many rural areas, and the existing demands upon teachers and schools, I think it is important to consider whether and how State-supported broadcasting capabilities should be employed to assist what State-supported schools are seeking to do, and that is the reason I prepared this summary.

b. Here are some of the things that broadcast television can do in support of schooling goals:

- Extend the school day for the student without extending the school day for the teacher;
- Carry instructional programming that small school faculties are unable to offer;
- Present information at home that would be useful to both parents and students (e.g., drugs, alcohol, and other health information);
- Present information for parents as parents; and
- Provide in-service education for teachers.

c. Broadcast radio can also be useful in instructional programs, perhaps especially in language arts. In the communities where stations exist, high school students could also use them as places of learning.

d. I have written the president of RATNet, asking what criteria are used in making program decisions, and I will share his reply with you once I receive it.

e. The Governor's Telecommunications Information Council (made up of the cabinet and three others) may have the authority to consider the issues noted here. Although the council may not decide specific program content, its purpose regarding information technology resources is very broad.

Bob Arnold 10/19/88

RURAL ALASKA TELEVISION NETWORK (RATNET)
Briefing to House Finance Subcommittee
March 15, 1989
by Division of Telecommunications
Department of Administration

•The Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET) began providing television to bush communities in Jan. 1977. At present, 248 communities receive State-funded television. It began as a demonstration project (TVDP) of a single delivery system for education and entertainment then changed to two separate systems (LEARN/Alaska and RATNET) and again into a single system, (RATNET). Throughout its evolution, one constant remained in the minds of Alaska's lawmakers—that State government should have nothing to do with selecting the programs.

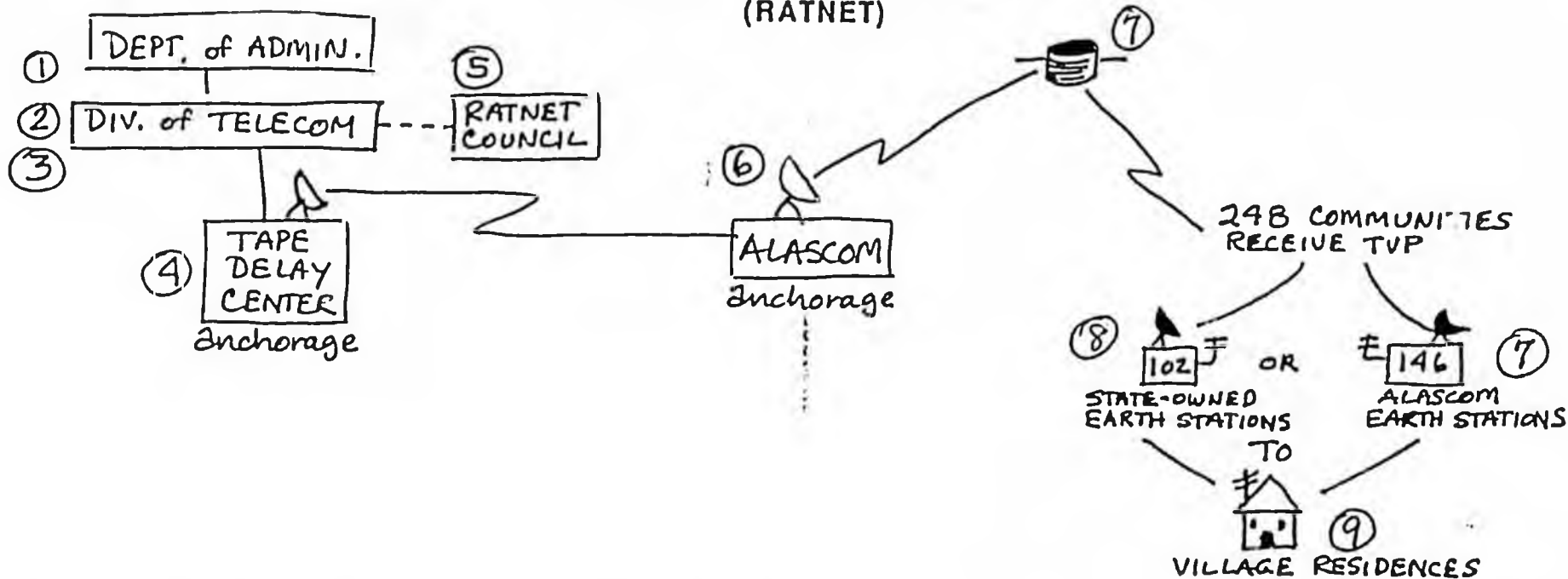
•The RATNET Council was formed to allow rural viewers to select network television programs. Originally an interim steering committee, the Council was reorganized in 1981 to include representatives of 12 regional non-profit native corporations and two Governor's appointees representing statewide interests. In 1986, the then separate LEARN/Alaska network was discontinued and the RATNET Council was expanded to 17 members to more broadly represent educational and public broadcasting interests. The newest members represent and are appointed by the APBC, the Department of Education and the University of Alaska. (Included also in the current mix of members are 2 retired teachers and one active teacher.)

•The RATNET Council meets quarterly to review, evaluate and select programming, as well as to discuss input (complaints, praise and program preferences) from the viewers they represent. Programming is selected from a number of sources, including ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, FOX, the U of A, DOE and independent Alaskan producers. With a wide variety of programming to choose from and only one channel available, (even though the schedule is reviewed and updated quarterly), it is easy to understand why the Council comes under fire for not airing particular programs.

•The Council uses a number of techniques to select programs. The primary tool is a program survey of the local area, which helps to ascertain favorite and least favorite programs. Viewers also provide input as to the programming they would like added or decreased, i.e. sports, education, PBS, "specials", etc. In cases where programs are offered far enough in advance, the Council may employ telephone polling as a method of determining interest.

•Council meetings are generally 2 days in duration. General business is conducted the first day; a primary agenda item is Council member comments. This consists of reports on letters, phone calls and personal contacts received during the quarter. Towards the end of the first day, programs are presented for consideration. On the second day, the Council gets down to the serious business of making program selections. Each hour of each day of the week's air time is considered and programs are selected as deemed appropriate for each time slot.

STATE TELEVISION PROJECT (RATNET)



1. Division of Telecommunications provides assistance to RATNET Council with meeting coordination and travel per diem.
2. Division technicians provide statewide maintenance and repair to 102 small earth station sites that receive TVP.
3. Division engineers update and maintain 248 FCC licenses and associated documentation.
4. Division operates and manages Tape Delay Center in Anchorage with staff of 6 to deliver television programs, produce tv schedule and liaison with RATNET Council.
5. 17-Member RATNET Council meets quarterly to select programs for TVP based upon input from viewers/entities each represents.
6. Satellite uplink and transponder services leased from Alascom.
7. 144 small earth stations and downlink services to 248 sites are leased from Alascom.
8. Division maintains and repairs 102 State-owned small earth stations.
9. Residences in 248 communities receive TVP signal via State-owned or Alascom small earth stations at each location.

SATELLITE TELEVISION SCHEDULE: WEEK OF MARCH 12, 1989

SUNDAY 3/12

6:00 AM SUNDAY TODAY
 7:30 MEET THE PRESS
 8:00 NBA BASKETBALL
 (DENVER VS BOSTON)
 10:30 NCAA BASKETBALL: BIG EAST FINAL
 12:30 PM SPECIAL: ROAD TO ALBERTVILLE
 1:30 NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP SELECTION
 2:00 CARTOONS
 3:00 SUPERBOY
 3:30 THE BATTLE FOR EASTERN AIRLINES
 4:30 AUSTIN CITY LIMITS
 5:30 NATIONAL NEWS
 6:00 CHANNEL 2 NEWS
 6:30 A DIFFERENT WORLD
 7:00 60 MINUTES
 8:00 MURDER, SHE WROTE
 9:00 15TH ANNUAL PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS
 11:00 TOUR OF DUTY
 12:00 BEYOND TOMORROW
 1:00 AM MARRIED WITH CHILDREN

MONDAY 3/13

7:00 PM DOLPHIN COVE
 8:00 MOVIE: ORIGINAL SIN
 10:00 ROSEANNE
 10:30 PERFECT STRANGERS
 11:00 CHANNEL 2 NEWS
 11:30 MATLOCK
 12:30 AM IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

TUESDAY 3/14

7:00 PM PARADISE
 8:00 MURPHY BROWN
 8:30 HOOPERMAN
 9:00 MOONLIGHTING
 10:00 GOLDEN GIRLS
 10:30 CHEERS
 11:00 CHANNEL 2 NEWS
 11:30 ABC NIGHTLINE
 12:00 MIDNIGHT CALLER
 1:00 AM 227

WEDNESDAY 3/15

7:00 AM GROWING PAINS
 7:30 HEAD OF THE CLASS
 8:00 ALF
 8:30 DEAR JOHN
 9:00 A FINE ROMANCE
 10:00 CHINA BEACH
 11:00 CHANNEL 2 NEWS
 11:30 AMERICA'S MOST WANTED
 12:00 LATE MOVIE: NIGHT HEAT

THURSDAY 3/16

7:00 PM FULL HOUSE
 7:30 FAMILY TIES
 8:00 DYNASTY
 9:00 MOVIE: PETE'S DRAGON
 11:00 CHANNEL 2 NEWS
 11:30 THE REPORTERS
 12:30 AM WAR OF THE WORLDS

FRIDAY 3/17

7:00 PM THE WONDER YEARS
 7:30 THE COSBY SHOW
 8:00 DALLAS
 9:00 20/20
 10:00 MIAMI VICE
 11:00 CHANNEL 2 NEWS
 11:30 HUNTER
 12:30 AM FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEOS

SATURDAY 3/18

6:00 AM CARTOONS
 8:00 NCAA BASKETBALL
 SECOND ROUND
 10:00 NCAA BASKETBALL
 SECOND ROUND
 12:30 PM NCAA BASKETBALL
 SECOND ROUND
 3:00 CARTOON
 3:30 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
 SPECIAL
 4:30 STAR TREK: THE NEXT
 GENERATION
 5:30 NATIONAL NEWS
 6:00 CHANNEL 2 NEWS
 6:30 GREAT CIRCUSES OF
 THE WORLD
 7:30 MAGICAL WORLD OF DISNEY
 8:30 HEARTBEAT
 9:30 MACGYVER
 10:30 L. A. LAW
 11:30 TUNDRA TERROR
 THEATER

THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 PROGRAMS ARE SCHEDULED FOR:

MAR. 16, 11AM TO 12N--TALKBACK: AIDS
 STUDENTS WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO LEARN
 ABOUT AIDS, ITS EFFECT ON THE UNITED
 STATES AND ALASKA, AND WHAT CHOICES
 THEY MUST MAKE TO PREVENT IT.
 MAR. 21, 10:30 TO 11:30 AM--NASA
 (TECHNOLOGY AND YOUR CLASSROOM)
 MAR. 22, 11AM TO 12N--TALKBACK
 (CLOSE-UP WITH GOVERNOR STEVE

WEDNESDAY MARCH 8, 1989

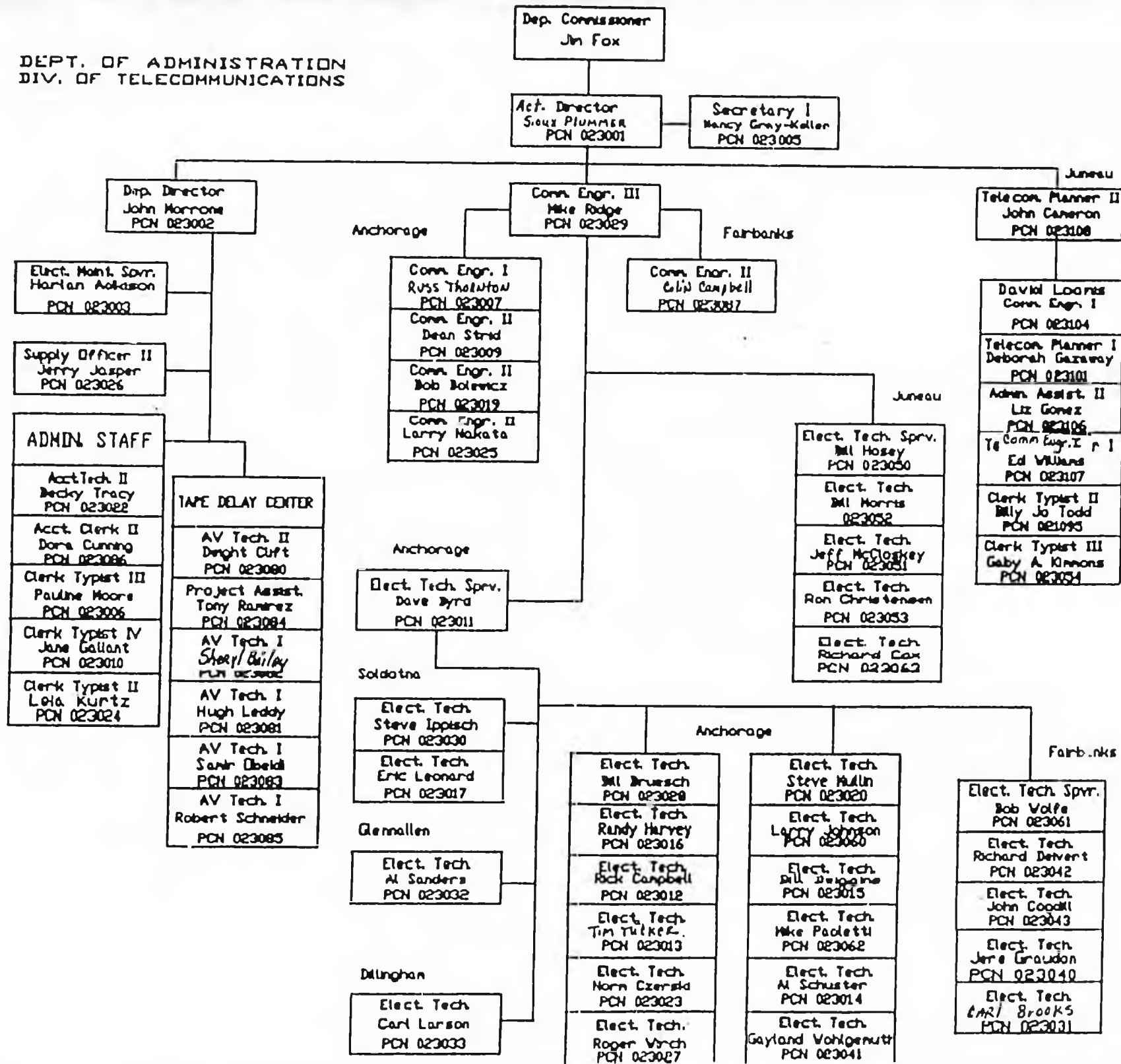
1:30	SCHEDULES.....	
5:30	20 MINUTE WORKOUT	OFF AIR CH 13
6:00	THIS MORNING'S BUSINESS	OFF AIR CH 13
6:30	ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING	OFF AIR CH 13
7:00	GOOD MORNING AMERICA	OFF AIR CH 13
9:00	FAMILY FEUD	OFF AIR CH 11
9:30	WHEEL OF FORTUNE	-----
10:00	CARTOONS	-----
11:00	* SESAME STREET <i>TAPED</i>	OFF AIR CH 7
12:00	ALL MY CHILDREN	OFF AIR CH 13
1:00	PRICE IS RIGHT	-----
2:00	*WOMEN IN AK HISTORY (PSA #8) GENERAL HOSPITAL	OFF AIR CH 13
3:00	MR. ROGERS	-----
3:30	* GOVERNOR'S WINDOW	-----
4:00	*THE ALASKA REPORT <i>Recorded at 11:AM</i>	-----
4:30	NEWS CLIPS	ALASCOM
5:00	CAPITAL '89	ALASCOM (KJUD/JUNEAU)
5:30	NBC NEWS	OFF AIR CH 2
6:00	STATEWIDE NEWS	OFF AIR CH 13
6:30	ALASKA WEATHER	TAPED HERE AT 6PM/CH 7
7:00	GROWING PAINS	OFF AIR CH 13
7:30	* HEAD OF THE CLASS	OFF AIR CH 13
8:00	ALF	-----
8:30	DEAR JOHN	-----
9:00	A FINE ROMANCE	-----
10:00	YUKON QUEST SLED DOG RACE	OFF AIR CH 13
10:30	NIGHT COURT	-----
11:00	WOMEN IN AK HISTORY (PSA #8) CHANNEL 2 NEWS	TAPED HERE AT 10PM/CH 2
11:30	AMERICA'S MOST WANTED	-----
12:00	* LATE MOVIE: NIGHT HEAT	-----
1:00	EMPTY NEST	-----

SATURDAY MARCH 11, 1989

2:00	ALL-NIGHT PROGRAMMING	OFF AIR CH 4
5:00	FLINTSTONE KIDS	OFF AIR CH 13
6:30	WINNIE THE POOH	OFF AIR CH 13
7:30	THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS	OFF AIR CH 13
8:30	SCOOBY DOO	OFF AIR CH 13
9:00	NCAA PRE-TOURNAMENT SPECIAL (PT.1)	OFF AIR CH 11
9:30	NCAA BASKETBALL BIG EAST SEMI-FINALS	OFF AIR CH 11
11:30	NCAA PRE-TOURNAMENT SPECIAL (PT.2)	OFF AIR CH 11
12:00	NCAA BASKETBALL BIG EAST SEMI-FINALS	OFF AIR CH 11
2:00	CARTOONS	-----
	WOMEN IN AK HISTORY (PSA #11)	-----
2:30	WONDERWORKS (THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE--PART 2 & 3)	-----
4:30	STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION	-----
5:30	NATIONAL NEWS	OFF AIR CH 2
6:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS	OFF AIR CH 2
6:30	* MR. BELVEDERE	-----
7:00	MAGICAL WORLD OF DISNEY	-----
8:00	HEARTBEAT	-----
	WOMEN IN AK HISTORY (PSA #11)	-----
9:00	* MACGYVER	-----
10:00	L. A. LAW	-----
11:00	MOVIE: PSYCHO III	-----
1:00	WHO'S THE BOSS	-----
1:30	SCHEDULES.....	-----
2:00	ALL-NIGHT PROGRAMMING	OFF AIR CH 4

*DISPLAY ALCOHOL DISCLAIMER

DEPT. OF ADMINISTRATION
DIV. OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS



RATNET COUNCIL
February 1989

- * Denotes Executive Council
- *ISAAC KAYUTAK, President
Box 764
Barrow, AK 99723
852-2070 (Msg. Phone)
852-4750 (H)
Inupiat Community
- *LINDA DAVIDOVICS, Vice President
c/o Maniilaq Assn.
Box 256
Kotzebue, AK 99752
442-3311 (W)
442-3711 (H)
Maniilaq Association
- *KAY SHEPHERD, Secretary
Box 727
Whittier, AK 99693
472-2350 (H)
Governor's Appointee
- TIM TOWARAK
Box 89
Unalakleet, AK 99684
624-3003 (H)
Kawerak, Inc.
- *RUSSELL NELSON
Box 161
Dillingham, AK 99576
842-5471 (Msg. Phone)
842-2370 (H)
Bristol Bay Native Assn.
- *HAROLD HOPPER
Box 245
Haines, AK 99827
766-2249
Governor's Appointee
- *PETER TWITCHELL
Box 703
Bethel, AK 99559
543-3131 (W)
543-3640 (H)
AVCP (Assn. of Village
Council Presidents)
- CHRIS GENE
Box 124
Gakona, AK 99586
822-3497
Copper River Native Assn.
- RHEA MAE KNAGIN
Box 265
Port Lions, AK 99550
454-2276 (H)
Kodiak Area Native Assn.

VELMA SCHAFFER Box 70 Huslia, AK 99746 829-2258 (H)	Tanana Chiefs Conference
NELLIE M. VALE Box 193 Yakutat, AK 99689 784-3423	Tlingit & Haida Indians
GARY HARRISON Box 1105 Chickaloon, AK 974 745-7184 (H)	Cook Inlet Native Assn.
ARNOLD MELSHEIMER 722 Ocean View English Bay via Homer, AK 99603 281-2231	North Pacific Rim
DIMITRI PHILEMONOF c/o APIA 1689 C Street Anchorage, AK 99503 248-5341 (H) 276-2700 (W)	Aleutian/Pribilof Island Assn.
JERRY BRIGHAM c/o KYUK TV P.O. Box 468 Bethel, AK 99559 543-3131 (W)	Alaska Public Broadcasting
LOIS STIEGEMEIER Box F Juneau, AK 99811 465-2884 (W)	Dept. of Education
EDIE LYNCH ACC/K-102 2533 Providence Dr. Anchorage, AK 99508-4670 786-1990 (W)	UAA/ACC Instructional Telecommunications
<u>ALTERNATES:</u> Billie Benedict (Russell Nelson) Box 1011 Dillingham, AK 99576	Larry Sinyon (Chris Gene) Star Rt. Box 150 Gakona, AK 99586
Reggie Cleveland (L. Davidovics) General Delivery Shungnak, AK 99773 437-2168	Debbie Harris (Nellie Vale) P.O. Box 233 Yakutat, AK 784-3288/3233

Bonnie Eastburn (Gary Harrison)
c/o CINA
1569 S. Bragaw, Ste. 200
Anchorage, AK 99508

Margaret Galovin
(Dimitri Philemonof)
c/o APIA
1689 C Street
Anchorage, AK 99503

FORUM

State must take active role in rural TV programming

By DANIEL HOUSBERG

It is refreshing to see the state legislature is reviewing the merits of the Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNet.)

The review is taking place in light of dwindling revenues. However it is a review that should have been conducted in 1977 when RATNet was established, and every year thereafter. For the questions of state funded television go beyond the cost consideration.

I am in favor of maintaining RATNet. But to merely continue funding RATNet without considering how television fits into the lifestyle of rural Alaskans would be unwarranted.

Television is vital to rural Alaska. It can open new worlds for people who rarely travel beyond their isolated village. It can provide an immediate source of news and public effective learning aid. And, yes, TV can provide entertainment.

Television is a tool whose power is underestimated. It should not be dismissed solely as a source of benign entertainment. Its place in our society is too well-found-



ed to be ignored. In rural Alaska, the impact of television is amplified because of the lack of exposure to other forms of stimulation and resources.

However what television is, and what it could/should be are vastly different. The world portrayed on television is often discordant with the values and lifestyle of the Native community. Alaska Native culture is based on cooperation and sharing, values necessary to living in the Arctic. But television emphasizes competition and acquisitiveness. TV presents role models irrelevant to young Natives living in the Bush. And there is an absence of news and public affairs programming examining the issues important to Alaska's Natives, such as self determination or resource development.

RATNet perpetuates this destructive tendency by offering the lamest of programs to its viewers. Sports

and entertainment programs routinely take priority over worthwhile television. The one Alaska (Anchorage) produced, statewide "news" program is at best humorous, and at worst offensive to rural audiences. It doesn't begin to provide rural viewers with the information or analysis RATNet's viewers deserve.

The RATNet board will tell you they are providing what the viewer wants. This notion is based on surveys that are conducted haphazardly. In any case, what the viewer wants is not necessarily what the viewer needs. Most children will eat Twinkles instead of vegetables. The television audience has been fed a steady diet of junk food TV, and that's what it has become accustomed to. So long as the state is involved, it is RATNet's responsibility to provide what the audience needs along with what it wants.

It is vital for RATNet to provide programs that deal with Native issues and portray Native values and role models. Programs that discuss current events are also

important for rural audiences as the outside world continues to encroach on rural Alaska. Locally produced programs need to be encouraged, with funding if necessary.

Anchorage-based television needs to be sensitive to the issues facing rural Alaska. It cannot continue to ignore the Alaska outside of the urban areas. If necessary, it needs to tap new markets in order to fund this kind of programming. And of course, rural Alaskans need to be involved in production. As a spin off, urban Alaskans will be better served. Urban viewers are deprived of programs that accurately reflect contemporary Native/rural life, the heart of Alaska. It's ironic that television gives urban viewers an opportunity to see cultures around the world, but they rarely see programs about Native life in their own state.

The legislature made a big mistake in 1986 when it eliminated LearnAlaska (The educational counterpart to RATNet). I assume the intent was to combine the dual purposes of informing

and entertaining into the one present channel. This hasn't happened. Now that the debate regarding the world of state funded television has been opened again, there is a second chance for the state to take an active role in ensuring RATNet provides informative and educational programming.

A structure should be created whereby RATNet may benefit from the revenues generated from advertisements contained in advertising space. The money generated should be made available to production facilities to produce rural oriented programming.

More funding should be made available to the rural production facilities already in operation. Some of the funding could be channeled through the Department of Education. (A student may spend six hours in a classroom, but that student easily spends six hours in front of the tube.)

The state, through the Department of Education and other educational institutions, should exercise more control over the RATNet board to ensure responsible

decisions are being made. And at the very least, more public broadcasting programs should be aired. Both of these measures would cost nothing.

I am perhaps naive to think that the legislature or RATNet would choose to pre-empt "As the World Turns" for the "World Report" or "Hooperman" for MacNeil/Lehrer. That would really wake up the viewers. And why risk that while they are passively sleeping in front of the tube? What I'm hoping for is a change of consciousness.

The considerations of television in rural Alaska go beyond the funding and political issues. We all need to become active, rather than passive viewers. We need to recognize the power of television and use that power to better ourselves and our community.

Daniel Housberg has been producing television programs in Alaska since 1980. Four of those years were spent in Kotzebue. His programs have aired on national and Alaska television, including the Rural Alaska Television Network.

Lawmakers debate funding of rural TV

By LARRY PERSILY
Associated Press

JUNEAU — The state spends \$2.6 million a year beaming television to 248 communities, but some lawmakers are unconvinced that broadcasting "Miami Vice" is an essential service of state government.

"I don't see entertainment as an essential function," Rep. Kay Brown, D-Anchorage, said Thursday.

"If we maintain it, I think it would be appropriate to shift its focus to more educational," Brown said.

The House Finance Subcom-



Rep. Kay Brown

Rep. Randy Phillips

Rep. Fran Ulmer

Rep. 'Red' Boucher

mittee on the Department of Administration budget started its review this week of state funding for the Rural Alaska Television Network, known as RATNET.

Subcommittee Chairwoman

Rep. Fran Ulmer said she is not prepared to recommend RATNET's closure, but added that she "may reach that point."

"We've got lots of problems in the villages. There's a lot of vio-

lence on TV. Maybe you could take away 'Miami Vice' and maybe there'd be fewer problems in the villages," the Juneau Democrat said.

Many people believe that the overuse of TV is detrimental to children and detracts from their time with family, friends and school work, Brown said.

"It's not really a good way to develop the mind," she said.

Despite the debate between entertainment and educational TV, rural lawmakers don't want to pull the plug on the channel.

"I think that it is essential ser-

See TV, page A-8

Fr
ANC. TIMES
3/17/89

TV: State debates funding for transmitting 'Miami Vice'

Continued from page A-1

vice," said Rep. Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel. Many social problems in rural Alaska are caused by a lack of activities, and TV helps fill that void, he said.

Sen. John Binkley, R-Bethel, said the network is the only source of news for many villages, and he favors changing the network's schedule to include more educational shows.

Most of the 18-hour-a-day programming on RATNET is commercial TV, picked up from the

three networks and independent stations and transmitted by satellite to earth stations across the state.

Movies, sports, soap operas and comedies are joined for less than 10 hours a week by "Sesame Street," "Mister Rogers" and "National Geographic."

Nightly statewide news programs and national network news shows also are carried on the channel.

The entertainment value is important to consider, Binkley said. "We don't have swimming pools or hockey rinks that many of the people in larger urban

communities take for granted every day."

The news value is important in many villages that don't have the luxury of cable or even radio, Hoffman said.

Cancelling RATNET would add to rural Alaska's social problems, he said.

"Everyone acknowledges that there are serious problems in rural Alaska with soaring alcoholism and suicide rates," he said. "By eliminating RATNET, you're going to further aggravate the situation" by depriving people of an alternative to drinking and drugs.

Hoffman serves as co-chairman of the House Finance Committee, and any proposal to cut or change RATNET would have to move through his chambers.

Brown serves with Ulmer and Reps. Red Boucher and Randy Phillips on the subcommittee looking at state-funded TV.

The channel went on the air in 1977 and its schedule is determined by a 17-member citizens board, said Sioux Plummer, acting director of the state Telecommunications Division.

The program's \$2.8 million budget pays for satellite time, earth station leases and admin-

istrative costs, Plummer said.

The citizens board includes representatives from 12 regional native corporations, the University of Alaska, public broadcasting, state Education Department and two members appointed by the governor.

If the channel is continued, user fees could be collected to help cover the costs, Ulmer and Brown suggested.

An annual charge of \$30 per household would cover much of the channel's operating expenses and would be appropriate if people continue to enjoy commer-

cial TV at state expense, Ulmer said.

"That would not be a viable option," Hoffman said. Many rural Alaskans lead subsistence lifestyles, and their limited cash goes toward heat and other essential utilities, he said.

Gov. Steve Cooper two years ago recommended dropping RATNET from the air, but lawmakers rejected the money-saving proposal.

This year the governor has taken no position on funding for the state channel, Cooper spokesman David Ramsaur said.

Is it education or just entertainment?

Budget-wary lawmakers take up question of rural TV channel



APC photo

Lawmakers are wondering if Crockett and Tuble belong on state-funded TV.

By LARRY PERSILY
The Associated Press

JUNEAU — The state spends \$2.6 million a year beaming television to 248 communities, but some lawmakers are unconvinced that broadcasting "Miami Vice" is an essential service of state government.

"I don't see entertainment as an essential function," Rep. Kay Brown, D-Anchorage, said Thursday.

"If we maintain it, I think it would be appropriate to shift its focus to more educational," Brown said.

The House Finance Subcommittee on the Department of Administration budget started its review this week of state funding for the Rural Alaska Television Network, known as RATNET.

Subcommittee Chairwoman Rep. Fran Ulmer said she is not prepared to recommend RATNET's closure, but added that she "may reach that point."

"We've got lots of problems in the villages. There's a lot of violence on TV. Maybe you could take away 'Miami Vice' and maybe there'd be fewer problems in the villages," the Juneau Democrat said.

Despite the debate between entertainment and educational TV, rural lawmakers don't want to pull the plug on the channel.

"I think that it is essential service,"

said Rep. Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel. Many social problems in rural Alaska are caused by a lack of activities, and TV helps fill that void, he said.

Most of the 18-hour-a-day programming on RATNET is commercial TV, picked up from the three networks and independent stations and transmitted by satellite to earth stations across the state.

Movies, sports, soap operas and comedies are joined for less than 10 hours a week by "Sesame Street," "Mister Rogers" and "National Geographic."

Nightly statewide news programs and national network news shows also are carried on the channel.

The channel went on the air in 1977 and its schedule is determined by a 17-member citizens board, said Sioux Plummer, acting director of the state Telecommunications Division.

The program's \$2.6 million budget pays for satellite time, earth station leases and administrative costs.

The citizens board includes representatives from 12 regional Native corporations, the University of Alaska, public broadcasting, state Education Department and two members appointed by the governor.

If the channel is continued, user fees could be collected to help cover the costs, Ulmer and Brown suggested.

From :

ANC DAILY NEWS

3/17/59



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Health, Education & Social Services
 committee on DNCR 18 committee name
 committee on HB 33, 198, 203, 231, 257, 252 dated 3-31-89
 bill/subject

It amazes me that our legislature can come to us requesting our input on how we would cut necessary services to our people and then turn around and giving one of our biggest industries an unrec. carry Tax Credit. What types of services will be cut from the budget when the fishing industry takes advantage of this tax credit? I hope it will only come out of the Fish & Game budgets. It is my feeling that if budget cuts are going to be necessary, H.B. 33 should be scraped. At least until we come on better Times.

See attached sheets.

Signed: Darryl Trigg Darryl Trigg
 Testifier Nome Eskimo Community
 Representing (Optional) Box 401, Nome, AK 99762
P.O. Box 401, Nome, ALASKA 99762
 Address (907) 443-2246 443-2246
 Phone No.

(2)

TESTIMONY RE: HB's 198, 203, 231, 251, 252

In regards to HB 198, I feel it is a good bill, but needs under Section 1 an additional sub paragraph that states: -

"(5) For not having a sufficient number of their students passing a test admitting them to the next higher grade."

Section 2 should read "The amendment to AS 14.20.175 made by sec. 1 of this Act, applies to all Teachers and administrators hired by a school district prior to and after the effective date of this act.

Subparagraph (5) is suggested because we feel that too many of our students are "socially" rather than "academically" promoted into higher grades. The Nome school district has many high school level students who still are only capable of reading at 3-7 grade levels.

The only problem I see with H.B. 203, is that it does not address non-degraded bilingual Teachers. It is my feeling that they are gross unrecognized and often under paid.

(3)

HCR 19, is, in my opinion, a work of Art with the exception of the last "be it further resolved." This should be an ongoing action.

H.B. 231 is long over due. It is our feeling that Section 14.03.015, sub paragraph (3) (d) should include in each grade level, "Entrance and Exit" exams that show our students have actually achieved the academic skills necessary to advance to the next grade level.

HB 252

It is the feeling of Nome Eskimo Community that should it become necessary to institute an income tax, that the Longevity Bonus, Property Tax exemptions and the State Dividend check be exempt from taxation. In other words, that income taxes only be levied on earned income and/or wages. We feel that many dollars could be shaved from the budget if the Legislature would study the state hierarchy's and delete all or most of the "pork barrel" positions and administrative costs that were created in times of plenty. Nome Eskimo Community requests that all other sources of revenue and budget cuts be reviewed before an Income Tax is initiated.

We here at Nome Eskimo Community feel that H.B. 252 is supportable and would like to see it + Educational Programs replace (6)

the uneducational "soap" programs.

Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Health Education and Social Services
committee name

committee on HB251, HCR18, HB231, HB203, dated March 31, 1989
bill/subject

Kawerak Incorporated is supportive of HB 136 with some minor technical amendments. We agree that the Governor should appoint the members of the Rural Alaska Television Network Council. We would like to see language included in the bill which directs that the membership of the Council includes at least one member from each of the twelve regions established pursuant to ANCSA. This will ensure the Council maintains a statewide as opposed to a special interest perspective. We urge continued funding of the RATNET system.

In reference to HB 251. We support requiring additional educational programming on RATNET as long as the programming is selected by the RATNET Council. Key to this whole issue is what constitutes educational programming. In example, we consider statewide news and weather to be educational programming. If the effect of the amendment is to mandate that 50% of air time be turned over to the Department of Education to use as they see fit, we oppose this bill. We understand that the RATNET council does not receive many requests for additional educational programming. Currently the hours of 2 - 6 am are reserved for educational materials on the RATNET system. If individuals are interested in a particular subject or class, the session can be videotaped by the students or teachers for later viewing. This committee may wish to consider increasing the number of strictly instructional hours as opposing to increasing the number of educational hours.

We would also like to state that we are wholly supportive of HCR 18, HB 203 and HB 231. These three bills will help ensure the residents and children of Alaska receive a quality education.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

Signed: *L. Bullard* *Loretta Bullard*
Testifier

Kawerak Incorporated, PO Box 948 Nome AK 99762
Representing (Optional)

Address

443-5231

Phone No.

cc: Richard Foster, Eileen MacLean

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

POUCH Y - STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
907-465-3800

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Copies of minutes listed below were originally included in this file. The minutes are available on the STAIRS database CMPR. In order to save space copies of minutes have not been left in the files.

Mary Van Nimwegen

H. HESS 4-12-89

H. HESS 4-11-89