Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Arizona Indians have formed the first organization in the country designed to involve all of the Indian reservations in a State in a program for mutual planning and economic development help, Secretary Udall said today.

Called the Indian Development District of Arizona, the group initially is made up of nine of the 17 reservations in Arizona, combined into a statewide corporation that will enable Indian tribes to qualify for Economic Development Administration districting funds.

Rupert Parker, Hualapai leader from the Grand Canyon country, who has been elected first president of the organization, says that other tribal groups are expected to join soon.

The program is the result of the combined efforts of local Bureau of Indian Affairs officials under Phoenix Area Director W. Wade Head, and EDA personnel, working with Arizona's Governor Jack Williams.

The state-chartered corporation, IDDA, is expected to result in the development of strategically located planning areas. There will be from three to five of these initially, with more to follow.

Each area will hire professional staff funded by EDA under title IV of the EDA Act, to cover up to 75 percent of costs. The annual IDDA budget is estimated at about $200,000. The remaining 25 percent of costs are covered by in-kind contributions from the planning area, and includes outlays for office space, desks, typewriters, supplies and related items.

Each associated tribe has one representative on the IDDA board of directors. In addition to President Parker, they include:

Robert Mackett, Papago, and Howard Schurz, Salt River, vice presidents; Alexander Lewis, Gila River, secretary-treasurer; Jay Gould, Colorado River; Reeves Steele, San Carlos Apache; Fred Banashley, White Mountain Apache; Clinton Pattea, Fort McDowell; and Llewellyn Barrackman, Fort Mohave.

Once established, the planning area administration committee will hire a professional staff. The committee will be made up of area board members plus an additional member from each area reservation. This group in turn will then select up to an equal number of non-Indians from neighboring communities bordering the reservations.

The result, according to BIA Area Director Head, will be to foster Indian and non-Indian interaction, working for a common objective. This is significant when it is realized that in Arizona, where only Indian reservations are designated as eligible to receive assistance from EDA programs, 17 percent of- the land is privately owned while nearly 30 percent is Indian owned.

Initial coordination of the plan is being provided by a Navajo Indian, Art Hubbard, on Governor Williams' staff. This is a temporary arrangement until IDDA becomes operational.

When the professional staffs are set up, each will layout economic development needs in its area and then research and implement indicated planning. The staffs will also assist in the preparation of applications for technical assistance and funding from various Government and private sources. ln the end, though, the tribes themselves will be the applicants for such help.

Arizona's three state universities are expected to take part in the IDDA program, and planning committees may call on business and engineering consultants for further advice.