

# NANA to require drug tests for all employees

## Meeting in May

by Soren Wuerth

for the Tundra Times

About 460 NANA Regional Corp. job positions will likely fall under much stricter scrutiny for drug use violations next year, according to Sarah Scanlan, NANA's vice president of Human Resources.

Most of the jobs in NANA's Kotzebue offices — including its museum, hotel and tour operation — and many of NANA's administrative positions will fall under similar drug testing policies that already exist in the corporation's security and development companies, if the board approves the procedures at its May meeting.

The tougher standards that the board will vote on are as follows:

- Testing employees who apply for promotions.
- Screening newly hired workers.
- Testing employees who are thought to be using drugs during their job.
- Voluntary drug tests for current employees.

Pre-hire screening and random testing currently apply to about 340 employees at Red Dog Mine, Purcell Services, Alaska United Drilling and NANA-Coates Diamond Drilling.

# • Test to enhance productivity

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"NANA's board of directors and staff have seen the devastating effect drug and alcohol abuse have had on Natives in the state," Scanlan said. "We want to let people know we aren't going to tolerate these abuses with our own employees."

Though the new drug testing policy has not been formally adopted by the board, it appears almost certain that it will be approved at the May meeting, said Scanlan.

"The board has mandated in the past that we strengthen our drug testing standards," Scanlan said. "We don't anticipate the board having any problems with passing the recommendations."

Scanlan said all NANA's senior staff officers have undergone drug testing.

The corporation's decision came after Alaska's voters chose in November to make the possession of marijuana a crime, Scanlan said.

The NANA subsidiaries that already have drug testing policies have them

for security reasons, said one employee.

"If you were a person being hired (for Purcell Services — a guard security service owned by NANA), you would know that you would be drug tested in advance," said Daren Beals, a dispatcher for Purcell. "I've worked for other companies that didn't drug test and some of the people I worked with I wouldn't trust."

Beal said he knew of only one Purcell employee who was fired in a drug-related incident.

The cost of implementing a drug testing program for NANA's 460 employees will be high, Scanlan said.

"The cost is going to be a factor," she said. "But there will be a payoff in terms of people's productivity."

"We'd rather spend money on testing than have them go off and wreck their lives and not be good employees."

Scanlan said, however, that the corporation will likely give consideration to current employees' grandfather rights before asking them to submit to testing.