

Bethel voters turn down proposal to make city 'dry'

by Geoff Kennedy
for the Tundra Times

BETHEL. — "I never give up hope."

That was the reaction of Bethel elder Antoine Anvil to the defeat of his proposal to ban the sale and importation of alcohol in this city of 4,390.

The unofficial tally was 341 against the ban and 318 for it.

Anvil expressed disappointment not only in the results, but also in the turnout. Only 46 percent of the city's registered voters went to the polls. A higher turnout, Anvil said, could have helped his cause.

Anvil had led the drive to bring the sixth local option election to the community in a little more than two years. In all six elections, voters

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consistently supported "damp" status.

They defeated not only measures to allow the sale of alcohol in liquor stores and restaurants, but also attempts to ban alcohol completely from the city.

Bethel needed another vote, Anvil said, because last year's ballot was too confusing and led many city elders to vote the wrong way.

The election Tuesday left Anvil still determined to fight alcohol abuse, but he said he was uncertain about future strategy.

"I'm not about to give up. I'm going to try to do what I can in other means," he said. "If you're not going to accomplish something by voting for it, there may be — there has to be some way."