

Location, location, location...

As a location for businesses catering to the visitor industry, Northway offers some special features. Besides its convenient placement on a major state highway, its exceptional summer weather is always a welcomed surprise for those southern neighbors who still envision Alaska as a frozen expanse.

The wonders of Alaska's varied and abundant wildlife is on display in nearby Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge. Home to one of North America's largest waterfowl nesting areas, the refuge offers a picturesque backdrop for those getting their first taste of the "Great Land."

Having originally migrated from the Yukon region of Canada, Natives from this area have some unique traditions and customs from which to draw when planning new tourist attractions. Currently, efforts are under way for the construction of a Native cultural center in Northway. Plans for the center include a replica of a traditional Athabascan fish camp and a dance pavilion for Native song and dance performances.

The nearby communities of Tok and Tanacross are considering similar endeavors. Combined, the cultural centers could create a tourist destination unparalleled in the region. ■



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge is a major visitor attraction in the eastern interior.

appeal to visitors in that employees are Native and can offer explanations of the local culture and traditions.

Naabia Niign has faced many barriers to success, however. Among those typical for village-based businesses are: high fuel and electric costs, lack of local repairmen, a struggling local economy and problems with attracting and retaining skilled workers.

Helping to even out those barriers is

the village's proven ability to develop good local leadership. Case in point: Emma Hildebrand who reports that the best thing about working for Naabia Niign is the fulfillment of her educational goals and aspirations. In her mind, nothing could be better than working for the people that she grew up with, close to home, helping those who are most important to her. ■