
AFN/JOM Dir. Eluska Resigns

By DONN LISTON
of the Alaska Native Foundation
The AFN director for Johnson-O'Malley federal supplementary educational funds has announced intentions of resigning his position Oct. 31.

Ralph Eluska took over the job last May from Gordon Jackson, who is now AFN director for Human Resources. Eluska ran for the Anchorage School Board a year ago and worked for the University of Alaska, Anchorage, prior to accepting the JOM director job. He said he has no plans for future employment yet.

"I'm upset about the way this program has been going, especially since the resolution that was passed at the convention," Eluska said. "If they really believe in local control, they should have moved to have the regions contract for JOM funds directly from the BIA."

Jackson said he had heard rumors that Eluska was planning to resign but as of Monday he had received no official word. He indicated that "a difference

(Continued on Page 9)

Ralph Eluska Resigns Post . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

in philosophy" regarding distribution of JOM funds apparently existed between he and Eluska.

"I'm opposed to that (the regions contracting directly from BIA) because too much money would go to the regional administration," Jackson said. "If you can direct the administration from one central office, and phase it out as local control is established, it would mean less money spent on administration."

Eluska expressed concern about resolution 74-22, which was passed on a roll-call count with the Aleut Corporation and the Cook Inlet Region, Inc. opposing, during the recent AFN convention. The resolution calls for AFN to form a statewide Indian Education Committee to direct the changeover to local control of schools in the unorganized borough within five years.

"We've been advocating local control for a long time," Jackson said. "It would be against the concept (of the new JOM regulations) to go to the regions. I feel strongly we could have more local control if it was directed on a statewide basis — AFN could set a prime example for SOS."

Eluska said the Aleut League was already successfully contracting for JOM monies directly and that Cook Inlet Native Association, Sealaska and Yupik Tak Bista were all in positions where they might be able to contract directly from the federal government instead of going through AFN.

"The regulations advocate local education communities take control," Jackson said. "It's a fact of life that many don't have the tools yet. This is a huge task and it might take a little while to set it up."

But there's more to the problem than that, according to Eluska.

"There are so many things involved," he said. "Gordon never really supported my appointment to the position anyway — its been an uphill battle since I started."

Jackson says Eluska never indicated he was having any problems, adding; "I told him the technical assistance is available if he needed it — but he never asked."

Jackson also denied any ill-feelings between them.