Purpose of Meeting: To discuss an initial draft of a set of evaluation criteria which will be used by ISER to evaluate alternative utility management structures under study tasks K, L, and M.

The Initial Draft Criteria are Posted Separately on the OMM Project Website.

Persons Present: Steve Colt, Scott Goldsmith, Sharman Haley, Mary Killorin, Amy Wiita (ISER); Sheila Selkregg, Jill Smythe (USDA Rural Development); Pat Poland, Scott Ruby (DCED); Joel Neimeyer (Denali Commission); Mark Foster (consultant to ISER); Hart Hodges (Northern Economics).

Scott Goldsmith said that putting the list of measurable criteria by which to evaluate operations, maintenance and management systems for rural utilities proved to be a challenging task. He noted that some criteria were accompanied by question marks and, in some cases, by vacant slots. The overall philosophy in putting the document together pretty much followed the scheme written on the blackboard by Sharman Haley (goals ➝ objectives ➝ criteria ➝ measures).

Scott Goldsmith said that general considerations that he took into account when developing the criteria and measures are the following: They should be quantitative, measurable, specifically related to goals, and should be applicable to different types of utilities and communities and to utilities with widely varying operating and management circumstances and characteristics. When thinking about goals, different stakeholders may interpret the goals differently. The criteria need to be sensitive to that. They also need to be general so that they can be useful to different stakeholders who come at the evaluation process from different perspectives. In addition, they need to be simple to understand and limited in number.

Scott Goldsmith said that there is a need to start with broad goals, and to then convert them into specific objectives that are measurable. Criteria and measures are designed to measure progress toward meeting those objectives.

Scott Goldsmith said that based on information already pulled together, he identified four broad goals that utilities might pursue. They are: 1) Provide an appropriate level and quality of service; 2) Minimize the cost of service delivery; 3) Maximize community control; and 4) Enhance community sustainability. The next task was to identify lists of [potentially] measurable objectives that could be related to each goal and to identify performance measures that could be used to measure progress toward each objective. There, Scott said that he ran into a problem. In order to move forward, he felt that he needed to lay out some statements that he thought the group could agree on as being appropriate. For example, under Goal 2, - minimize the cost of service delivery - what do we mean by cost? Scott said that as he began to lay out the objectives, it occurred to him that more meat was needed on the notion of cost, to define it a bit more, before he could come up with measurable objectives. Hence, he has listed some principles that can inform the method by which one calculates cost. There may be differences of opinion about how one defines cost, but there needs to be some common understanding of what the costs are. The general principles are: 1) the idea of opportunity costs (ie, having more of anything usually means having less of something else), 2) the idea of life cycle costs (ie, both capital costs and operating costs are important) and 3) the idea of internalizing externalities (ie,
utilities must not foist off costs onto other entities without someone taking proper account of those costs when determining what the total actual costs really are). Scott said that he tried to structure the objectives and criteria in such a way that stakeholders and communities with different emphases on the various objectives would still use them in their evaluations.

Scott posed three questions to the group – general reactions; reactions to the statements of the various goals; and reactions to the general approach taken.

Sheila Selkregg said she thought that the methodology was a good one and that the criteria represented a really good first cut in terms of breaking the tasks down. She said that a lot of time should be spent on agreeing on the correct goals and capturing the right intent. She said that she did not quite understand who the measures were for - the community to see how it is doing, or the State to see how communities are doing. In other words, who is the audience? She said that the measures could be valuable for the community, but the State might use the measures for completely different purposes.

Scott Goldsmith said that his idea when he wrote the measures was that they could be used by anyone conducting an evaluation of the utility – customers, management, the utility, the state or federal governments, or any other entity.

Sheila Selkregg said she was confused by the part of the draft document that discussed “weighting” – how different groups might place different weights on the different goals or on the specific objectives within a goal.

Scott Goldsmith offered an example to try to clarify what he meant by weighting. He referred to the fourth goal (enhance community sustainability) and one of the objectives - develop local human capital. The criterion for that objective - number of residents employed - can be measured. The criterion could be assigned a lot of weight or no weight, i.e., some people might think it was very important that lots of residents be employed, while others might see many employees as a source of inefficiency that could lead to higher rates for struggling local businesses, or threaten the long-run viability of the utility itself. The information can be evaluated in different ways, depending on the user.

Steve Colt said that in his view there are two broad ways the criteria could be used. First, to conduct a prospective evaluation of different utility management structures, which is a clear and fundamental goal of the current study process. And, second, as tracking measures to see how we are doing. He referred to discussions like this in the sanitation area which too place back in 1993-94. Since then, agencies have started to move slowly down the road of developing pilot projects. The tracking of pilot projects has proved to be very useful. The question is, how much effort do we want to put into developing criteria for tracking because a decision may be made to go into a pilot project mode as one of the next steps following the current study. Steve said he thought that tracking could be very useful after next March when the present study is completed. However, first and foremost, the criteria have to be useful for a prospective evaluation. Steve said he thought that developing usable tracking measures would be more work, but said he thought it was worth the effort, within reason.

Scott Goldsmith asked Steve Colt how he saw the two ways as being different.

Steve Colt said some things could only be done as part of an annual audit, e.g. collection rates, number and duration of power outages. Such things can't be done in a prospective, single study - they are tracking measures.

Sheila Selkregg agreed both are worth doing and said she was comfortable with that.
**Pat Poland** said it is important to gain consensus for the goal statements and some of the initial statements. He said that lot of data would be collected but he was concerned that it might not be the right data. For example, using the criterion of number of residents employed for the development of local human capital, does not address the issue of worker quality (training and skill development). Yet, this is an issue in village Alaska. A village may see the criterion of just employment, not competent performance. Similarly, there are many different perspectives for Goal 3, maximizing community control. Community control is not necessarily the same thing as ownership. In terms of an appropriate level and quality of performance, part of the issue is what portion of a community's resources is going towards utility services. Utilities are generally considered to be critical services.

**Hart Hodges** asked “what is success”. He said that this may need to first be defined.

**Scott Goldsmith** said he was thinking holistically from the perspective of utilities already in existence and their operational mode. What goals, objectives and criteria should be applied to an operating utility that would work both for their current operations and future changes (investment, management scheme, etc.)? In response to Pat Poland’s comments, Scott said that one has to start somewhere. One can either start with the level of service wanted and how it can be obtained at minimum cost OR how much does an entity you have to spend and how much service can be obtained for that amount. When thinking about coming up with a series of goals and objectives, he approached the subject by asking how much service is wanted and tried to minimize the level of cost for that service.

**Steve Colt** said he felt that the study process (as determined by the Steering Committee group over the past year) wanted to consider appropriate levels of service and then to address minimizing the costs of achieving those levels. Hence, He said, Scott is following a direction that is fairly clearly established.

**Pat Poland** said that there is an interdependence among organizations and services in village Alaska. We have a habit of looking only at the different pieces. The look for this study has to be in the context of the larger community and its limited resource base. There is never enough of anything in village Alaska.

**Sheila Selkregg** said there were two questions, methodology and content. She said she was comfortable with the methodology, but was undecided on content. She added that the content was not necessarily wrong, but it was incomplete. She said that she would like to put the mission statement back on the table and that cultural community realities needed to be incorporated.

**Scott Goldsmith** said he would like to finish going through the methodology before jumping into the content. He said that he had a hard time putting some of the ideas into the appropriate slot, so that some content areas might be present in the draft document but not in the places where people expected to find them.

**Sheila Selkregg** asked that Study Statement of Purpose be handed out.

**Joel Neimeyer** said that there is a need to focus on the community. Agencies look at utility management and ways of improving it. Community management may be a disincentive. Need to make sure that the goals are correct. The methodology is fine - good tool for analysis. Agree that in arriving at definitions of goals, need to use the work plan, mission statement and statement of work and review our purpose.
Scott Goldsmith continued through the body of his work. Under Goal 1. Provide an appropriate level and quality of service, Scott noted that the term “appropriate” is squishy. He said that the reason for this is that there are constraints imposed on utilities operations from outside as well as inside the community. In order to move forward and meet the objectives of this goal, there has to be acceptance of some set of standards against which the operation of the utility can be measured. A combination of internal and external standards is a reality of life for utilities, regardless of where they are located.

Scott Goldsmith continued. The objectives and criteria under Goal 1 follow fairly straightforwardly. He noted that this is pretty much of a technical goal. The first objective, to maintain appropriate internal operational standards, comes with a subset of objectives and criteria that determine the efficient operation of a utility, whatever that operational level is. These are standard industry measures of operational efficiency. Perhaps the best example is the question of whether the plant is maintained according to manufacturer standards (e.g. change oil every X hours).

The second objective, providing an appropriate service level, addresses questions such as the following: is the utility operating at the number of hours per day that it has determined is appropriate? The third objective, to provide reliable service, can be measured by number of unanticipated service interruptions. The provision of consistent service objective, e.g. voltage levels, addresses operational quality of service issues. Then there is a set of objectives that relate to health, environment and safety issues. Utility operations want to minimize these. In addition, Scott said that he put in several objectives relating to maintenance resources available to a utility. In a large community, the availability of resources to run the utility efficiently can be taken for granted, but this may or may not be true for smaller utilities. Scott identified three objectives in particular - technical resources, administrative and managerial resources, and resources to deal with all types of contingencies (plant burns down, leak in fuel line, etc). To summarize, the objectives under Goal 1 can be divided into four categories - operational standards, service delivery standards, health and safety standards, and availability of resources. These objectives are independent of any specific level or quality of service.

Scott Goldsmith said that once the appropriate level of service is identified, one then comes to the objective of minimizing the cost of service delivery. To determine costs of service delivery, three important characteristics that need to be agreed upon, i.e. true opportunity cost would be used as the measure to guide resource allocation decisions, total life cycle cost ... (Scott was interrupted here to allow Sharman Haley to make her comments before she had to leave).

Sharman Haley said she agreed with an initial focus on the goals issue. However, a goal that should be present on the list is the political and administrative feasibility of any management arrangement. She added that she did not see Goal 3 - maximize community control - as high order goal. Instead, she sees it as a factor that helps determine what the appropriate level of service is. Ownership and buy-in contributes to minimizing the cost of service delivery and service sustainability and is a major factor in political administrative feasibility. The subject (community control) needs to appear somewhere, but she does not think it should be an independent goal. Instead, she would put it as a principle in every category. She gave the following examples. When people take ownership of a system, they are willing to be more careful in turning on heat tapes and therefore less likely to freeze up. Or, they are more likely to pay their bills on time when they have been involved in the decision making.

Pat Poland questioned the wording of “community control” but decided to postpone Wordsmithing efforts until later.
Sharman Haley said that customer satisfaction needs to be included somewhere. In Goal 1, the “acceptable level of service” concept should be included. Is a flush haul system acceptable or does everyone need piped systems? There is a need to distinguish this from regulatory standards and other good management objectives.

Sharman’s third comment was that measurements should not be restricted to quantitative measures. Many things need to be measured qualitatively. A lot of information will be lost if everything is measured quantitatively.

Scott Goldsmith said the way he thought about it was that if the community has control, it would be able to establish the standards it wants for service delivery, and will then be able to respond to the criteria for appropriate service level.

Sharman Haley said that data collection in rural Alaska is a formidable challenge. She said that she does not want to discourage people, but it needs to be recognized that it will be difficult.

Scott Goldsmith said he did not assume that anyone would be going out to rural areas to collect any of the information. This is more an exercise about what types of information are important.

Sheila Selkregg asked Steve Colt to explain the role of the criteria.

Steve Colt said for the current study, the primary purpose of having these criteria is to give us something we can apply to the list of potentially different maintenance and management structures. (Tasks K and M). The idea was to establish some filter or set of hurdles to pass the various alternatives by or through in a structured way. This list was very difficult for Scott to put together. If it is used in the richness that Scott has presented, it can be potentially also be usable for tracking (i.e. beyond the scope of this study).

Sheila Selkregg agreed that criteria could be useful in the future.

Steve Colt said it could be very useful to take the criteria used in coming up with rankings, policy options, etc. and be able to roll them forward into a demonstration or pilot project mode.

Sharman Haley agreed that it would have been very helpful if recent sanitation pilot projects had been conducted with a list of criteria -- such as are now being proposed – in place from the start of the project.

Sheila Selkregg said she was concerned about assumptions incorporated into the various criteria. What is considered good or productive sidesteps some of the issues with communities marching to a different drummer. The criteria should not determine solutions. Standard approaches of operations and maintenance have not been complete tools.

Scott Goldsmith asked for concrete examples of where objectives would be constraints.

Steve Colt said that we could live with somewhat incompatible goals. Management options can be filtered in terms of how they meet or do not meet any one of the goals. For example, a regionwide cooperative may be effective in providing standardized service but may not meet the goal of maximum community control.

Scott Goldsmith said that the goals are consistent. He said he could not think of any instance where a utility would not want to provide an appropriate level of service. He said he tried to list the objectives so they would be consistent with those goals for any utility. Where the controversy comes in (e.g. federal government vs. the community or the people running the
utility vs. the village corporation) is what criteria should be used to measure the objective or how much weight should be given to it. There could be some trade-offs in terms of how much weight should be given to meeting the various objectives, e.g. the weight given to local employment vs. efficient operation of the utility. Both are objectives that the utility would like to meet.

*Steve Colt* said he did not intend to apply the weights to come up with some final ranking. He said he could live comfortably with multiple goals and hopes to be very forthright about articulating where the goals may be in conflict.

*Sheila Selkregg* said that Sharman Haley's addition of political and administrative feasibility should be included as an additional goal.

*Scott Goldsmith* continued. Goal 3 (maximize community control) may not be a goal in and of itself but more of a means to attaining a goal. However, it has been characterized as a goal in terms of the study. If it is eliminated as a stand-alone goal, it needs to be incorporated into the other three. Scott said that the phrasing of “maximizing community control” was used thoughtfully. Ownership does not really mean ownership in the sense of paying the bills, etc. Control does not mean ownership either, but it means that the community is in control. The idea behind community control is that if the community is in control of the utility, it can basically decide what level of service the utility provides. It can also decide how the utility organizes its operation to provide that service. In addition, it can decide what the utility takes into account in providing that service in terms of what is culturally, environmentally, etc. appropriate. The idea goes beyond culture. The principle is pretty simple, especially since it is likely that having a sense of ownership leads to service that is cost effective and responsive to community needs, be they cultural, economic, etc. Unfortunately, measurable objectives for this goal are more difficult to achieve. There are four objectives listed under Goal 3. They are weighted in the direction of making it clear who has the authority, responsibility and ownership; what is going on; and who is in charge. Who runs the show, whose job is it to fix things, who is responsible for bills not being paid, and who decides on policy decisions? Finally in terms of being able to make policy decisions for the community, it is important that those decisions be laid out - some process beyond decision making - who will end up paying more for electricity, etc.

Scott Goldsmith continued on to Goal 4, enhance community sustainability. The idea here is that a utility is a special entity within a community. Its role goes beyond that of merely providing a service, especially in smaller communities. It is one of the glues that can hold a community together. It is an entity that musters resources and is also a source of resources for the community, both to potentially assist in economic development and to provide opportunities for the development of other community resources, e.g. labor, etc. Objectives under this goal include sharing the resources of the utility with other community entities. Those resources could be management, technical resources, or heavy equipment. Being responsive to opportunities and constraints is a similar idea but is being looked at more strategically. For example, under the objective of “allocation of costs consistent with community development,” the idea here is the rates charged to various customers by a utility are driven by how the utility's costs are allocated and can influence community wellbeing. The fourth objective is contributing to the economic base of a community, e.g. how much money does the utility spend on local purchases. The final objective, development of local human capital, involves going beyond a utility's own needs.

*Steve Colt* asked for Hart Hodges' comments because Hart had to leave.

Hart Hodges said he tried to write up his response to the draft criteria to evaluate operations, maintenance and management systems, but failed. He said he did not have many specific concerns. Goals can differ but, depending on the subject, the customer could have one perspective, agencies another, and utilities yet another. Northern Economics is working on the
companion rural energy study. There is not a review group for that effort similar to the one gathered today. Furthermore, there will not be one until after the screening analysis is completed. (Looking at costs / savings for more efficient diesel generators, etc.) In terms of political and administrative feasibility, the companion study is looking at the subject from a different perspective.

Sheila Selkregg commented that the two projects are related. Work from this effort will be provided to the other. It would be nice to integrate the work.

Hart Hodges said that items such as hours of operation, etc. were valid considerations. Once his group has completed the screening analysis, then it will get into technical support group mode. (This function is currently limited to Dick Emerman at the Alaska Energy Authority).

Sheila Selkregg said that the list of goals have been written as part of the Sponsors’ Statement of Purpose. A lot of time and energy and review went into their development. It is possible to take the principles and objectives and apply them to the goals put together by Scott Goldsmith. There is a need to tie them back to the goals of the study, although they do not necessarily have to be exactly the same. Sheila noted that none of the goals listed under the criteria to evaluate operations, maintenance and management systems for rural utilities even referenced the words “sustainable community”.

Steve Colt said that this link (between efficient utilities and sustainable communities) has been validated at many levels.

Sheila Selkregg said it is not necessarily a core goal of the operation, maintenance and management work. It is a step by step process that needs to be tied to identified up-front goals. Principles identified can fall under those goals. The right things are the measurements a but tie-in needs to be clarified.

Scott Goldsmith said the thing in writing goals is to ask what is a community for in its utilities – efficient service delivery, to be a dynamic part of the utility beyond the service, or to be a means of self-fulfillment (taking control). The goals of a utility are not necessarily the goals of the study. Element E of the Study Statement of Purpose is to provide a list of service alternatives. The criteria coming out of this exercise would help a community determine E – assessing the various alternatives. Criteria for a successful utility allow that utility to choose among the list of service alternatives, but there is nothing in this set of criteria about coming up with that list.

Sheila Selkregg asked if it is the intent for the communities to evaluate themselves or to deal with evaluating our current incentive structure and whether or not they meet a set of service goals. We need to be able to measure the work in the study in reference to something. That is identified in the objectives but she is not sure if the identified goals in Goldsmith’s draft are the same as specified on the “Sponsors’ Statement of Purpose.”

Steve Colt asked Pat Poland and Joel Neimeyer if they feel the same way. Joel said he did.

Pat Poland said he sees he was not exactly sure how it all fit together. It will help to measure whether we do or do not meet those goals.

Scott Ruby said there is a jump between what is best for the community or for the utility. Community control does not lead to the most efficient operation. For almost every one of the objectives, if the community were running the system, it would mean that the system would be less efficient. Scott added that if he were running a utility, he would not want to donate his equipment for non-utility use on some other community project. It costs the utility money and
the utility would not get reimbursed. The end result is to make the utility less efficient and, perhaps, less sustainable. Under the development of human capital, training for non-utility jobs is a drain. For the community it may be a good deal, but it may make the utility inefficient.

Scott Goldsmith said that it is up to the community to decide if its utility operations are run strictly as a utility. A community may want to take a broader perspective of the utility as a community resource. It can debate which one it should be or will be. The incentive tools should give a community the control to decide what role a utility should have, not as a general welfare operation or strictly as a business.

Pat Poland said that the agencies’ view of an ideal world might be in conflict with the community perspective. To ignore this difference is delusional. The more talk there is about local control, the less comfortable he is. He noted that the Alaska Natives report talks a lot about control, less about responsibility and accountability.

Scott Goldsmith asked how do we resolve this situation. Strings on federal money at one extreme. Local community says it wants more control.

Sheila Selkregg said that there are many subtle incentives, even at the local level.

Scott Goldsmith cited Hart Hodges’ example of different reactions to a proposal to cut a dollar out of everyone’s bill. He said that a set of criteria is needed.

Sheila Selkregg said she does not see the right goals listed. Incentives need to be identified.

Scott Goldsmith asked if these were implicit.

Sheila Selkregg said that was not enough.

Steve Colt said he agreed with the point raised by Pat Poland. He stressed that the criteria to evaluate operations, maintenance and management of rural utilities refer to Tasks L, M, K and H only, i.e. they are part of a larger study process that is much more than ranking and screening. We need to talk about goals and come to a better consensus or higher comfort level, but we can and probably will go forward with incompatible goals and can run different management structures and ideas through this multi-dimensional filter. We do not have to resolve which goal is most important and/or trumps the other goals.

Sheila Selkregg said she did not have a problem with incompatible goals but said they have to reference back to the goals in the Statement of the Purpose, specifically goals B and C. She added that she is comfortable with things identified under the principles, but that the focus does not feel correct.

Scott Goldsmith said that “cost efficient” in Goal B ties to Goal 2. He said that sustainability of a utility is more fundamental than using a utility as a tool for sustainability of the community. The term “reliable” relates directly to Goal 1. Scott articulated the idea that community control would allow “socially appropriate” to emerge, as does community sustainability.

Sheila Selkregg said she wasn’t comfortable with the words.

Scott Goldsmith said that these are the goals that a utility would strive for. It is being proposed that a utility would strive for these goals.
Sheila Selkregg said that there should be a statement to say that the goal of a well operated utility is the purpose of the study.

Steve Colt said he kept hearing the words of Joe Sarcone. He knew that Joe would be defending the goal of community control and sustainability if he were present.

Joel Neimeyer and Scott Ruby both asked why an agency would want to invest in a community with certain philosophies. The example of the cheaper light bulb was again cited.

Mary Killorin asked if each community should fill out the questions so they can recognize and evaluate the consequences of their decisions. Mary also suggested that maybe what Scott had proposed as “goals” could be thought of as “measures.”

Sheila Selkregg agreed that maybe they are measures rather than goals. Measures that any viable community management question can use to evaluate.

Steve Colt added, or an agency.

Pat Poland said that some kind of introduction to measures like that would be appropriate. Utilities are such a critical piece of a community’s future in rural Alaska.

Sheila Selkregg said she had noticed that there is already a de facto threshold for providing services. She cited the example of a community in Bristol Bay with essentially only a summer population that cannot get water and sewer funding. Communities can fall through the cracks.

Jill Smythe pointed out that there are many more different management structures for electric power than water and sewer, possibly because those systems have been around longer and many have already gone through the screening analysis in some informal way.

Steve Colt asked if the group was comfortable about the four measures listed.

Sheila Selkregg said she would like political and administrative feasibility added.

Steve Colt asked what the goal was.

Sheila Selkregg said that certain administrative tools must be in place. For example, do you have a paid city clerk?

Scott Goldsmith referred to adequate administrative and managerial resources already included under Goal 1.

Steve Colt said that adequate administrative and political feasibility may not fit cleanly with the other four measures, but it is clearly a critical subject if we are considering significantly different management structures. It is definitely a measure by which we would want to do some high level thinking about major changes in management structures. For example, changing PCE to a block grant formula would result in a different way of doing business for rural electric utilities. In such a case, political and administrative feasibility would be a paramount consideration.

Scott Goldsmith said it is an important consideration in evaluating alternatives, but wonders how is it a goal?

Steve Colt and Sheila Selkregg said it is not a goal, but a measure.
Steve Colt suggested a hypothetical example. It might be administratively feasible to have centralized billing and accounting for ten villages close to Bethel, but not for 20 villages surrounding Tanana.

Sheila Selkregg said that these measures are for a community to evaluate and consider in running a good utility. They are also a measure against which we will evaluate proposed new policies in supporting new utility structures.

Scott Goldsmith said he can see its importance but does not see how it will fit into the structure he has developed. He sees it as an addition that is totally external to a particular utility.

Sheila Selkregg said she was talking about local structures.

Steve Colt offered another example: It might be politically feasible to move a utility into non-profit management (eg, Tuntutuliak) but not feasible in others.

Scott Goldsmith commented that a utility can’t change the political climate.

Scott Ruby suggested changing the title of Goal 3 to Level of Community Control. He noted that we are talking about utility management. Locals determine who will run the utility.

Sheila Selkregg said there were a lot of questions a utility needed to ask. She said that she was interested in having Sharman Haley looking at the subject further and adding items under her list. Sheila added that Joe Sarcone should probably also take a look at the list. Also, Sheila said there was a need to integrate operators and local review.

Scott Goldsmith said that the objective to “be responsive to opportunities and constraints” under Goal 4 was pretty broad. Perhaps what is being talked about could be included there.

Sheila Selkregg said she would like more time to look at the good work here and chew on it in the context of discussions at this meeting.

Amy Wiita referred to Task K - evaluation measures.

Sheila Selkregg asked how the measures will respond to that task.

Steve Colt said that measures would be used for sample villages and for evaluating major structural changes (Task M). He noted that there is a steering committee meeting scheduled for September 7. The question to be answered now is whether we want to aim for one iteration and discussion at the next SC meeting or, instead, to aim for ratification at the September 7 meeting. He added that if we aim for ratification today, particularly in view of the absence of Joe Sarcone and Mike Black, we would probably be getting ahead of ourselves. Scott Goldsmith has given a critical initial boost to the work, but we should aim for a more focused consensus. Then ISER can go back and finalize this piece of the work.

Sheila Selkregg said she would like to have rural participants present at the September meeting. She added that she had recently met a contact in Nome who would be a good addition. She will get his name.

Steve Colt asked if Sheila could return from the Southeast Conference one day early, the 21st of September would work a lot better than the 7th. Sheila said she would check her schedule. [The 21st of September has since been confirmed as the next Steering Committee meeting date.]
Steve Colt said that the next step is for people to send him their written, verbal or other comments. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 21, 2000, pending Sheila Selkregg’s availability.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.