

Employment Assistance Program—

FNA May Soon Take Over BIA Prog.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Progress toward the signing of a contract between the Fairbanks Native Association and the Bureau of Indian Affairs for operation of the bureau's employment assistance program can be expected soon, according to BIA Community Services Deputy Director Flore Lekanof.

The Tundra Times inquired last week to the BIA why the contract sought by the FNA had not proceeded as swiftly as the one recently signed between the bureau and the Tlingit and Haida Central Council.

Lekanof explained that the FNA could not proceed in seeking the contract until it was informed of the employment assistance budget for the Fairbanks agency program.

He assured the Tundra Times that the FNA would receive the budget and the negotiations on the contract would follow.

Lekanof noted that, after the announcement of the Tlingit and Haida contract was made last week, Alaska Native groups had made a number of inquiries with regard to the BIA's policy of contracting out services to Indian tribes and Alaska Native groups.

He indicated that briefings

would be made by the bureau to any interested parties in Alaska in order to explain the BIA's contracting policy.

A statement issued by the BIA explaining the new policy changes announced by Commis-

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sioner Bruce last November said, "The policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is to make available to Indian people the option to take over the administration of any or all programs which the Bureau provides for them."

The Tlingit-Haida contract for administration of the BIA's Juneau Agency functions was one of the first announced under the new policy change.