

# Spotlight on village tourism

One of the most popular workshops at the CEDC Annual Membership Meeting featured how to set up a successful tourist business in a rural community. Ann Campbell, president of Alaska Village Tours, a CEDC subsidiary, outlined some of the lessons learned from the tours already established on Gambell Island, in Tyonek and Bethel.

She and Dale Fox, a visiting industry specialist, explained to residents from regions throughout the state that a tourist market is slow to build and should be seen as a three to five year project before profits are realized.

At the same time, the travel industry will soon become the world's largest.

More and more people are traveling, and they are looking for interesting and attractive destinations. In other words, explains Campbell, the opportunity for Alaska communities is there, but it requires capital investment, skillful marketing and a commitment on the part of local residents.

Campbell has just been named by Governor Steve Cowper to the 21 member Alaska Tourism Marketing Council. She sees this as an opportunity to bring the concept of village tourism into the statewide spotlight and is eager to work with rural communities throughout the state to explore their potential.



*Participants at the tourism workshop at the CEDC Annual Membership Meeting question visitor industry specialist Dale Fox.*