

## ***Groups support ANWR opening***

Six pro-economic development organizations in Alaska have formed a coalition to support opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to environmentally responsible exploration, development and production of petroleum resources.

The Resource Development Council, the Alaska Oil and Gas Association and the Alaska Support Industry Alliance have joined the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, the Alaska Chapter of Associated General Contractors and the Arctic Slope Regional Corp. to form the steering committee of the new Alaska Coalition for American Energy Security.

The coalition will combine its efforts with the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for American Energy Security to assure that members of Congress are fully informed about all aspects of the ANWR issue before deciding whether to open the coastal plain to exploration and development or designate it wilderness.

Wilderness designation would prohibit development of the oil and gas lands in the 1.5 million acre coastal plain. The lands are within 65 miles of Prudhoe Bay and the trans-Alaska pipeline.

The steering committee will head the coalition effort by charting strategy and policy. A coastal plain committee has been formed to work directly on the various issues.

The Alaska group is working with numerous other organizations, companies and communities to establish a broad base of support for opening the refuge. The coalition is developing a speakers bureau to address issues relating to ANWR.