

Rural education

FAIRBANKS—With the University of Alaska moving to broaden educational opportunities in rural areas of the state, its Alaska Native Human Resources Development Program is now planning a course of action to help insure the success of this effort.

The university is implementing a proposal of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. for a higher education delivery system in rural Alaska.

The proposal calls for establishment of a number of regional centers, a central service organization, local policy councils to help give direction to the over-all program, and the position of vice president for rural educational affairs in the university.

The AFN proposal, which has the endorsement of the university's Board of Regents and administration, was the end result of extensive discussions between the university and native leaders fostered by the Alaska Native Human Resources Development Program, also known as the Kellogg Program, in its catalyst role.

Last June, Dr. Robert W. Hiatt, president of the university, announced the creation of the vice presidential position to insure that high priority would be given a new thrust into rural Alaska, and in November he appointed Elaine Ramos, a Tlingit Indian who is vice president for institutional development at Sheldon Jackson College, to the new position. She will join the state university on Jan. 1.

The university's proposed budget for the next fiscal year includes funds for establishment of six regional centers and expansion of existing university programs in rural areas.

The Kellogg Program, a five-year program funded largely by a \$681,461 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is now in its third year.

Directed by a policy council made up of native leaders and high-level university administrators, its primary purpose is to promote the training and development of native leadership and the

broadening of university operations to help accomplish this purpose.

Native members of the policy council are Fred Bigjim, a former AFN executive now serving as liaison officer in the university's new Office of Rural Educational Affairs; Mitch Demientieff, past president of the Tanana Chiefs Conference and AFN executive; Roger Lang, former AFN president; and Emil Notti, first AFN president and now president of the Alaska Native Foundation.

Representing the university on the council are Dr. Don Dafoe, executive vice president; Dr. Frank Darnell, director of the Center for Northern Educational Research; and Victor Fischer, Director of the Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research and member of the Alaska Native Foundation's board of trustees.

Dr. James W. Matthews, director of the university's Cooperative Extension Service, is over-all administrative head of the program. Eric Ekvall, formerly a training specialist in the AFN's Technical Assistance Program, is acting executive director.

The program's budget for the current fiscal year is \$314,160, with the state providing \$55,476 and the Kellogg Foundation \$258,684. Nearly a third of the total, \$101,000, is earmarked for establishment and training of the local policy councils.

The program this year will also make a major effort to build management expertise at the village leader level through development of a business management workbook, the holding of regional workshops, and utilization of special assistance of the Cooperative extension Center, university departments and federal, state and private agencies.

The program this year also plans to continue the development of educational video tapes to augment the more traditional educational processes. Information in the business management workbook is to be put on video tape.

In the past year, the Kellogg Program conducted a number of seminars for village leaders, began

RCA Alaska Communications, Inc. has erected antennas for two of the first 20 small earth stations being installed under a joint RCA Alascom-State of Alaska agreement.

The 15-foot parabolic "dish" antennas manufactured by Andrew Corporation were installed by RCA Alascom crews with the assistance of villagers at Kivalina and Noatak.

Antennas also are enroute to King Cove, Akutan and Atka and have been delivered to St. George and St. Paul of the Pribilof Islands.

Construction began in late September with site preparation at 20 of the 100 small earth stations designed to bring telephone, emergency medical communications and eventually television to rural Alaska villages.

Under the agreement reached last July, the state is purchasing most of the equipment needed to provide one push-to-talk telephone circuit for emergency medical services, along with the basic earth station components.

RCA Alascom is responsible for installation and maintenance of the earth station and furnish-

ing equipment to provide dial telephone and private line service to each village. The ownership of the stations is being held jointly, in trust, pending a final resolution of the ownership question by the Federal Communications Commission.

The first 20 earth stations are to be completed by March of 1976 and all of the 100 earth stations covered by the agreement are to be operational by late 1977.

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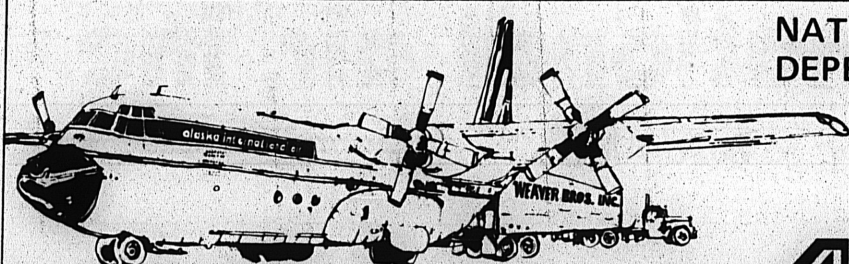
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