

# ***Interior Dept. to Work with Natives***

ANCHORAGE —The Interior Department has agreed to involve Alaska Natives in the final drafting of land selection regulations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

State Sen. Willie Hensley, D-Kotzebue, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., made the announcement Friday.

Hensley said Interior Department officials wanted five representatives of the Native people to be there when the final regulations are written, but added that each region would like to be represented in Washington D.C. for that session.

In meetings several weeks ago in Anchorage with Interior officials, AFN Inc. and various regions flatly rejected the second set of proposed rules and regulations, notably because of certain regulations defining a Native village and non-navigable waters within selected lands.

Regional representatives to that conference demanded that the rules and regulations be written again, with their advice taken into consideration. Interior officials also agreed to have final regulations put together by May 15th, the date AFN, Inc. requested.

John Shively, executive vice

president of AFN, Inc., called the Interior decision a "great step forward," in the relationship between Interior and Alaska Natives.

There is no question but that the Natives have the legal right to participate in the redrafting of the regulations, Hensley said, "and having the Interior Department involve us in the process will hopefully insure that there will be no litigation in this matter."