

Eight Natives chosen as city interns

by Steve Pilkington

for the Tundra Times

The Municipality of Anchorage recently selected seven Alaska Natives — from among 40 applicants — to work as interns in the city's Public Service Internship Program.

"This is a perfect match," said Michelle Meyer, an intern assigned to the municipality's Public Works Dept.

"I love what I'm doing."

Others selected include Kathy Anderson, Christine Charles, Candyce Henkelman, Diane Tigges, Yolanda Nelson and Charmaine Ramos.

The applicants had to be Alaska Natives, at least 20 years old and have at least an associate degree.

This will be the second year the interns have worked for the city in the program.

"Back in 1984 when the mayor reviewed the various ethnic groups employed by the municipality, he wasn't pleased with the number of Alaska Natives employed," said Bob Miller, communications director for the Mayor Tony Knowles.

"So the mayor decided on an internship program designed to train and

(Continued on Page Fourteen)

• Mayor considers program successful

(Continued from Page One)

better prepare Natives to enter the public service work force," he added.

The purpose of the program is to:

- Provide managerial level training for the interns while they are employed by various agencies within city government.

- Improve the interns' ability to qualify for a position in the public or private sector.

- Prepare the interns for employment in municipal services.

"The mayor considers this program very successful," Miller said. "It's certainly got a record of success as far as we're concerned."

The program began in July 1986. City officials decided on an intern program as opposed to a recruiting program, which would have had less value at a time of budget cuts and layoffs.

So far, one intern has applied for and been accepted for a job in the municipality system. Gwen Anagick, an intern at Anchorage Water & Wastewater is now a grant accountant in the city's finance department.

According to Miller, each intern's salary is \$25,300 a year. The total cost of the program is about \$200,000.

The program is now set to end Dec. 31, the end of Knowles' term.

The fiscal situation may be the big-

gest barrier for employment of the new interns, according to Frank Austin, director of the Employee Relations Department.

"Everything we do is designed to enhance employability," he said. "Legislative and administrative responsibilities are utmost in our program."

If funding for the program continues, there will possibly be more internships available for next year.

"We're going to make or break the continuation of the program," said Ramos, a Tlingit from Yakutat and the intern at the offices of the mayor and municipal managers.

"Mentally, I'm different, and I have more self-confidence," she added.

"The program is a definitely a challenging opportunity," said Henkelman, who is working in the Municipal Light & Power Dept.

The interns said they were particularly pleased with their assignments because they got a wide variety of experience.

For example, intern Kathy Anderson, assigned to the Anchorage Police Dept. and a certified patrol car driver, said she was allowed to take part in raids and the issuing of warrants, as well as management decisions.

The interns met recently with Austin; Reyn Bowman, director of the Department of Economic Development; and Marian Kowacki, the intern program coordinator, to discuss



Interns include, from left, Christine Charles, Diane Tigges, Candyce Henkelman, Kathy Anderson, Michelle Meyer and Charmaine Ramos. Not shown is Yolanda Nelson, who took the picture.

economic development and how to handle situations in a depressed economy.

The interns will periodically attend regular assembly meetings, assembly work sessions, the Mayor's Policy Committee and board or commission meetings, in addition to taking mid-management courses.