

# Hoffman offers advice at Arctic business breakfast

The Arctic Development Council small business incubator office in Barrow, at one of their recent weekly business breakfast gatherings, featured Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation's Chief Administrative Officer David Hoffman who shared his small business dream — as well as some of the pitfalls that came along the way — to an overflow group of about a dozen business persons.

"My wife, Dee, and I had a

dream and set up a village-based consulting business in August, 1983," he said. "Our idea was that with a computer and modem, we could compete with other management and business consultants."

Hoffman said they had a comprehensive business plan, but did not anticipate some basic problems, such as finding a place to live in Ruby. But he said they managed to remodel an old min-

ing cabin for quarters.

"There's no reason you cannot be in rural Alaska and run a world-class business," he said.

However, Hoffman told the group that he had to deal with the perception of outsiders in places like Anchorage, that if you are from rural Alaska, you are dumb. Other problems included cash flow, and getting clients to pay bills in a timely manner. He spoke about the "entrepreneurial terror"

he and his wife experienced at times due to lack of cash.

Hoffman said sometimes people wonder why a person would want to go into business on the North Slope, as opposed to continuing a paid government job. "I think it has to do with two things," he said. "When looking at entrepreneurs, I see a special spark in their eye and a spring in their step." In addition, he said,

there can be financial rewards down the road.

Questions included one from Tina Corwin of Barrow, who spoke about the difficulty of working on a business plan after a long day of work. Others in the group advised trying to do a little bit each day. Also, networking and getting organized enough to avoid later frustration — such as around tax time.