

Calista Sheraton hotel is go again

BY MARGIE BAUMAN

Construction has resumed on the Calista Corporation's multi-million dollar Sheraton Anchorage Hotel, boosted by \$19.5 million in interim construction financing by a California firm.

"It's going to be the best hotel in town," Calista President Oscar Kawagley told the Tundra Times Tuesday, "and we should be open by August of 1979, maybe sooner. It should take about 14 months to complete, but there are indications that it might be prior to that, maybe as early as June."

Calista signed the financing package with Crocker National Bank of San Francisco early on the morning of June 2 in Anchorage, while other representatives for Calista, Crocker, Sheraton and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Baugh Construction signed other papers in the financing package on the east and west coasts.

General contractor Gary Baugh resumed work on the 15-story structure three days later at the corners of Fifth and Denali streets in Anchorage.

"We are very happy about the closing," said David Colton, Crocker vice president. "We have worked on it for two years and we think it will be a strong addition to Anchorage and a worthwhile investment for Calista."

"We have financed a number of hotels throughout the country and I believe this hotel has an excellent combination which includes a corporation that is committed to its success, a good

general contractor and the Sheraton, which I consider ranks with one of the best hotels in the country. We are confident it will be successful," Colton said.

Kawagley, who was a schoolteacher in Tok, Glennallen and Anchorage for 11 years before joining Calista, said he was pleased with the financing agreement. He was also quite pleased with the management contract with Sheraton, which includes a training program for up to a dozen Calista shareholders for secondary supervisory positions at the hotel. "And we'll have a short training program for any Native people for basic level employment positions," he said. "We've taken in a number of applications already."

"We'll be recruiting sometime around October or November and training probably won't start until January or February, 1979, with approximately 15 weeks of training in Sheraton hotels in the Pacific Northwest. We did try to do it locally, but because of their particular training program we couldn't," Kawagley said.

Ethnic Motif

Kawagley is confident about the future of the Sheraton Anchorage because he said it will have a personality all its own. "The motif is going to represent all the Alaskan ethnic groups," he said. "The other hotels just don't have anything like that. They're all just the sort of run of the mill thing."

The Sheraton Anchorage will have banquet facilities to seat about 800 people comfortably, but up to 1,000 packed in.