

# Full-Time Legal Services

Thanks to a concerted community effort, Kotzebue now has a full-time Legal Services office. Operating from a quonset hut next door to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Local Services office and across the street from Friend's church, the Legal Services staff will serve the NANA Region and Point Hope.

"For the last two or three years the people of Kotzebue have asked for help in establishing an office," said Loyette Goodell, director of Alaska Legal Services. "We had been circuit riding out of Nome, but this was not adequate. There was a need for a full-time office."

Pam Herman, then a VISTA attorney, put together a proposed budget for the Legal Services office.

"We made substantial efforts to find outside funding without success," said Ms. Goodell. "Yet the people of the community came forward with the funding."

"Through the efforts of Maneluk and Pam Herman, people in Kotzebue were made aware of the problem," said Maneluk planner Bruce Newman.

The problem was how to fund a \$107,000 budget.

Maneluk accepted the formation of a Legal Services office in Kotzebue as a top priority and found RurAL and CETA funding for the staff salaries. Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation is providing office space for the law office.

NANA Legal Services will provide travel expenses. The agencies will jointly supply office furniture, a law library and office supplies.

"We opened our doors on the first of November," said Tim MacMillan, staff attorney for the new Kotzebue office, "and we have been getting business everyday since opening. We now have 120 open or pending cases."

Tim MacMillan was hired to head the Kotzebue Legal Services office after answering an advertisement in 'Clearing House Review,' a magazine for legal services attorneys.

MacMillan was formerly a VISTA attorney in Little Rock, Arkansas. He also was in private practice in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. MacMillan is a graduate of the University of Pittsburg Law School.

"A major source of our practice will be Native allotment applications. There's approximately 1,000 Native allotment applications and we will potentially be handling all of them," said MacMillan. "We will be handling non-fee generating,

non-criminal cases for some 4,600 people of the NANA Region and Point Hope, which has a population of about 380."

Working with MacMillan is a VISTA attorney, Jeffery Spring, paralegal, Barbara Carter and legal secretary Mary O'Hara. In addition to the Kotzebue staff there are three paralegals in surrounding villages working on allotment problems: Edward Lee in Shungnak; Delores Barr in Deering; and Billy Ticket in Kobuk.

"The only thing I really did was stick it out until someone else found the funding," replied Pam Herman in response to a question about her contribution to the permanent Legal Services office.

Ms. Herman is no longer a VISTA attorney. She is working as director of the

Johnson-O'Malley program for Maneluk. But she plans to return to the practice of law after taking the Alaska Bar Exam next summer.

"There is still a real demand for private attorneys in Kotzebue as well as the Legal Services attorneys, said Ms. Herman. "It would be hard to come up with a number, but it is my impression that nearly everyone has some legal problem that is unresolved and have no one to turn to."

According to Pam Herman, the firm of Larsen, Timbers and Van Winkle, who have the public defender contract in Nome, are the only private attorneys in Northwest. They get into Kotzebue about once a month.

Alaska Legal Services provides legal assistance for low-income persons with civil cases.