

Candidates speak out to Native business leaders

By Bill Hess
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One gubernatorial candidate seeking votes in the November election would help Native corporations find economic success by driving their young people out of villages in a public works draft program which would put them to work thinning trees and sending them to the papermill.

Another would declare all Alaskans living in the state shareholders in Prudhoe Bay who would split the royalty money which now goes to the state among them, so they could use the money any way they see fit.

Another would work to stop giveaway programs such as the dividend payment and instead funnel the money into rural areas for schools, roads, water and sewage, and other needs.

There were just a few of the views expressed by election hopefuls who addressed members of the Alaska Inter-Regional Private Industry Council in Anchorage last week. AIR/PIC is a largely Native organization set up to help village, urban and regional corporations develop professional management teams and good business practices, and to help them prepare plans and programs to employ Alaskans.

Three of the four candidates hoping to replace Gov. Jay Hammond were unable to make a personal appearance, but their Lt. Governor hopefuls did.

Steve McAlpine, running mate to Democratic gubernatorial candidate Bill Sheffield, told those gathered at the Anchorage Westward Hilton that the state has the respon-

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Natives recognized as largest land owners

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sibility to provide for the basic needs of the people in the state. "The most critical issue is our ability to tax natural resources."

McAlpine spoke of a growing threat to eliminate that ability, reminding listeners that legislation already has been introduced in the U.S. Congress which would limit the amount of severance tax Alaska could impose on companies removing oil and mineral wealth from the state.

"Governor Hammond spent \$4 million dollars on a television program to enhance Alaska's image (in the Lower 48) and then in the next breath spent \$400 million to destroy it!" McAlpine referred to the dividend program under which every resident of the state of more than six months is receiving \$1,000. That program, he contended, added fuel to the arguments to limit Alaska's severance taxing abilities.

"Our rural areas lack roads, water and sewage ... roads need to be developed," McAlpine argued. "We don't believe the state is in a position to give away money. The state needs to begin acting as it should, and limit spending to the basic needs of the population." Private industry should take over from there, McAlpine said.

McAlpine also contended that more money should be funneled directly as grants into Alaskan communities instead of having to work its way down through a slow, bureaucratic process.

McAlpine also promised that a Democratic administration would work closely with the regional corporations to help create an atmosphere where they could turn a profit.

He warned that after 1991, any corporation which was "asset rich and cash poor" - holding valuable lands and minerals but with little money in the bank - would be in trouble. Unless they could pay taxes, they could lose those lands. Shareholders could be tempted to sell their stocks.

Mike Colletta, the Republican running mate of gubernatorial candidate Tom Fink, emphasized that Natives are the largest holders of private property in the state. "Any viable development, any progress for the future, has got to happen on private lands," Colletta stressed. "It has got to! And you will have assistance from a Fink administration."

"The only economical producible lands in Alaska are those being held by the Native landowners," Colletta re-emphasized. "Tom Fink is committed to assist (in the development of those lands), and not to have people be dependent on the state."

Colletta reiterated Fink's support of the subsistence repeal initiative and his own opposition to it. Yet, he stressed their ultimate goal was the same, to make Alaskans "equal," but that would do it

through amendment.

"Regardless, there is one promise from Tom Fink," Colletta pledged. "Any individual who needs fish, game or fowl will have it!"

Donnis Thompson, running-mate of Libertarian candidate Dick Randolph, said she was uneasy about what was happening in Alaska today. Anywhere else in the Nation, she argued, any Americans holding lands beneath which oil and other minerals were found were entitled to the royalties from those resources.

A clause in the Statehood Act had taken subsurface rights away from Alaskans, she claimed, and thus "disenfranchised" them from what was rightfully theirs. The Libertarian solution? Divide Prudhoe Bay's wealth into shares and on one day issue one share to every Alaskan, and then close the books. This would eliminate the hassle of jobless Outsiders flocking to the state to claim a share of the money, she said.

Raymond Neakok, executive director of the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope took Thompson on about what seemed to him to be inconsistencies of individuals in a group holding private ownership in Prudhoe Bay, and

about her program being an attempt at further colonization of Alaska.

Thompson seemed to grow a little more confused with each of Neakok's questions, and finally and with great relief tried to stop him short by calling upon another member of a small group of onlookers.

Up next was Joe Vogler, the Alaska Independence Party Candidate, the only governor's candidate to show.

"You folks have not only an opportunity, you have the obligation to your own people and the rest of Alaska to use your money - it won't last long - one dollar. But it'd make people lazy! I've seen it happen."

Vogler said he was strongly opposed to subsistence, U.S. sovereignty over Alaska, and favors moving the capital to Willow. "How many people will go to Willow," the street person challenged him. "I'm from New York. How many people there go to Albany? Hardly anybody!"

"I don't believe in the land mineral rights," Vogler said his ancestors, who he thanked goodness for allowing to jump off the reservation and intermarry with others, used to hunt buffalo on the plains of Kansas.

"We couldn't go back to those days. That land produces food for millions of people - it once produced for only thousands." Vogler, who wants to build dams, roads, and most everything else, envisions a similar future for Alaska.

Vogler also likened village life to a black hell, and told Native leaders they should get their young people out of them. Get them into trade schools, working as apprentices, and teach them that one day they are going to have to provide for themselves, Vogler advised.

Dave Carlson, the Democratic candidate seeking to take

away Don Young's seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, had just the solution. "Compulsory public service!" Carlson preached. "Get those kids out of those villages. Away from trouble and crime. They should not be on welfare. Put them to work. The old public works program."

Carlson suggested having the kids got out and thin trees, which could be used as "paper resources." "Get those kids out of the villages. Out of the slums!" Carlson advocated. He billed himself as the "Anti-nuclear candidate."

Young could not appear, but he did send a letter praising AIR/PIC and Native enterprise.