

# ALASKA ELECTION '90

## Republican candidates differ on solutions for subsistence

by Geoff Kennedy  
for the Tundra Times

The three Republican candidates for lieutenant governor, like legislators, differ on how to handle Alaska's subsistence dilemma. That shouldn't be surprising because two of the candidates are also lawmakers.

Sen. Tim Kelly of Anchorage, said he'd call in four or five minority members and convince them to avoid a continued federal takeover of fish and game on 60 percent of Alaska lands by voting for a rural subsistence preference.

His status as an urban Republican

would help him persuade fellow urban legislators and Republicans that avoiding a continued federal takeover would be in the best interests of urban Alaskans, he said.

Sen. Jack Coghill of Nenana disagrees.

"I would instruct the fish and game

boards to establish management units to establish local subsistence preferences without amending the constitution," Coghill said. "Regulate uses, not users, of the wildlife and fish on a sustained-yield basis to maintain a good, healthy stock."

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Steven Levi

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The top priority for subsistence should be for those who depend on the resources for food, he said.

"We don't need to amend the constitution to conform to the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act," he said. "A priority of users probably is against the U.S. Constitution as well."

Steven Levi would challenge



Sen. Tim Kelly

ANILCA's rural preference in court. "I wouldn't even mess with the Legislature. Let's just bite the bullet," he said.

Levi disagrees with Gov. Steve Cowper, Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, and Congressman Don Young, R-Alaska, who say a court challenge has very little chance of success and could backfire by increasing restrictions on hunting and fishing on



Sen. Jack Coghill

federal lands in the state.

"I don't think they know what they're talking about," Levi said. It's impossible to predict the outcomes of court cases, he said.

Asked to set priorities for balancing the state budget as revenues decline, Levi's first priority would be

to reduce services by cutting the state budget 6 percent a year for every year he's in office.

Except for education, the cuts would affect "everybody in every department in every division," he said.

Next he would tap the earnings and undistributed income of the Permanent Fund.

Then he would reduce aid to local governments.

After that he would impose a sales tax on everything but food and health.

He said his last resort would be to tap the Permanent Fund.

Coghill would first reorganize government without cutting services.

"We have too much government for the sake of government," he said.

About 60 percent of the state workforce consists of policy-makers and administrators at one end and the

"It's very difficult to reduce spending when you have money available," he said. "But when people realize we're in dire straits, then they'll accept cuts in state services. You'll have to pare down government until you reach the point when the public decides to pay taxes to pay for those services."

Kelly refuses to promise to add or increase any services to rural Alaska. Instead, he predicts the Bush will suffer its share of cuts when revenues dwindle.

"Anybody that's promising to increase services to rural Alaska is misstating reality," Kelly said. "If we can hold what we have in rural Alaska, we'll be ahead of the game."

Coghill wants to reduce some services to rural Alaska.

"We need to establish priorities in

"I have no trouble finding hotel rooms in Nome and Kotzebue."

The Bush has a tremendous potential, but the state government hinders the Bush by putting "political roadblocks" in the way, he said.

Coghill wants the state to promote cottage industries in rural Alaska by setting up arts and crafts cooperatives for villages "closely knit" by family and cultural ties.

Kelly wants the state to provide revenue bonds for natural resources industries in rural Alaska. The best example is the state participation in the Red Dog Mine in Northwest Alaska, he said. The state should also help start other projects like Arctic coal mines, bottomfishing and fish-processing plants on shore, Kelly said.

"The biggest single problem in rural areas is the uncertainty over sub-

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—Sen. Tim Kelly

workers who provide the services directly at the other, he said.

"We have a lot of people who just pass paper around. That's where government is overgrown. We don't need to cut services to the needy."

Coghill estimates such a reorganization would cut the state operating budget by about 30 percent.

Coghill refused to choose among cutting aid to local governments, imposing taxes or cutting state services.

Instead, he proposes a series of town meetings in which Alaskans decide their own priorities. Although the state held such meetings a couple of years ago, it should repeat the process, he said.

That's because the fiscal condition of the state is constantly a "moving target," Coghill said.

"But before we do that, we should spend our resource dollars. Royalties should not be spent on government, but should be re-invested in tourism and natural resource development," he said.

Spending the Permanent Fund earnings would not be a last resort for Coghill. It wouldn't even be a resort, he said.

"It's not the government's money," he said. "It's the people's money."

the Power Cost Equalization Program to phase it out over four years. And we ought to set aside funds for energy-saving down the line," he said. "PCE is a subsidy program that abets waste rather than encouraging thrift."

"Cut back on grant programs over and above capital projects. There are always goodie bags," he said.

"Replace the giveaway programs with self-determination," he said. The state should encourage villagers to choose hunting, fishing and gathering and help villagers set up ranches for moose, beaver and other furbearers, he said.

Levi also opposes many of the state services to rural Alaska.

"Stop the hemorrhaging of dollars in stupid projects," he said. "We have projects that are ridiculous. Let the private sector come in and develop something that will last."

The government should instead remove the obstacles that prevent transportation corridors, Levi said.

"Government should make it as easy as possible for development in an environmentally safe manner."

The state can promote economic development in rural Alaska by re-allocating the money it spends on tourism, Levi said. The government

sistence. The longer we fail to provide a solution, the worse and more intrusive federal management will be," Kelly said. "My top priority as Senate president or as lieutenant governor will be to get a solution."

For Levi the biggest problem is balancing the budget as revenues decline.

"Alaska is on a very critical path right now, and it's a path to disaster," he said. "I'm the only one talking about doing something now. The Bush will be hurt the most, because the votes just aren't there."

For Coghill, "Our top priority should be to look out for health, safety and welfare. We can do it by self-determination, not by orders from Washington, D.C. We have been dictated to more by Washington than by the elders. We need to listen more to the elders."

Coghill, 64, served Nenana as school board member and mayor. He's served in the Territorial House and State Senate.

Levi, 41, is an Anchorage free-lance writer.

Kelly, 45, has represented Anchorage for one term in the House and for three terms in the Senate.

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Kelly would start by reducing state spending according to its income. Then he would cut state services themselves. Third, he would cut aid to local governments. Then he would impose alcohol and tobacco taxes. The last resort would be the Permanent Fund and its earnings.

is wasting money advertising out of state for people to come in Alaska, because places like Anchorage have more tourists than they can handle, he said.

Instead, the state should advertise in urban Alaska for people to visit rural Alaska, Levi said.



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