

• Native culture center is a statewide project

continued from page two

project is a new initiative by Alaska Natives and many other sponsors who see merit in the project. Development of an Alaska Native culture center, envisioned for over a decade, was approved in concept by the Alaska Federation of Natives in September 1987.

It is a statewide effort to build a high quality Native culture center as a major visitor destination in Anchorage. It is for the enjoyment of Alaskans and visitors to Alaska who want to learn about Alaska's rich heritage.

It is intended to depict the diversity of Alaska's ethnic heritage. It is an educational and cultural center. It is

an opportunity for Anchorage to join with the rest of the state in this cooperative effort.

It will provide a significant addition to Anchorage's tourism infrastructure and the community's effort to further diversify the economy. For the first time, there is involvement by Alaska Natives from all 13 regions of Alaska and the Continental United States in a project of this kind.

The *Daily News* has been awarded a Pulitzer Prize for its extensive reporting on the social problems faced by Alaska Natives. It has devoted hundreds of inches of column space to Native social ills and received public recognition for it.

Agreeably, these are important issues that merit attention and resolu-

tion. However, when there is a positive movement in progress to develop a significant addition to the community's cultural and economic resources such as the Alaska Native Heritage Park, that in my opinion is newsworthy.

The *Anchorage Times* has thought so, too, since it has published an article and made periodic references to the culture center from the outset.

In contrast, the *Anchorage News* has remained silent on the Alaska Native Heritage Park until a "problem" was identified; then the *News* wrote an article on it, and furthermore, in its haste deemed the matter "urgent" enough to require that the article go to press within 24 hours without investigating the full scope of the culture center pro-

ject as it has been unfolding over the past two years.

If the reporter had bothered to investigate the complexity of this project, he, too, might have seen that the "balk" of the Heritage Land Bank was not that newsworthy.

This kind of problem-driven news reporting written for deadlines and headlines and not for community understanding unfortunately reinforces what I have wanted to think otherwise: the *Anchorage Daily News* is interested only in reporting problems to sell newspapers.

Sincerely,
Alaska Native Heritage Park
Lydia L. Hays
Executive Director
Anchorage