

AFN Seattle Chapter

Estimates 7,000 in Area

An estimated 5,000 to 7,000 Alaskan Natives live in the Puget Sound area and there could be as many as 20,000 living outside their state according to research being done by the Alaska Federation of Natives, Washington Chapter.

The stateside AFN is conducting a census of all Alaskan Natives, one-quarter degree or more Eskimo, Aleut, Thlingit, Haida, or Athabascan who are currently living outside Alaska. To date they've enrolled 1,700 adults, who, with dependents, bring the total to well over 3,800.

The organization is enlisting the help of all Natives in helping with this project.

"We solicit your support in passing this information on to relatives and friends," a current brochure from their office reads. "Take time to send for your census forms and automatically become included on our mailing list to receive our AFN newsletters that are mailed periodically to keep our members informed of the fast-moving events concerning the Alaska Native Land Claim legislation now pending before Congress of the United States. For information, write to Alaska Federation of Natives, P. O. Box 24144, Seattle, Washington 98121 or call 546-1919."

Organized less than two years ago, the Washington Chapter has also undertaken a survey of immediate needs and long range goals of Alaska Natives outside. The organization stands ready to assist any government agency concerned with the welfare and goals of Alaska Natives both within and without the state.

It is also prepared to advise and assist individual Alaska Natives, consistent with limited funds it receives in donations from its membership.

The group boasts an all volunteer effort in committee work with programs in education, jobs, cultural heritage, arts and crafts, social, health and welfare, membership and public information.

"Due to a dire lack of funds, we have not been able to progress in these areas as is our desire; so much of our aid is restricted to a referral service until we are funded enough to accomplish these goals on a self determining basis," the brochure notes.

"Federal funding proposals now are pending to assist us in helping our brothers and sisters in the urban areas of Puget Sound adjust to the complexities of urban life as compared to those of our native areas of Alaska to which we were once well adjusted and enjoyed until the economic opportunities of the 'lower 49' seemed to show more promise.

"We will continue to do all we can in promoting an equal chance for each of us."

Present officers of the Washington chapter are George Walters of Teller, president; Jay Mallott of Yakutat, first vice-president; Harry Apodruk, council, second vice-president; Virginia Thomas of Wiseman, secretary; Rachel Craig of Kotzebue, treasurer; Rebecca Harris of Cape Prince of Whales, corresponding secretary and Axel Anaruk of Bucklin, sergeant-at-arms.