

APRN starts national Native radio show

by Carl Gidlund

Tundra Times

The Alaska Public Radio Network is launching a national series of week-day programs on Alaska Native and American Indian topics.

Diane Kaplan, the Alaska network's executive director, said the first 14-minute program of the National

Native News Service will be beamed via satellite to interested National Public Radio Network stations on Jan. 5.

The programs, to be produced by APRN personnel and Native American stations throughout the nation, will be available for broadcast five days a week.

Local affiliates will determine when

the programs will be aired.

Kaplan said each 14-minute segment will include five minutes of news, a feature story and an "actuality" — a voice talking on a subject around which local producers can build their own stories.

She said she expects most of the 16

(Continued on Page Three)

APRN airs nationally

(Continued from Page One)

full-service APRN-affiliated stations in the state to carry the show, which also may be picked up by repeaters in six other locations.

The network serves 300 Alaska communities.

In addition to Alaska Native news, Kaplan said she expects contributions from many of the National Public Radio producers whose stations serve Indian audiences in the Lower 48.

"We plan to report on issues from Florida to Alaska affecting Native and non-Native people," she said.

"Besides bridging the current geographical communications gap among Native Americans, we hope to give radio listeners a glimpse into life in Native America."

The series is funded for 13 weeks by a \$60,249 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Kaplan said. However, she hopes to raise enough money to continue production indefinitely.

"We're asking National Public Radio to co-sponsor the series," she said. "That would give us access to a lot more foundation money."

Kaplan said APRN took on the project because most of the dozen Lower 48 stations whose principal audience

is Native Americans "are in pretty poor financial shape.

"And only one general-interest Native American show is being aired, a weekly feature called 'First Person' out of Minneapolis."

The project has been taking shape for about 18 months, Kaplan said, beginning during a meeting of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters.

She said Susan Braine of KMXT, Kodiak, and David Harding of KBRW in Barrow were two of the leaders in the effort that's resulting in the series.

National Native News' managing editor is Gary Fife, 36, a Cherokee/Creek whose sole project will be the series.

Fife said he's spent his career specializing in Native American news as a broadcast and print journalist. He moved to Anchorage from Washington, D.C. this October after spending the last 11 years on a Capitol Hill news beat.

His credits also include radio and television reporting on Native American matters from Minneapolis.

Executive producer for National Native News is Corey Flintoff; technical director is Michelle Lopez; and assistant producer is Johanna Eurich.