



GULKANA—Houses of this type provided for residents by BIA.

## Gulkana People Build Houses with BIA Help

The small town of Gulkana—population about 85—has taken on a new look this year.

Nine of the approximately 15 families there have replaced their old homes with new ones.

A pilot project for the Anchorage area Bureau of Indian Affairs, the effort will serve as basis for other BIA housing programs in the Gulkana area.

“We hope to learn from this experience and plan accordingly,” said Roy Peratrovich, superintendent of the BIA.

The next scheduled project is for six to nine houses in Chistochina.

The agency is currently making a survey to determine which villages need housing the most and just how far the financial resources of the BIA can be stretched, Herb Hope, housing officer said.

In Gulkana, with less than \$10,000 the bureau bought all of the materials necessary for building the nine houses and contracted with the village for them to provide a carpenter and village labor.

The land was provided by the villagers.

Through this program, Peratrovich said, “we provided houses for people who would not even be able to make a minimum house payment.”

The families to benefit from the program were selected by the village council, Al Tracy, administrative manager of the BIA

said, and the BIA had no part in the selection.

Fred Ewan, president of the village council, devoted much time and energy to getting the project underway and was responsible for paying the construction workers, Peratrovich said.

The skilled carpenter hired by the village supervised the work of from four to nine unskilled villagers in constructing the houses.

In the fall, during the initial construction period, the villagers were working 70 hours a week for about \$2 an hour, Peratrovich said.

The number of hours dwindled as the weather worsened, he continued.

However, by the time cold weather arrived, the workers had completed one house and used it to assemble parts, such as rafters, for the other houses.

The project was carried out in the winter, the superintendent explained, even though costs were greater because during that time there is no work in the village.

Of a plywood exterior, the two-to-three bedroom houses have six inches of insulation all around, Tracy said.

Oil will be the source for heating, cooking, and hot water with the stove being furnished by the BIA.

The public Health Service is providing sewer and water for these and other houses in Gulkana.