

Hayes would revive Rural Development Council if elected

In a continuing effort to identify and promote new opportunities for rural Alaskans, Republican gubernatorial candidate Joe Hayes this week announced plans to revive the Rural Development Council.

Hayes said he also would work to ensure continued oil and gas exploration, develop the potential for coal mining in the western Arctic and deal with the problems of drug and alcohol abuse.

"We need to revive and restructure the Rural Development Council to include representatives of regional and village corporations who will work to find specific markets and opportunities to create rural jobs," Hayes said in comments before the Barrow Chamber of Commerce late last month.

The RDC was created in 1980, but funding was eliminated in 1983.

Hayes also praised the position of the Arctic Slope Regional Corp., which recently endorsed oil exploration activity in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"Oil and gas exploration has and will continue to provide many jobs and community facilities for Barrow and the North Slope," Hayes said. "To have the people who would be most affected by such resource development take a positive stand will send a strong message to Congress and the oil industry that we welcome exploration in the refuge."

Hayes also recently spoke out against pornography, drug and child abuse and prostitution in a talk in Fairbanks.

Sturgelewski for development

Arliss Sturgelewski, Republican candidate for governor, said recently that her administration would include an economic development cabinet and

that she would take an active role in promoting Alaska, if elected.

"Commitment to aggressive economic development starts at the top, with the governor and her cabinet," she said. "My economic development cabinet will consist of the heads of all state agencies involved in any phase of economic management and promotion."

The candidate also said the governor must be personally active in promoting Alaska's economic interests.

"I'll meet with private sector leaders on their own turf to persuade them that Alaska wants them," she said.

\$5,000 donated to Murkowski

U.S. Sen. Frank Murkowski received \$5,000 from the National Realtors Political Action Committee as a contribution to his re-election campaign. The donation, made at the recommendation of Alaska members of the organization, was presented to the senator recently in Fairbanks.

"This PAC contribution represents an endorsement from a number of individual Alaskan Realtors," said Jeff Cook of Fairbanks, a member of the national board.

Richards will tap Permanent Fund

Anchorage economist Bob Richards, Republican gubernatorial candidate, recently unveiled a program he would like to institute using the Alaska Permanent Fund to create 24,000 jobs.

Richards said he would use \$1.5 billion of the earnings of the fund for an "aggressive capital construction program in projects that expand the economic base."

He said another \$1 billion would be used to double the Permanent Fund dividend to \$1,000 for each person.

"This will represent a major shift of dollars from the hands of politicians into the hands of Alaskans. We are going to revitalize our state and get moving upward toward our exciting potential," Richards said.

Hickel says, "Work together"

Republican gubernatorial candidate Walter Hickel said recently that Alaskans must all work together to solve problems created by the state's budget crunch.

"It is not helpful right now to say that this budget crisis should have never happened, or to be critical of Gov. Sheffield's proposals just for political purposes," Hickel said.

"We all know our state government spending has to be cut. We all know there is state money in different budget categories that can be used," Hickel said.

He urged Alaskans to "get this crisis behind us" and "work together to get Alaska moving again."

Sheffield will not tap Fund

Despite the sudden drop in Alaska's oil revenue, Gov. Bill Sheffield said recently the Permanent Fund and the fund's dividend program will be protected by his administration.

"The government will not reach for your savings account," Sheffield said in his statewide budget speech.

"While some people will want to plow your Permanent Fund dividend into the government deficit, I want it plow-

ed into the local economy," he said. "It helps local businesses, it gives families a tangible share of our oil wealth and I'm sure it even helps homeowners pay their property taxes."

In the face of a \$900 million shortfall, Sheffield said Alaskans may debate whether to funnel some of the undistributed earnings from the fund to support state programs. The undistributed earnings are what's left after portions are used to fund the dividend program and inflation-proof the fund itself.

"Before anyone does anything new with the earnings of the Permanent Fund, the people need to vote on it," Sheffield said.

Randolph wants investigation

Dick Randolph, Republican gubernatorial candidate, recently urged the attorney general to initiate a state grand jury investigation of lobbyist Lewis Dischner, emphasizing that continuing disclosure of financial arrangements between Dischner and elected officials are "seriously undermining the integrity of state government and Alaska's political system."

"What we have here is the obvious appearance of impropriety. If the attorney general needs probable cause to investigate Mr. Dischner, he only needs to read the front page of the newspaper," Randolph told Attorney General Hal Brown in a letter.

Randolph said recent disclosures that Dischner loaned \$18,000 to state Rep. Marco Pignalberi and co-signed a \$240,000 loan for state Sen. Joe Josephson raise "serious ethical and legal questions concerning Dischner's role in Alaska government."