

Hickel Says He Will Run For Governor of Alaska



Walter J. Hickel

Photo by Ward Wells

Over statewide radio and television last night, Anchorage Hotelman Wally J. Hickel announced he would be a candidate for governor in the August Republican primary.

"In arriving at this decision, we traveled extensively throughout the state," said Walter J. Hickel announcing his candidacy for governor.

In commenting about Native conditions in Alaska, Hickel said at length:

"I was amazed when I read about the administration suddenly finding out last fall that deplorable conditions exist in the villages. All those political people who made the radio and newspaper headlines deploring these conditions have been here as long, or longer, than I have.

"The lack of housing, the lack of educational facilities, have always existed. WHY did your present administration suddenly acknowledge that many Native people were living in aboriginal conditions?

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Hickel Is Running . . .

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Could it have been because it was election year? Could it have been because we were electing a governor?

"I believe that it was. Why have they not faced these problems before, or are the Native people to believe that although they have been promised Santa Claus to come every four years, he never quite shows up at Christmas-time, because that's a month after election.

"There is a better way to run our state than always considering the problems from a political expedient point of view. I realize that these people have been getting welfare, and in many cases it has been insufficient, but no

one wants to stand day after day, year after year, with no hope but for a handout.

"A typical village home as described in the magazine 'The Village People' is one room 15 feet wide by 18 feet long, or 270 square feet, where six people live. Their heat comes from a wood stove and their light from a gas lantern. The floor is made of rough planking. Water is carried from the nearest supply, and human waste is deposited in five gallon cans.

"I promise to fight to alleviate these conditions. Schools and dormitories SHOULD be built in major cities for all people of rural areas so that we might bring these people in for higher education and show them and teach them a better way of life. This program is long overdue."

In making the announcement, Hickel became the second announced candidate for the state's highest office. Earlier, Anchorage attorney Wendell Kay announced he would be a gubernatorial candidate in the Democratic Primary.

Prominent Republicans who have been mentioned as potential candidates to oppose Hickel in the primary election include Fairbanks Attorney Mike Stepovich; Elmer Rasmuson, mayor of Anchorage; Anchorage Attorney Howard Pollock; and Anchorage Hotelman Bruce Kendall.