

Notti Native Affairs Advisor to Begich

By THOMAS RICHARDS, JR.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Alaska Democratic Congressman Nick Begich announced in Washington last week that Emil Notti, President Emeritus of the Alaska Federation of Natives, has accepted an invitation to join the freshman legislator's staff as his Advisor on Native Affairs.

Informing the Tundra Times of the appointment, Begich described the veteran Native leader as a man who "has both feet on the ground at all times" and is "truly representative of all Alaska Native groups."

"Behind that humble and sincere character is a man with great depth and understanding,"

he added.

Notti, an Athabascan Indian now residing in Sitka, served as President of the Alaska Federation of Natives from its founding in 1966 until he stepped down

from that position during the AFN convention last fall.

He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree by the Alaska Methodist University

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in September of 1969 in recognition for his efforts on behalf of Alaska Natives.

Rep. Begich said Mr. Notti would travel throughout Alaska on his behalf to solicit Native opinion. He will also represent the congressman on matters concerning Natives.

The appointment is one of the first actions taken by Rep. Begich following the opening of his Washington office in suite 1210 of the House of Representatives' Longworth Office Building.

The addition of Mr. Notti to his staff was described as part of Rep. Begich's effort to attack his "number one problem" of achieving a fair settlement of the Alaska Native Land Claims.

The congressman said passage of the claims bill would be a "long overdue action to recognize the needs of a great rural people."

He stated that the claims must be settled "for the sake of improving the life style of a great people..and for the economy of the state."

He indicated that his efforts in Washington will reflect his concern for three problem areas stressed during his election campaign.

Primarily, he wants a fair land claims settlement as well as programs to meet educational, health and sanitation needs in rural Alaska.

To facilitate his action on the bill, the legislator is energetically seeking membership on the powerful House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.

"This week, we are concentrating on that committee assignment," he said.

Rep. Begich views the second major problem area as that of easing unemployment, inflation, and tight money.

The third major problem area according to Begich is the Presidential veto of legislation affecting Alaska, especially in education, construction and housing.

He also placed under attack cutbacks in funding of Alaska programs such as the Head Start program, terming the 17 million dollar reduction as "ridiculous."

After Congressman Begich concludes the process of setting up his Washington office, he plans to return to Alaska next month to attend fund raising events in Fairbanks and Anchorage in an effort to meet the costs of his campaign.

Rep. Begich indicated that he would attend Interior Department hearings on the Alaska pipeline project on February 12 and 13.