

Candidates vie for Southeast votes

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

JUNEAU — With the General Election only weeks instead of months away, voters in Southeast Alaska have been treated to last-minute appearances by the three major candidates for governor.

As Democrat Tony Knowles and Republican Arliss Sturgulewski

prepared for presentations before the Alaska Visitors Association convention in Juneau last week, late third party entry Wally Hickel, with Sen. Rick Halford, R-Chugiak, in tow, made a swing through Sitka and Ketchikan.

Voters in the southern panhandle were keeping even closer watch on the region's most spirited legislative race. Democrat Paul Young, with strong

Native support, is trying to unseat incumbent Republican Rep. Robin Taylor of Wrangell.

Taylor won notoriety among many of his constituents by backing anti-subsistence forces during this year's regular and special legislative sessions.

Edith McHenry, administrative director for Sealaska Corp., said

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voters were "intense and excited" about the Young-Taylor contest.

She said Sealaska had sent a letter to shareholders on Young's behalf. Fundraisers for him have been well attended, and another large function is planned just before election day, she said.

when Tony talked about quality of life. Now everybody's talking about it."

She laughs out loud at a poll conducted for the Sturgulewski campaign showing the Republican out front by 10 points. Metcalfe also downplays the significance of Sturgulewski's new running mate, Jim Campbell, who by all accounts is popular in Southeast.

"Jim will help Arliss in Petersburg,

to support and volunteer to assist Sturgulewski.

"We think our candidate will have a great deal of support in rural Alaska and in the Native American community," Wagoner said.

Bill Overstreet, former mayor of Juneau who is coordinating Hickel's campaign in the city, asserts his candidate enjoys similar support among Native voters.

From his card-table desk sporting three phones, Overstreet advances Hickel as the principal candidate of high integrity with thoughtful, forward-looking ideas.

Overstreet rejects the notion that Hickel is a viable spoiler rather than a viable candidate. He charges that Sturgulewski and Knowles rely on polls to decide their policies.

With only a couple of weeks to go, Overstreet agrees that Hickel has an uphill battle in the city of Juneau, but enjoys wide support elsewhere in the region.

With Hickel's entry into the campaign, it's become increasingly difficult to predict the outcome, either in Southeast or statewide. In fact, as one voter in Juneau noted, gambling on the World Series would be a surer bet.