

13th Region Kicks In Womb

Seattle Times news writer Stanton Patty says it's beginning to look as if there will be a 13th regional Native corporation, with 5,600-10,000 stockholders and worth up to \$100 million.

"Thirteen may turn out to be a lucky number for thousands of Alaska Natives," wrote Patty, at the start of a lengthy article for the Seattle daily Sept. 16.

Patty says indications indicate a majority of non-resident Alaska Natives voted to form their own regional corporation under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Unlike the 12 regional Native corporations within Alaska, the 13th corporation, if formed, would not share in the land settlement under the act - but would get a chunk of the \$962.5 million monetary settlement.

Patty also noted a split between non-resident Natives on the prospect of a 13th region, which would include all areas outside the state, but mainly the Pacific Northwest.

First there is the Washington State chapter of the Alaska Federation of Natives, led by Mrs.

13th Region . . .

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Rachel Craig of Auburn, chapter president.

Craig has already enrolled back to NANA Regional Corporation Inc., Kotzebue, where she was born, and would not participate in the 13th region, but she told Patty "I am in this now to be sure that everything goes properly. I do not want anything to happen in laying the groundwork (for the 13th region) that would not be beneficial for all of the members."

She has called a meeting at Portland this coming weekend to elect five incorporators.

Meanwhile, there is heavy competition from Esk-Ind-Al, led by Frank D. Price Jr., of Seattle. Esk-Ind-Al submitted proposed articles of incorporation and by-laws for a 13th regional corporation to Interior Department.

Interior officials say they won't even consider that proposal until it is determined if the majority of non-residents want a 13th region.

Craig and Seattle's Billy Johnson, (chairman of the provisional organizing committee for the Washington State AFN chapter) have criticized Esk-Ind-Al, saying that organization is not truly representative of non-residents.

They told Patty they were confident that Interior Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton would select the group formed under sponsorship of their chapter.

Price counters that Esk-Ind-Al has been helping non-residents enroll and that his group is the true representative of non-residents.

Price criticized the fact that non-residents like Craig who are enrolled back to Alaska are trying to organize the 13th region.

"We don't think they have any right to do this. We have enough talent here to set up our own corporation," he told Patty.