

5 Barrow residents run in NSB mayor election

by Geoff Kennedy
for the Tundra Times

The race to succeed George Ahmaogak as North Slope Borough mayor promises to be hotly contested.

Although the filing period remains open till Sept. 12, five Barrow residents are already running.

They are Arnold Brower Jr., Edward Itta, Benjamin P. Nageak, Rex A. Okakok and Jeslie Kaleak.

Brower is currently the mayor's special assistant for cultural affairs. He

is a past chairman of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, a past member of the Ukpengvik Inupiat Corp. and a borough employee since its inception in 1972.

"I know how departments function in the borough and what the mayor is supposed to do," Brower said. "I have a long-standing commitment to public service."

Brower cited his close relationship with the late Borough Mayor Eben Hopson.

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"My overall goal is to maintain a well-kept government," he said.

Brower is married and has two sons.

Itta manages the Capital Improvements Program/Residential Employment and Living Improvements Program for the borough.

He is a past president of the North Slope Borough School District and a past vice president of the Barrow Whaling Captains Association. He also serves on the board of the Utkeagvik Presbyterian Church in Barrow.

Itta directed the Borough Planning Department, served as the mayor's chief administrative officer and directed the Public Works Department.

He helped "straighten out the mess" resulting from scandals during the administration of Eugene Brower, Ahmaogak's predecessor, Itta said.

"I believe I can provide the needed leadership in the '90s," he said. "My past experience gives me the qualifications to handle the job as mayor."

Itta is married and has two children.

Benjamin P. Nageak directs the Borough Department of Wildlife Management. He chairs the Eskimo Walrus Commission and serves as vice chairman of the Alaska Board of Game.

He chaired the Rural Alaska Resources Association and the Gates of the Arctic Park and Preserve Subsistence Resource Commission and served on the Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corp. Board of Directors.

"I have worked hard to protect our way of life these past several years in various capacities and I feel that I can continue to do that and more if elected," he said.

Nageak is married and has three children.

Rex A. Okakok is also a special assistant to the mayor. He serves on the Arctic Slope Regional Corp., UIC and school district boards. He is president of the Barrow Rotary Club, the Native Village of Barrow Tribal Government and the Piquiniq Manage-

ment Corp.

"I feel it is time to focus on strengthening the family and community values of the residents of the North Slope Borough," he said. "We are living in a time of great diversity

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which was foreseen, yet uncomprehendable, by our ancestors. Now, more than ever, we need to continue our growth toward accountability within our government to maximize benefits to our residents."

Okakok is married and has five children and five grandchildren.

Jeslie Kaleak is corporate secretary for ASRC and serves on the ASRC Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

He has served as president of the North Slope Borough School Board and as member of the Barrow City

Council.

"I'm positive I can provide positive leadership and work with the people," he said.

If elected, Kaleak would try to use borough and state funds to provide vocational training and a pioneer home for borough residents. And he would seek to develop Arctic coal fields as an alternative heating source for Barrow and the villages.

Kaleak points out that he's the only candidate who doesn't work for the borough.

Ahmaogak is limited to two terms and is currently serving his second three-year term.