

Hoffman, Ivan get headstart with victories

by Geoff Kennedy

for the Tundra Times

BETHEL — Rep. Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel, and Ivan M. Ivan got a headstart on many other candidates in Alaska when they won their Primary Election races Tuesday. Neither faces opposition.

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Hoffman defeated former Rep. Vern Hurlbert, D-Sleetmute, in the race for the seat given up by Sen. John Binkley, R-Bethel. Binkley has announced his retirement and moved to Fairbanks.

Hoffman had 2,829 votes, compared to 1,619 for Hurlbert.

The results are unofficial, pending a count of absentee and questioned ballots and certification.

Hoffman said the margin of victory surprised him.

"I anticipated a lot closer race, and I'm pleased that my hard work traveling to the villages and going door to door has been successful," he said.

Endorsements from Interior Alaskans, such as from Doyon Ltd. President Morris Thompson, Tanana Chiefs Conference Chairman Mitch Demientieff and former Republican Sen. John Sackett of Ruby, as well as from Binkley helped his campaign, Hoffman said.

"The support from Morrie Thompson and from John Sackett, from John Binkley, from Mitch Demientieff has

worked out," Hoffman said. "They've seen the work that I've been able to give to the people from Juneau, and I think that is the deciding factor."

Ivan, the Aniak city administrator and board chairman of the Calista Corp., defeated Bob Herron, Hoffman's aide, business partner and brother-in-law. With all 23 precincts reporting, Ivan had 1,248 votes, and Herron, 942. Republican challenger Albert C. Romer Jr. of Bethel said he has dropped out of the race.

With the victory, Ivan will succeed Hoffman as representative for House District 25. Hoffman will succeed Binkley as senator for District M, which stretches from Saint Matthew Island in the Bering Sea northeast to the Canadian border.

The primary campaign divided officials of Calista and the non-profit regional corporation, the Association of Village Council Presidents.

Ivan and Hurlbert announced they were running together as a team. Ivan and three other Calista executives: Mike Neimeyer, Terrance Reimer and Matthew Nicolai contributed to the Hurlbert campaign, according to a campaign statement Hurlbert filed

with the Alaska Public Offices Commission.

The AVCP Board of Directors authorized contributions to Hoffman, gubernatorial candidate and former Anchorage Mayor Tony Knowles and Sen. Al Adams, D-Kotzebue.

Hoffman incurred opposition from Calista officials when he sought a critical habitat designation for an area near Platinum and Goodnews Bay, Herron said. Calista was interested in developing the area's mineral deposits, Herron said.

Supporting development in the area may have helped his campaign, Ivan said.

"I don't believe we should lock everything at this time, and my interest is keeping development open at the direction and control of the village which is affected," Ivan said.

During the campaign Hurlbert and Ivan also criticized Hoffman for not using his position as House Finance co-chair to prevent passage of the state budget until legislators enacted a rural preference subsistence constitutional amendment.

Hoffman, who introduced a con-

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stitutional amendment proposal, said it is unrealistic to blame a single legislator for failure to pass a constitutional amendment when not even Gov. Steve Cowper was able to do so.

Ivan denied the rift would jeopardize his working relationship with Hoffman when both represent Southwest Alaska in next year's legislative session.

"Negative, whatsoever," Ivan said. "In fact, I feel that with some different viewpoints, we can look at these issues from all sides for the benefit of the area. I look forward to working with him."

Hoffman also stressed the need for cooperation.

"When it comes down to elections, there are issues that may divide people, but, in final analysis, we have to separate those and work for the betterment of the people," Hoffman said.