Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Indians are operating an increasing number of the Federal Government's programs designed to help their people find better jobs and send their young to college.

The programs themselves are not new – but the leadership, and the accent on self-determination, are.

Operated with funds from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, an agency of the Department of the Interior, they symbolizes a new approach, which is steadily gaining ground.

''We intend to give Indian leadership every opportunity to operate Bureau programs," Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce said. "We have turned over authority for many types of Bureau operations to the Indian people."

Bruce cited three local programs typical as of the "determination of this Administration to give Indians control of Indian policy."

One is the employment and training center which was opened recently at Kansas City, Mo., by Indian Enterprises, lnc., of Horton, Kans. The corporation is made up of members of the Iowa, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Sac and Fox Tribes of north-east Kansas.

Indian Enterprises will operate as an employment and training coordinator for the Bureau's Branch of Employment Assistance which will refer to it Indian job seekers interested in working in the Kansas City area.

A similar contract with the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma gives that organization the funds to operate an employment assistance service for Indians in Oklahoma's Adair, Cherokee and Sequoyah Counties.

In New Mexico the All Pueblo Indians Council has taken over Bureau of Indians Affairs high school counseling programs. The contracting group is known as the Pueblo Indian Education Talent Project (PIETP).

One of the first actions of PIETP was to begin counseling services with sophomore rather than seniors. It includes included parents in its counseling services. Already there are indications that increasing numbers of Pueblo youngsters will continue on to college after high school graduation.

"These are programs at the local level where the basic work in rebuilding Indian communities must begin," Bruce said. "I would emphasize that these are not one-of-a-king demonstration projects but are typical local programs to meet Indian community needs."

"We are seeing success here just as I know we will success in our efforts to be effective Indian leadership operating at every level of government."