

Call number: 2000-100-01

Name: Alaska Public Radio Network News

Date and place: Fairbanks, September 5-12, 1979

Summary created by: Varpu Lotvonen

Date of summary's creation: 10/29/15

Series: APRN Radio Feeds tapes

Notes: Original on 7-inch reel. Master copy on CD.

A Karen McPherson [as indicated later in the recording] reports news about Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's hearings in Anchorage and a meeting in Fairbanks. There were testimonies from borough officials and others in support for building a natural gas conditioning plant in Fairbanks.

Lloyd Pernela from Earth Resources Company that owns the North Pole refinery talked about his company's views on the matter. Pernela says that they want the pipeline to proceed, and that their company isn't hindering the development. They want to consider all the alternatives, however. The amount of gas that's burnt up at North Slope is about 1-1.5 billion gallons a year, and Pernela thinks that there's no oil field in United States that produces that much, and that they should look at all the alternatives. They need to look at coal development.

Karen asks how good a chance Pernela thinks they have. He says that they are optimistic even though their odds are small. The possible rewards are so great that they can't ignore the opportunity.

[End of the segment.]

1:59 Karen introduces another news piece by telling about 1967 flood in Chena River and how it prompted the Chena River flood control project that was initiated by U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. The project was completed and the construction was completed on another aspect of flood control.

Kevin Harun, a member of Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly, requested a delay on the project and that the resolution is passed unanimously.

Kevin says that in 1971, the borough signed an agreement with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that states that the borough hold and save the United States free from damages due to construction. That means that the borough would assume liability for any mistakes that result from the project. Kevin thinks that they should be sure about everything before they start building and says that there's evidence that the borough doesn't know what they are getting.

3:06 The Army Corps of Engineers has stated that the water level in the Chena will drop and Bob Carlson from UA said that might [unclear] the Rosy Creek area. There's also possibility for losing a prime grayling fishery in upper Chena. Then there's the liability issue, and maintenance costs out of which the borough would pay 10% while the state would pay the rest. That might

add up to millions of dollars that have to come from local property taxes if taxpayers have to subsidize a mistake made by the Army Corps of Engineers. They should look before they go through with the project.

Karen says that the project they were talking about is an extension to an already completed project. Kevin says that the original project didn't involve the diversion. The original flood control project stopped at the airport but it was felt by the borough that the original project didn't protect the property owners on the Lower Chena and that there was need to extend the levy down there. There are many problems concerning the actual levy. Tanana has begun to reroute itself to railroad spur and if they will not do something, they might lose the railroad. No action is not an alternative, and Kevin doesn't think that diverting the Tanana is necessarily the best way to go. [Cut?]

Kevin says that another point is that after the assembly has passed the resolution, Governor [Jay S.] Hammond has to take some action. They have asked the department of Natural Resources to examine the project and now they need leadership from the state level. The community [of Fairbanks] has expressed concern and requested a 90 day delay on the project and they should use the 90 days to have state and different departments to come together. [End of the segment.]

5:56 Karen introduces the next segment in which Ron Davis from Fairbanks Downtown Association and Bill Brody, who is an instructor at the UAF art department, disagree on a mural painted by Brody that was painted over. Davis says that what was contracted wasn't done by Brody and as a result, owner of the building wasn't happy and Downtown Association painted out the mural. Brody's voice says that the owner of the building had seen the work in progress all through the week, but told a bit prior to finishing that the work was unacceptable and would have to be changed or it would be painted out. Brody refused the request.

8:00 Karen asks Davis that even if the mural Brody painted was different from the sketch but still an acceptable work of art, why paint it out. Davis says that there was no quarrel about the piece's artistic value but the property owner didn't like it and he has the final say-so. Also, Brody didn't fulfill his contract as it was first submitted.

Karen mentions that Bill maintains that he did do the painting and the owner of the building came around it often and seemed quite happy with it. Davis tells that he agrees that the rendering and the painting have no similarity with each other. Karen clarifies that the whole argument was that the painting wasn't the same that was agreed upon, and Davis confirms.

Karen asks if Davis thinks that the beautification project of downtown has enhanced the area, and he says that he thinks it was a good idea. Karen then asks if he would do it again, and he says that he would but he would "get stuff on paper this time." [Laughter.] [End of the segment.]

10:53 Karen's reports about a conflict between buffalo owners and farmers in Delta Junction. An upcoming military exercise at Fort Greely may encourage buffalo at Delta Junction to migrate towards unharvested grain fields, in which case the farmers threaten to shoot them.

According to a farmer, buffalo damage comes from trampling rather than from eating the grain. The farmers are in midst of the harvest and a good weather has bought them more time but now the buffalo are threatening the crops.

Karen continues that according to Glenn Breckler [sp?] who is a public information officer at Fort Greeley, the representatives from BLM, Fish and Game, and the Army have formed a working committee to solve the issue. They don't have a solution yet, but Breckler promised to let Karen know when they have one.

12:18 Karen says that in June, the Department of Fish and Game planted 5 15-acre barley fields that were designed to attract and hold the buffalo herds so farmers can complete their harvest, but the farmers are still worried.

For now, the bison are on south side of Tanana River and there's only one buffalo in Delta area according to a flyover survey. One farmer has a device that blasts out shotgun sounding sounds periodically, and that has kept buffalos away for now but he is worried that the buffalo will become accustomed to the sound.

Some other farmers believe that it's their responsibility to keep the bison out.

Breckler reports that the military exercises are going to go on as scheduled and so far there have been no problems with the buffalo. [End of the segment.]

13:50 [The same news piece runs again.]

16:44 A woman's voice [Mary Shields] muses about the beginning of winter (she's a musher), talking about fall and the onset of the winter.

19:39 Karen's voice says that John McMillian who is the chairman of the Northwest Alaskan Pipeline Company has sent letters to President [Jimmy] Carter and Governor Hammond but their contents couldn't be disclosed at the time of the recording. The public affairs specialist, Catherine Kelly [sp?], said that the summary that was released by governor's office misrepresented the facts and that they weren't abandoning the possibility of financial participation by the state.

Fairbanks representative, Charlie Parr, feels that the state should investigate alternatives to the present relationship with Northwest and that the relationship has been affected by McMillian's letter. Karen says she did a phone interview with Parr.

Parr's voice says that they have asked for in-state use of gas and the citizens of the state are behind that. If they can't get that, they would question whether they want a pipeline at all. It's theoretically possible for the federal government to build a line despite of people's objections but it would be difficult because a part of the pipeline is going over state land and the state has possibility of making things much more difficult.

21:23 Karen says that McMillian sent the letter because he's upset that the state hasn't offered financial help for the Alaska Highway Natural Gas line. Parr says that they set the bonding authority and that they asked "them" to come back and tell them "these things" and then "the bonds could go," but that hasn't happened. For example, they said that they wanted an agreement that the gas pipeline would use Alaskan hires as much as possible but they haven't seen that agreement. Secondly, they wanted them to use Alaskan contractors and have a right to take their gas off at mutually agreed upon points which would probably be in Fairbanks area. State has the right to demand those things in return for "putting down" 1.5 million dollars.

Karen wonders if the action that McMillian has taken has irreparably damaged the relationship between his company and the state. Parr says that in politics, it's not wise to stop dealing with someone. They are more likely to [unclear].

23:07 Most of the people believe that a gas pipeline should go under certain conditions and the conditions are ones that protect Alaska. They don't really hear [unclear] Northwest [unclear]. He says he doesn't know what kind of a game McMillian is playing and that maybe, instead of state putting 1.5 billion into the pipeline as McMillian wants, they should make it into 2 billion and build their own conditioning plant. It's a strong statement but McMillian wants to put them into bonds loan and equity, leaving them to being minority stockholders.

If they used some surplus money from their reports and built a conditioning plant that they would own, everybody would have to deal with them. Fergus or Northwest wouldn't like that idea. Nevertheless, Parr says that he thinks more and more that that's the way to go. [End of the segment.]

24:27 Karen narrates an introduction to an interview Gordon Philips, trainmaster for Alaska Railroad who was speaking in Fairbanks Environmental Center. Karen asks Philips what a trainmaster is. He tells that his job title is actually trainmaster and road foreman of engines. That means that he supervises trainmen and enginemen on the Alaska Railroad. They train them to do their jobs. Philips conducts the school for locomotive engineers. They recently finished a class of 7 people and Philips has trained total of 34 people since he's been in his job.

Karen asks if numbers are increasing or decreasing. Philips says that during the pipeline years, they naturally trained more people and now they are averaging to 5 people every 2-3 years. Philips himself is a locomotive engineer [by training] and he was also a trainman when he first came "here" [in Alaska.] He has worked all the positions. They train all the conductors and some other personnel themselves.

26:12 Karen asks how Philips became a train master. He tells that it was probably because he likes to train people and he had some experience in the air force as an instructor. Karen says he's also doing PR for the railroad, and Philips says that he enjoys that aspect of the job. He is also the sales representative for the Alaska Railroad [laughter from Karen]. He calls on customers for the sales department in Fairbanks when he's in Fairbanks once a week on average.

Karen asks if sales are up or down. Philips says they are down right now but Alaska's economy is down in general which affects the railroad too.

Karen asks what encourages people to use trains. Philips says that the only encouragement he gives to people is that when they come to Alaska without automobile, they can travel more cheaply and more comfortably on train between Anchorage and Fairbanks. He can also see more than by air, train is cheaper, and saves energy.

Karen asks if that's bringing in more customers, and Philips says that they are up to 28% from the next highest year in the railroad's history. If the energy situation stays as it has been, Philips thinks that their situation is getting even better. [Karen ends the segment.]

[End of the recording.]