

# Tyonek faces financial woes if BIA moves

by Steve Pilkington  
and A.J. McClanahan

for the *Dundra Times*

The Village of Tyonek will face serious financial difficulty when its largest tenant — the Bureau of Indian Affairs — moves from the Kaloa buildings in Anchorage to the old Federal Building at 605 West Fourth Ave. next January.

"It's a loss that would be financially devastating," said Thomas A. Matthews, Tyonek's attorney. Currently, the BIA is leasing 18,345 square feet of space at 16th Ave. and C Street and is paying about \$28,000 a month — \$341,000 a year.

Matthews also said the Village of Tyonek has spent nearly \$400,000 in the last two years, renovating the facility to bring it in line with federal regulations for handicapped access.

The BIA, which has been leasing office space in the Kaloa buildings for about 15 years, must move according

(Continued on Page Ten)

# • BIA to be relocated

(Continued from Page One)

to General Services Administration regulations. GSA acts as the landlord for civilian agencies around the country.

The Kaloa buildings are one of the village's principle assets, said Matthews, and keeping tenants is critical. Currently, the BIA is leasing about 40 percent of the buildings' space.

"It's a very tough time for the village in general and individual village members," he said, explaining that given the current economic climate in Anchorage it would be very difficult to find another tenant.

GSA officials say, however, that the move can't be avoided.

According to Jesse Avila, field office manager for GSA, it is in the best interests of the government and the taxpayers to have the BIA move into the old Federal Building.

Avila explained that the regulations used by the GSA have been in place for a long period of time, and he said the BIA entered into an "illegal lease" with the Village of Tyonek when it began leasing space in Tyonek's Kaloa buildings.

Avila also explained that when BIA entered into the lease, GSA was not involved in the process.

"It is not merely a breach of the regulations it is a breach of the law," said Avila.

Several years ago, an internal government audit found the leasing problem and it was then decided that BIA would remain in the Kaloa buildings until federal space was available.

Matthews said, however, an exception should be made to the regulations because the federal government has a special relationship to Native and In-

dian tribes. He said the federal government should continue the lease in order to encourage Native economic development.

He also said there are a number of other federal agencies leasing space in private buildings that could be moved.

Meanwhile, renovations on the old Federal Building will soon be complete and there will be plenty of space for the BIA, said Avila.

Ruth Kaloa, general manager of Kuskokwim Planning and Management Corp., has been trying to help gain legislative support for Tyonek. And Kuskokwim recently found another problem with the move, she said.

"BIA will have to pay for their move," said Kahloa. "The money will have to come from their programs, which will affect every Native tribe in Alaska."

Not only will the move cause financial troubles, but village officials say that there are other problems associated with the move.

Matthews said many businesses have moved into the Kaloa buildings in order to be near BIA. The move will cause hardships for those offices. Another problem is the difficulty of downtown parking, he said.

Until the move, Kuskokwim and Tyonek will continue to seek legislative support. Rep. Don Young has been discussing the situation with village officials. But so far, no alternatives have been found.

Kuskokwim is trying to get a 90-day moratorium. But even if they can get this, it is by no means a solution, said Kaloa.

The old Federal Building is still being renovated. The BIA is expected to move in by Jan. 4, 1988.