

Fisheries Loan Program transferred to CEDC

Dwindling grant monies have forced the Alaska Native Foundation to transfer administration of the Fisheries Loan Program from ANF to the Community Enterprise Development Corporation.

The transfer, which became effective on Jan. 18, will mean no change for the program which makes loans to independent fishermen trying to get into the commercial fish-

ing market.

The program was transferred because ANF didn't get enough money to pay the one employee who administered the program, said Perry Eaton, head of CEDC. Eaton said that employee Stella Davis will start working for CEDC but soon will take on responsibilities for the CEDC loan program as well as the fisheries program.

There will be no change in the amount of money the program has to loan out, said Eaton, who estimated that amount to be a total of \$800,000. He said \$300,000 of that remains unloaned.

"There will be absolutely no change in the policy of the program," said Eaton who has sat on the fisheries loan awards board since it was first formed. "There is just a different roof over its head."

Eaton called the program "far too meaningful to the economic well-being of rural Alaska to let it die.

"The program is absolutely perfectly parallel to what we are doing (at CEDC)," said Eaton. He said that the Foundation first started the program because "in the past there was just so much going, so many troughs to dip into," that the Foundation got involved in the loan program.

The Foundation, CEDC, and two other organizations which provide services to rural Alaska — the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) recently agreed to limit their areas of concern instead of each one having a dabbling of programs. Under such an agreement AFN

would be primarily responsible for political activities, CEDC for economic programs, and ANF for educational or research programs.

This decision was reached primarily so that the dwindling source of grant money would be used to its best advantage.

Eaton said the Fisheries program has been very successful.

The success was so great, he said, that the Economic Development Administration which first granted the program \$300,000, added \$500,000 to the program when the EDA was disbanded by the federal government.

That \$500,000 was an unsolicited addition, said Eaton.

The program "is designed to put fishermen into fisheries." Loans are granted to individuals to help them purchase boats to start commercial fishing. A maximum \$25,000 loan is granted per person and that is repaid at a 12 percent interest rate. The maximum

payback time for a boat loan is seven years, the maximum payback for a motor is three years.

The program has focused on fishermen in the Norton Sound Yukon-Kuskokwim area and some in the Bristol Bay Region, said Eaton but he said it is starting to look at the Aleutian-Pribilof bottomfish industry for loan grants.

The program doesn't consider loans for processing plants because the maximum loan limit wouldn't start to pay for a processing rig, said Eaton.

He said the rate of loan payback is quite good and the Board has not yet had to foreclose on any loan.

"We had one case where a father who passed away and his sons came to us and said 'do we have to give the boat back or simply repay the loan,'" said Eaton.

"It's really exciting, really nice to be able to say we are helping worthy individuals."

A one-day conference on fair employment practices will be held in Anchorage on Feb. 3.

The workshop will include discussions on entering the work force, discipline and discharge, and sessions on pregnancy issues and sexual harass-

ment in the work place, current issues in the handicapped law, and equal pay issues.

The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 3 at the Captain Cook Hotel. The conference is free but a \$9.50 fee will be charged for a buffet lunch.