Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Seminole Indians of the Hollywood Reservation in Florida this week signed a contract with Amphenol Corporation of Chicago to lease 10 acres of tribal property for industrialization.

This is the Tribe's first venture into economic development.

The Chicago firm, one of the Nation's largest electronics manufacturers, will erect a branch plant on the Seminole land to produce electronic connectors, and to employ upwards of 100 Seminoles by early next year. The lease with the Tribe is for 65 years. Plant construction will commence in August. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will contract with Amphenol for on-the-job training of Indian workers.

Robert L. Bennett, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in making announcement today, said:

"Negotiations with Amphenol have been part of our stepped-up nationwide effort to develop business and industry in regions where Indian unemployment is high. This is the first major breakthrough in the battle to bring the Seminole Indians into the circle of economic growth enjoyed by the State of Florida in this decade. The total Indian community--and, indeed, the adjacent non-Indian community as well--will benefit from the locale of this industrial plant."

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was instrumental in bringing the negotiations to completion. The Bureau's economic development division responded some months ago to Amphenol's 50-State canvass for a new site by introducing the firm to the Seminole Tribe's newly formed Board for Economic Development.

Bill Osceola, the Tribal development board's chairman, said; in putting his signature to the contract in behalf of the Tribe:

"This is one 'treaty' we are happy to sign."

A total of 143 acres have been set aside by the Hollywood Reservation Seminoles to use for development and they are planning an industrial park.

Amphenol is one of several electronics firms that have gone into Indian areas for expansion sites. Discussions are currently under way with numerous others, sparked by a conference last month between Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and representatives of 11 major electronics concerns.