

Census to count every person in state

by Holly F. Reimer

Tundra Times reporter

Staff from the Bureau of Census Anchorage office and census officials from around the United States met in Anchorage recently for a two-day meeting to discuss how the Alaska census staff will try to count every person who lives in the state.

Census staff will work with village corporations, officials and residents and talk about ways to ensure Alaska Native and American Indian participation in the 1990 enumeration.

The Bureau of Census and the Bureau of Indian Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1987 that outlines a common goal so the counting of Alaska Natives and American Indians will be easier.

The BIA will act as the principal agent of the U.S. government in carrying out the government-to-government relationship that exists between the United States and the federally recognized American Indian tribes.

As part of this responsibility, the BIA maintains an active list of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes recognized by the federal government. The BIA also is the federal custodian of records describing the boundaries of American Indian reservations and trust lands.

During the 1990 census, there will be a special emphasis aimed at getting Alaska Natives and American Indians to fill out their census forms, stating which tribe or type of Alaska Native they are, and returning their form to the Census Bureau.

The 1980 census was established with a special emphasis toward black and hispanic participation.

Tom Oxendine, deputy public affairs officer from the bureau's Washington, D.C., office, said it's very important that Alaska Natives and American Indians fill out the census form because federal and local agencies use the census statistics for the

next 10 years to determine how different funding will be distributed fairly.

Oxendine said that the 1990 census will be the 21st in America's history

and will be the largest and most complex of all.

He added that it will cost \$2.6 billion for the 10 year program and \$1 billion in the year 1990 alone.