

It's official: Hickel is now governor

by **Holly F. Reimer**

Tundra Times reporter

Gov. elect Walter J. Hickel officially became Alaska's eighth governor during his swearing in ceremony at Centennial Hall in Juneau Dec. 3.

Dr. Ted Mala, who was appointed by Hickel to be the commissioner for the Department of Health and Social Services, said the room was full at the swearing in. He said nearly 1,500 people were there to witness the ceremony.

"We really like Hickel. We think the world of him so the moment was very moving," Mala said from his Juneau office.

continued on page seven

•Inauguration

continued from page one

Mala said Hickel represents many things for the state of Alaska, and he said there are many people to help him accomplish those goals.

Mala, an Inupiat Eskimo from Kotzebue, along with the other appointed commissioners were sworn in later that afternoon.

In his inaugural address, Hickel, who won election on the Alaskan Independence Party ticket, said Alaskans are independent regardless of political party.

"We like to stand our ground, whatever that ground might be, and we're not awed by Outside interests, however big they are or how big they think they are," he said.

Hickel said Alaska has a unique climate, culture, geography and geology, and he's going to make sure that it stays that way.

"We will not tolerate those who take advantage of Alaska's people or abuse our beautiful state. . . We're going to try to educate those people — Outside — about this unique country called Alaska," he said.