

Former AFN Comptroller Potter Victim of Apparent Suicide

Former comptroller of the troubled Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., Thomas J. Potter, died Thursday night of a bullet wound in the head, victim of an apparent suicide.

Potter was replaced as comptroller at an August 4-5 meeting of the board in Anchorage. Persistent rumors of financial

difficulties led to a review of AFN finances and programs. Potter was dismissed and a complete audit of the books ordered.

Since that time, Potter has acted as Don Wright's campaign manager in Wright's bid for a seat in the state Senate. Wright himself was subsequently ousted by the AFN, Inc. board and replaced by State Senator Willie Hensley.

"I have no comment, except to say that I am very, very, sad," Wright said from Fairbanks. "I know none of the circumstances. I have to attend a business meeting up north, and I will be back Monday and look into it."

The chairman of the restructured AFN, Inc. board, John Borbridge, said from Juneau, "Anything like this is a tragedy and I was sorry to hear the news. I can only comment on this in a personal vein."

The reasons for the suicide are unknown. Potter was said to be drinking heavily before

firing the fatal shot. A friend reported that Potter had confided he had a brain tumor and did not have long to live.