

Traders on Reservations Probed for Violating Consumer Rights

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce announced that public hearings have been scheduled August 28 and 29 at Window Rock, Ariz., to probe charges that traders on the Navajo Indian Reservation have violated consumers' rights.

A joint investigation currently being concluded by officials of the two agencies has looked into Navajo consumers' complaints of deception, fraud, threats and manipulation.

At the request of Navajo Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald and Dinebeina Nahiilna Be Agaditahe, Inc., (DNA), an OEO-funded legal aid program, the federal agencies moved to conduct pricing surveys and business practice inquiries of more than 100 trading posts on the reservation.

Over one hundred consumer interviews have been completed.

The most common complaints include the withholding of checks, unmarked prices, usurious credit practices, and truth in lending violations.

The hearings will receive testimony from tribal officials, Navajo consumers, D.N.A., economists, BIA officials and traders.

Following the Window Rock hearings, other hearings will be conducted throughout the reservation to permit consumers living in isolated areas to relate their personal experiences with various trading posts.

A principal objective of the investigation is to revise and enforce federal regulation of traders in Indian country.

The Federal Trade Commission's Los Angeles Regional Director, Richard B. Lavine has assigned a substantial part of his staff to the undertaking. The trading post pricing survey has been completed.

It indicates that the trading

posts are charging exceedingly high prices compared to prices at off-reservation stores.

Ernest L. Stevens, the BIA's Director of Economic Development is coordinating the activities of the Navajo Tribe and the Federal agencies involved.

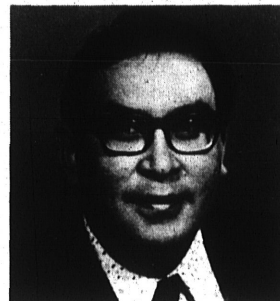
Stevens, an Oneida Indian, has worked closely with Chairman MacDonald since the project's inception in developing alternatives to the trading posts.

MacDonald recently said, in a message to the Navajo Tribal Council, "I do not propose to run non-Navajo traders off the reservation any more than I propose to do without white experts in the construction business."

"We need to learn to have the opportunity to try, and even to make mistakes . . . I call now for a strict enforcement of all those rules and regulations to which traders are subject . . . We must make sure that no owner can continue to exploit the Navajo people."

Testimony will also be taken concerning the difficulties experienced by Navajos with off-reservation new and used car dealers and the lack of dealerships on the reservation.

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Minority Hire

ANCHORAGE - The Governor's Equal Employment Opportunity Committee met in Juneau last week beginning Wednesday. It was announced by Larry Oskolkoff, Chairman of the ten-member Committee.

The EEO Committee is working to establish affirmative action plan to improve the State's minority hire posture on a departmental basis.

The committeemen included: Emil Notte, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services; Robert Willard, Executive Director, Alaska Human Rights Commission; Byron Mallott, Commissioner of the Department of Community and Regional Affairs;

Jon Carter, Executive Director, Alaska Public Employees Association; Calvin Williams, President, Anchorage NAACP; Charlie Mae Moore, from the Juneau Community College; and J. P. Jones, President of Fairbanks NAACP.

The Governor has not yet named the appointees to two vacancies on the Committee.

The plan of action should be completed by late fall or early winter the Chairman said.

Yakutat Project

Senator Ted Stevens announced that the Yakutat water and sewer facilities project has been funded by HEW.

The project called for a construction grant of \$696,535. An additional \$74,866 has been granted to implement the Alaska plan for equal employment opportunity compliance.

The total amount accruing to this project will be \$771,401.

At Humble we've found that when it comes to Alaskan art, it's you - the viewer - who is the real winner. We've found, too, that the pride and beauty of ancient Alaskan art is every bit as exciting as the things happening in Native art now.

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Humble has funded a special grant to the University of Alaska to help with the "Arts Demonstration Tour Project", a vehicle for introducing newer art forms to rural Alaskans and, in turn, to develop among all Alaskans a greater appreciation for the unique aspects of Native arts.

We have often used the editorial resources of our quarterly magazine, "The Humble Way", to present Alaskan art to the world at large and we supported this move with a series of institutional advertisements, designed to show newspaper and magazine readers everywhere the variety and exceptional quality of Alaskan art.

Partly because of these efforts Humble has won recognition here at home. The company was the winner of the 1972 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, presented by the Alaska State Council on the Arts. Nationally, Humble has received recognition from the Business Committee on the Arts.

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