

*Native Hire Not Working Well—*

# AFN to Reorient Effort On Native Pipeline Hire

By DONN LISTON

ANCHORAGE — The Alaska Federation of Natives Manpower Division is finding it must reorient its effort if some 4,500 Alaska Natives already signed up to work on the pipeline project are to be employed.

Because of the method by which most persons gain pipeline jobs through unions, Alaska Natives in rural areas who have already been recruited by AFN in

accordance with a contract agreement with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company are not being hired. At the same time virtually anyone who walks in off the street with a needed skill may be employed out of major Alaska urban centers.

"We're going to have to go further than just taking applications," said Jake Lestenkof, AFN Manpower director. "We need to do more than just take a piece of paper that says 'yes, I'd like to work on the pipeline' and forget it."

Under a contract with Alyeska, AFN has responsibility for recruiting, screening and refer-

ring potential Native pipeline workers. After recruitment, and screening the applicants are referred to the Alaska State Employment Center, which has only been able to hold them or put them into other jobs. Not a single applicant serviced by AFN, in accordance with its contract with Alyeska, has received a job on the pipeline, according to Lestenkof.

"We now intend to diminish recruitment efforts and begin strengthening placement," Lestenkof said. "We hope to establish a Job Assistance Center (JAC) program for rural Alaska Natives who want to work on

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the pipeline."

The new direction was proposed to Alyeska during a recently held Second Quarterly Contract Review meeting. The centers will be established on a cooperative basis between AFN and Alyeska.

"I'm a little unhappy with the system (for employing Natives in pipeline work) but I can't really blame anybody," Lestenkof said. "When they first established this system, I think they may have been a little naive."

The total plan for employing Alaska Natives on the pipeline project is in six parts, including recruitment, classifying and referral duties, which AFN has contracted for. After that, Alyeska provides money for the state to train as well as providing actual employment. Finally, the plan calls for counseling of Na-

tives employees, which Bechtel Incorporated and Fluor Incorporated have contracted for.

"The mechanisms for dispatching and hiring will have to start appreciating rural distances for people who can't just come into Anchorage or Fairbanks and wander around until their dispatched," Lestenkof added.

With the new JAC Program, Lestenkof hopes to establish job banks of people who are qualified to work and need dispatching. Then, perhaps AFN will be able to do what the state apparently can't do, under the present system.

"Rural services shouldn't stop in the villages with applicants but should be continued in urban areas where the jobs are dispatched," Lestenkof said.