Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Owen D. Morken, career employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, will take over as new Director for the Bureau at Juneau, Alaska, January 2, 1966, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced today.

Morken has been assistant area director for economic development at Aberdeen, South Dakota, since the spring of 1962. At Juneau he succeeds Robert L. Bennett, who is now the Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, D. C.

A native of Brainerd, Minnesota, and a social science graduate of Bemidji State Teachers College, Morken joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Civilian Conservation Corps program in 1939. After working in various assignments at the Pipestone School, the Hopi and Navajo Reservations and the Minnesota Agency, he was appointed Superintendent of the Fort Berthold Agency, New Town, North Dakota in January of 1957. While there he was given the Governor John E. Davis leadership award for community betterment and other recognition for his work in economic development.

In 1960 he was transferred to the Pierre Agency, Pierre, South Dakota, where his work in community development not only was effective with the Indian people, but was also singled out for praise by the Pierre, South Dakota, Chamber of Commerce. Since April of 1962, he has been the Assistant Area Director in Aberdeen in charge of Resource and Economic Development.

Secretary Udall said, "I believe that Mr. Morken's experiences in helping tribes to program judgment funds and in working with the Indian people, their neighboring communities, and local and State governments have demonstrated his ability to handle the important Alaskan assignment. These are all very important to the Tlingit-Haida people, who are awaiting settlement of their claim, and to the other native people of the State, whose future is an integral part of Alaska's future as a State."