

A lesson in business — American-style

by **Holly F. Reimer**

Tundra Times reporter

Perry Eaton, president of the Community Enterprise Development Corp., wants to bring Soviet business people to Alaska and teach them Western marketing and economics.

Eaton visited the city of Magadan in the Soviet Far East earlier this month to discuss the prospects of buying Soviet goods and selling them in Alaska.

But Eaton said first the Soviets must be taught how America's economic and marketing systems operate.

"They have a completely different

set of economics," Eaton said during an interview last week.

He added that the Soviet goods aren't packaged or put in warehouses before leaving the factory.

"You just go to a store and buy it. The store is the distribution center," Eaton said.

It's just the opposite in the United States. Eaton said consumers have to be sold on an item before they even buy it.

He said American consumers look at packaging, price, quality and consistency. How well the product is advertised usually determines how

well the product will sell.

The Soviets, on the other hand, are far ahead with their factories and the production of goods, Eaton said.

"They sew and make garments and have highly specialized products. They also have ivory and bone carving centers. Their production capacity and mentality is way ahead of us. But they lack distributive capacity. Their packaging is poor. They don't have quality control in some areas," Eaton explained.

"The Soviets are extremely eager. They want to learn retailing," he said.

The agreement with the Soviets is

a cultural and economic exchange. And Eaton noted the strong empathy level between Northern people.

"They have a real incentive for Alaska. They would rather do business with us. There is a warm feeling," he said.

Eaton is anxious to teach the Soviets. And he's anxious to open a store. But he said there are many individual issues and unknowns that will have to be worked out before he can reach his goals.

"I'm optimistic that a relationship can be made. It makes good sense to both sides," Eaton said.