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Lieutenant Governor Boucher Certifies Arctic Borough

ANCHORAGE — At 4 p.m., July 1, Lt. Gov. H. A. "Red" Boucher certified the election in the recently formed and contested North Slope Borough.

The signing took place at the

Anchorage Westward Hotel and was witnessed by a delegation of officials from the new borough who flew down from Barrow for the occasion.

Representing the borough at

the ceremony were Joe Upickson, Arctic Slope Native Association president and new school board member, Eddie Hopson, Wyman Panigeo, Oliver Leavitt, Jacob Adams, Harry

Kaleak, and Larry Dineen.

Officially signed into being, the new borough, encompassing some 56.5 million acres, became the largest local government in the world and symbolized a

hard-fought victory for the North Slope Inupiat Eskimos.

The North Slope Borough still faces legal challenges from the oil companies to be brought

(Continued on page 6)

Borough Certified . . .

(Continued from page 1)

before the Alaska Superior Court in October.

The new borough will receive \$25,000 initially from the state for organizational purposes and has scheduled its first meeting for Monday morning.

Better schools for the area's children are one of the top priorities facing the borough. At the present time the area is served by BIA schools.

Upicksoun said they are planning an orderly transition from BIA schools to borough schools, "so that the teachers, the children will not be hurting."

Boucher congratulated the Arctic Slope people on the election and their new borough and said, "Your work starts now."

Upicksoun answered, "It's been going on since 1966, but now it's more pleasure."

In his closing statements, Boucher said, "The election returns are pretty obvious. The people have spoken."

The Arctic Slope Native people had, indeed, spoken. Unofficial returns indicated that the people had approved incorporation of the borough by about 593 votes to 33.

The victory of the Arctic Slope people sets an important precedent for other areas of the state which look toward future incorporation of other boroughs as development continues in the wake of the Land Claims Settlement.