

# Calista, AVCP part ways on gubernatorial support

by Geoff Kennedy

for the Tundra Times

BETHEL — Once again, the two regional entities representing the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta are taking opposite sides in a political race — this time for the governor's race.

Three months ago, several officials of Calista Corp. backed the candidacies of Vern Hurlburt, a former Sleetmute state legislator running for the state Senate, and Ivan M. Ivan, the Akiak city administrator running for

the state House.

Calista's nonprofit arm, the Association of Village Council Presidents, backed two other Democratic candidates: Rep. Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel, running for the seat vacated by Sen. John Binkley, R-Bethel, and Hoffman's business partner and brother-in-law, Bob Herron.

Now that the winners of the August primary, Hoffman and Ivan, are run-

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ning unopposed in the General Election, Calista and AVCP officials are turning their attention to the race for governor.

Calista is supporting Sen. Arliss Sturgulewski, R-Anchorage, while AVCP is supporting the Democratic candidate, former Anchorage Mayor Tony Knowles.

The candidates' stance on reapportionment played a big part in the decision, said Calista President Johnny Hawk.

Sturgulewski has pledged to ensure that all the Yu'pik people in the Y-K Delta remain in the same election district, Hawk said.

"Do we want to remain divided and let the NANA region have some of our villages, the Bering Straits region have some of our villages and the Doyon region have some of our villages?"

Hawk asked. "Arliss Sturgulewski has said she will do everything she can to unite our people."

But Knowles would support only the "status quo," in which Yu'pik people are spread out in different election districts, Hawk said.

Gene Peltola, a Knowles supporter and member of the state Reapportionment Board, disagrees strongly. The board will reapportion the state election districts according to state and federal laws, regardless of who occupies the governor's mansion, Peltola said.

The candidates' positions on subsistence had little to do with Calista's decision to endorse the Republican candidates, since both support a rural preference, Hawk said.

Sturgulewski has had a "track record" of supporting a constitutional amendment providing a rural sub-

sistence preference in the Legislature, while Knowles has paid only "lip service" to a rural preference, Hawk said.

AVCP President Myron Naneng discounted the Calista decision.

"Their absence from the region makes it difficult for them to keep a good reputation," Naneng said about the Anchorage-based corporation, which recently announced intentions to open a small office in Bethel.

The AVCP is supporting Knowles because "the other candidates that are running are not close to the people, nor

do they understand the people in the villages as much as Knowles, who has been working with us, and we have a good line of communication with him," Naneng said.

The disagreement between the two corporations does not disturb Naneng. In a way, it can help the region if either Knowles or Sturgulewski becomes governor, he said.

"We have to take advantage of all our connections and, since Calista is for Arliss Sturgulewski, we can use that connection in case Sturgulewski gets elected."