Old Harbor to Benefit from Military Construction Training

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A new runway in Old Harbor should prove to be a win-win situation for both the village residents and federal government. The runway will allow larger planes to access the village, and provide crucial training for the U.S. military.

Fred Brooks is the tribal administrator for the Old Harbor Tribal Council and said the construction qualifies for the Innovative Readiness Training Program through the Department of Defense.

-- (OH Runway 1 : 32 "And what they do is they bring in their troops, in this case the Marines and the Army for training in development of a runway for when the get deployed to another country or a third party areas that they don't have the supplies there ready or an airport and they'll be trained and ready because they'll have to do that here in the rural area. They'll have to bring in their supplies, they'll have to logistically put things together to accommodate that and bring in the equipment. So it's a massive training program that we are working with that we are working with the military, and they'll provide the labor.")

He said that labor will be free to the village. Cynthia Lopez is the vice president of corporate affairs for the Old Harbor Native Corporation and said the project is funded through the legislature.

-- (OH Runway 2 : 25 "The funding is through the state of Alaska through the city of Old Harbor. And they received $4.5 million this last session to take care of all the engineering, design, permitting and to start the project in taking off all the over burden and take care of all the drilling and blasting so that the IRT will come and do the bulk of the rock movement.")

Lopez said the project will take place in two phases, the first phase is taking place this right now, and the second phase, the one involving the IRT, will take place next summer. She said the entire project has been a collaboration of many different entities.

-- (OH Runway 3 : 30 "It's a project that our community is working collaboratively on. Our city tribe and our village corporation with the state of Alaska and department of transportation, as well as the federal government with IRT participating. It's something that wouldn't be possible without the collaboration of all entities participating and we're ve3ry thankful that we can all come together and work on this project for all our residents and visitors alike as well as provide a training opportunity for reservists in the military.")

She said the project is under budget so far, and should be completed by fall 2013. ###