Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Work is progressing on plans for the all-Indian halftime program during the Washington Redskins, Dallas Cowboys National Football League Game in Washington November 27, according to Dr. Louis W. Ballard, Director of Music Programs for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Dr. Ballard said he has received applications from more than 600 Indian high school musicians to participate in the halftime show. He said a series of competitions will be held in various parts of the country to select the 150 young musicians who will make up the marching band.

In addition to the band, the show will include a girls drill team from either Haskell Indian Junior College or the Institute of American Indian Arts, and Indian dancers from several areas of the United States will also perform, Ballard said.

He stressed that the halftime program, which will be seen on national television, is part of the BIA's continuing efforts to upgrade and improve the cultural and educational programs for Indian students.

Dr. Ballard is composing an original musical score for the program, and the band will be under the co-direction of Fred Shields of Haskell and Jack Romine from the Mississippi Choctaw BIA Schools in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

The program marks the first time an all Indian group of musicians, dancers and drill team will perform at a National Football League game. The program was worked out in cooperation with the Washington Redskins football team and has the full support of that organization.

The students will be brought to Washington, D.C. the week before the game so that they will have time to practice together as well as put the final touches on the marching and drill program. He also said since the program will take place during the Thanksgiving weekend, the students will be guests of the American Indian Society in Washington for a Thanksgiving dinner.

Dr. Ballard said, "This program not only will give the Indian students the opportunity to visit the Nation's capitol and perform on national television, but also will give the people of the U.S. a chance to see Native American dancers and musicians and to become acquainted with the exceptional talents of these youngsters.

He said the program will be narrated by a nationally prominent Native American, but that person has not yet been selected.

"We also want to thank the Washington Redskins organization and the National Football League for the opportunity they have given us to perform at this game," Ballard said.