

Aurora Study By Television Is Planned

The northern lights will soon be studied at the University of Alaska with the aid of a new television system.

The University's Geophysical Institute has received a research grant of \$180,400 from the National Science Foundation for this purpose. Because the aurora is a relatively weak light source, it is not easy to photograph with normal cameras. Even then long exposures are required.

The new program will utilize a modified image orthicon television system, commonly used for studio work in the broadcast industry. This instrument is very sensitive and enables scientists to take movie pictures of the aurora and short-exposure auroral spectra. The system represents a significant advance over previously used techniques and allows investigation of rapidly moving auroras.

One of the first uses of the TV system will be in learning more about "pulsating aurora," a special type seen over Fairbanks, usually after midnight. The new system will be installed at the Ester Dome Observatory shortly after Christmas. It will be operated by Tom Hallinan, a television engineer who recently joined the staff of the Geophysical Institute. The study will be under the direction of Dr. T. Neil Davis, assistant director of the Institute.