

Railroad has potential

Based on a state study indicating considerable potential and need for a transcontinental rail line, Commissioner of Commerce and Economic Development Phil Hubbard today initiated efforts aimed at securing federal funds for a cost-benefit analysis of the project.

Hubbard said the preliminary study results indicate numerous economic benefits to Alaska, Canada and the Midwest with the construction of the proposed railway. According to Hubbard, the proposed 1,365 miles of track between Prince George, B. C. and Fairbanks has the potential to provide benefits in the form of new jobs and businesses, lower costs for consumer and durable goods and increased revenue for governments. The project may also offer Alaska a needed transportation option for resource distribution to manufacturing areas, Hubbard said.

Although the report indicates that over 2 million tons of Alaska and Yukon generated cargo alone would be available to the railroad by 1990, Hubbard emphasized that the route should not be viewed solely as a means of moving Alaska goods back and forth to

the Midwest. "The line has potentially valuable short haul combinations and could offer the East Coast new links to the Orient through Alaska ports. The trunk line would connect ports such as Toyko, Anchorage and Skagway with other population centers like Fairbanks, Whitehorse, Edmonton, Duluth and Chicago," he said.