

Native Hire Soon—

Pipeline Workers

By **DONN LISTON**

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ANCHORAGE — Alaska Na-

tives who signed up to work on the pipeline and are job ready will begin employment within two weeks according to the director of the Alaska Federation of Natives Manpower Division.

Recent meetings with Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. and the State of Alaska have convinced those organizations that a proposed reorientation of the contract to bring Natives into the pipeline workforce is acceptable, according to Jacob Lestenkof, director of the AFN Manpower Division.

"We've had the contractors in and they're anxious for people," Lestenkof said. "I predict that by the end of January we'll run out of qualified Alaska Natives."

Last month Lestenkof expressed concern that because of the method by which most per-

sons gain pipeline jobs through unions, Alaska Natives in rural areas who had already been recruited by AFN in accordance with a contract agreement with

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Alyeska, were not being hired.

Now AFN is going beyond the contract established originally and Lestenkof says pipeline contractors may be expected to hire Alaskans first when they gear up again starting Jan. 6.

"I'm encouraged," Lestenkof added. "We have a listing now and we know where we stand."

Under the contract with Alyeska, AFN is responsible for recruiting, screening and referring potential Native pipeline workers to the Alaska State Employment Center, which was only able to hold them or put them to work in state jobs due to the nature of union hiring policies.

Through implementation of a new Job Assistance Center (JAC) program, AFN will establish urban area listings of avail-

able persons and provide expertise for getting them into pipeline jobs.

"The past system was designed just to collect applications," Lestenkof said. "Now I hope we can develop a system which can follow-through on them and get them into the workforce."

As of Dec. 20, some 311 persons have been identified by the AFN Manpower Division as being ready. Another 400 or so are ready for training.

"We really want people who are job ready," Lestenkof said. "And by job ready, we mean they should have a desire to work and they should be prepared to work. Otherwise they just hurt the credibility of our whole program if they sign up and aren't really job ready when they've said they are."