

AIM targets lack of urban Indians on panel

By Robert Jackson

Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

The American Indian Movement will protest the absence of urban Indians on the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs today.

Wallace Coffey, director of the Denver Indian Center, said 90% of Colorado's Indians live in urban areas but that urban Indians and those living off reservations are not represented on the commission.

"The time has come when the white man can no longer make decisions for Indians," Coffey said. "The state has not addressed the needs of off-reservation people. The commission is made up of 14 members ... and only four are

Indians. The commission has not addressed the needs of off-reservation people."

The commission was created in 1976 by the legislature to coordinate tribal, state and federal activities that affect Indians.

The body consists of two Indians each from the tribal governments of the Southern Ute Reservation and the Ute Mountain Reservation, two at-large members and eight representative representatives from state government.

Coffey criticized Lt. Gov. Mike Callihan, who heads the commission.

"He utilizes his position to divide Indians rather than unite them," Coffey said. "He has consistently shown an arrogant disrespect toward Indians and has al-

ways used the Indians for his personal aggrandizement to promote his Always Buy Colorado program."

Callihan denied the accusations and said the commission works hard to represent all Indians.

"The commission is not appointed by the lieutenant governor," Callihan said. "As a matter of fact, we are going to the legislature for more money to fund programs for off-reservation Indians."

Callihan also said David Box, who represents the state department of labor is a fifth Indian member.

Coffey said the group will distribute leaflets to legislators as they come to work at 7:30 a.m. today at the capitol explaining the plight of urban Indians.

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