

## Legislative races

# Primary changes political map

by **Jeffrey R. Richardson**  
for the Tundra Times

Rep. Kay Wallis, D-Fort Yukon, appeared to edge out her Democratic primary challenger in one of the closest Bush legislative races this year. Wallis defeated Robert L. Beans of Mountain Village by a vote of 553 to 518.

Wallis will face Republican Georgianna Lincoln of Rampart in the General Election in what is predicted to be a tough race.

With all House seats and many in the Senate up for re-election, and many incumbents choosing to leave

legislative service, Alaska's political map is changing again.

Veteran political observers are watching both urban and rural races for clues about how the outcomes will affect the balance of power in the next four years.

In District 26, incumbent Democrat George Jacko of Pedro Bay will face Lydia Wilson of Nondalton, the Republican challenger for his House seat.

"I decided to run because I felt we needed more cooperation with other representatives and legislators down

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there," Wilson told the *Tundra Times*. She said Jacko's aggressive and often critical approach to dealing with issues was "very harmful for us."

"If you're getting along down there with your peers, you get a lot more for your district — get the bills that you want, instead of blasting away at each other."

Wilson acknowledged she had "a little bit of a battle ahead" against Jacko, who outpolled her by a more than 2-to-1 margin. But she remained positive about the process. She said her priorities are securing greater local control for communities in the district and helping urban legislators better understand the extent to which rural residents contribute to urban economies through purchasing, transportation and other financial relationships.

In other important rural races, Ivan M. (Martin) Ivan of Akiak won a decisive victory over fellow Democrat Bob Herron of Bethel for the seat vacated by incumbent Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel. The Republican challenger, Albert C. Romer Jr. of Bethel, said he has dropped out of the race.

Hoffman opted to run for the Senate seat held by the retiring Sen. John Binkley, R-Bethel. According to vote tallies provided by the Division of Elections, Hoffman trounced former state Rep. Vern Hurlbert of Sleetmute. Hoffman, heavily endorsed by Native and rural business and political leaders, received 2,829 votes to the 1,619 votes cast for Hurlbert. With no Republican opposition, the worst is over for Hoffman. □

But Hoffman's victory raises precisely the kind of tricky questions that are difficult to answer, at least until the General Election results are in. Hoffman was vice chair of the House Finance Committee, an important position for advancing rural agendas.

Wallis currently sits on the Finance Committee, as well. If she defeats Lincoln in November, will she be able to retain that seat? How would the makeup of the House affect a Wallis bid to chair the committee? What role would rookie rural legislators play in organizing the House and Senate?

Because influencing state rural policy depends so heavily on building effective coalitions with urban lawmakers, many observers were closely watching the tallies for important legislative seats from Anchorage.

Many, like Ruby John, the Cantwell Democrat challenging incumbent Dick Schultz, R-Tok, in District 17, celebrated the victory of Rep. Virginia Collins, R-Anchorage, over incumbent Sen. Jan Faiks, R-Anchorage. In the hotly contested primary battle, the two Republican women battled for votes in Senate District F-B in Anchorage.

John and others expressed confidence that Collins, who has no Democratic opponent, would be easier to work with and less rigid than the outspoken, sometimes controversial, Faiks.

Primary vote counts had not even been completed when the Alaska Public Radio Network reported that Ed Dankworth, the former legislator who is now a powerful lobbyist, already had begun organizing the next legislature to suit his ambitions and the needs of his clients.

How will maneuvering by

Dankworth and others behind the scenes affect legislative races that have barely gotten off the ground? It is difficult to say at this point.

Veteran legislative analysts, who declined to be identified, said the Bush contingent in the next legislature could be strong, vigorous and effective.

They suggested that if Democrats do

well in legislative races statewide, veterans such as returning Sen. Al Adams, D-Kotzebue, Rep. Eileen MacLean, D-Barrow, and Jacko, with the assistance of articulate newcomers like Democrat Jerry Mackie of Craig, the favored candidates for House District 2, could wield considerable influence for their rural constituents.