

Berry, JOM Director And Diane Burgin Attend NIEA Meet

Frank Berry, JOM Director, and Diane Burgin, Education Officer, attended the 7th Annual National Indian Education Association Conference held November 6-8 in Oklahoma City.

Mr. Berry reported that the Conference had over 2,000 participants, all of whom were in some way connected with Indian Education.

Various workshops and sessions were held throughout the day dealing with such topics as: Early Childhood Development, Special Education; Bilingual Education; and Education for Incarcerated Indians.

Mr. Berry felt that the Conference had great possibilities, but that there was a lack of coordination and pre-planning in that some important workshops were scheduled for the same time, for example; the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act coinciding with the Johnson O'Malley Act.

Mr. Berry also noted that a number of the participants were discouraged because many of the important speakers did not attend, as indicated on the initial agenda.

An important movement within the NIEA is the development of the student faction. This year for the first time 5 students were elected to the Executive Committee of the NIEA.

A number of other important issues also came to light at the Conference. Most apparent of these was the recognized need for a lobbyist for Indian Education to be located in Washington, D.C.

The over-riding feeling was that the importance of Indian

Education was decreasing in the eyes of the U.S. Government and that funding is becoming more difficult to receive.

A number of Alaskans associated with Indian Education were in attendance, including: Representatives from Tanana Chiefs Conference; Representatives from Southeast; Elaine Ramos, Sheldon Jackson College; Eric Ekvall, Alaska Nativy Foundation; and Representatives from AFN, Inc.

A Pow-Wow was held on the final night of the Conference with 500-600 people in attendance. Various dancers from lower 48 Indian tribes performed for the audience, although there were no Alaskan dancers. Mr. Berry felt it would have added a variety to the performance.