

# Native sovereignty task force appointed

by Linda Lord-Jenkins  
Tundra Times

A long-awaited task force to research the issues of Native sovereignty in Alaska includes well-known Native Leader Emil Notti at its head, two other well known Native leaders and three urban Anchorage legislators. Notti is Commissioner of Community and Regional Affairs.

The task force appointed

by Gov. Bill Sheffield will investigate the issues surrounding the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act and how that act applies to Alaska.

"The issues surrounding the IRA and federal/state tribal relations are not new to Alaska," said Sheffield in a press release.

"Since the passage of the act 50 years ago, IRA councils have been with us and we have been working with them in one

way or another.

"I think we will find that some of the issues raised within the context of Native sovereignty can be resolved through improved communications between IRA or traditional council and the state and federal government.

"We also can work to improve the delivery of services to rural communities. The organization of this task force is a

good starting point to begin to identify the questions surrounding Native sovereignty issues in Alaska, to reach a common understanding on these issues, and to provide for on-going cooperation and coordination in addressing these issues," said Sheffield.

In addition to Nottie who was first president of the Alaska Federation of Native, Inc., the task force has a members John

Hope, president of the Tlingit Haida Central Council; Willie Goodwin of Kotzebue, chairman of the United Tribes of Alaska; Gary Ricketts, village administrator of the village of Nicolai; Agnes Brown, president of the Statewide ANCSA Native Village Association; and State Rep. Tony Vaska of Bethel.

Urban legislators include Rep. Ramona Barnes, and Sen. Jan  
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# Task force

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Faiks of Anchorage and Sen. Rick Halford of Chugiak. Barnes was one of the most outspoken critics of the subsistence law in 1982.

Sandra Borbridge, Sheffield's rural affairs assistant and Timothy BeAsis, director of Native Services for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, round out the list. Press aide Pete Spivey said that a twelfth member may be appointed by Interior Secretary William Clark.

Spivey said Barnes and Faiks were "two of the most powerful legislators we have. He said that he didn't know if they were knowledgable in the area of sovereignty but added "maybe they will be when they are done if they aren't already. He said that the legislators were appointed by the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate.

Nottie said no date has been set for the first meeting nor has a timetable been established. Sheffield has given no formal "charge" other than to look into the issue. Notti acknowledged that is a broad task because there are few areas of the state that aren't effected by the question.

He didn't anticipate a completion to the job in less than one year.

He said that public hearings are probably going to be conducted. "I think that at some point we have to have public input because this involves a lot of interested groups."