

Letters to the **EDITOR**

Rights of way essential to rural communities

Dear Editor:

I would like to take issue with several statements in your last editorial of the *Tundra Times* regarding your stand on the RS 2477 rights-of-way. It would seem you are grossly uninformed as to the purpose and use of these rights-of-way, and your editorial shows as much.

RS 2477 rights-of-way were established to provide access for legitimate purposes to isolated tracts of land (Native allotments are often isolated) across public lands unreserved for any other use. In Alaska that more often than not became the trail system, of which the Iditarod Trail is the most notable. There are literally thousands of these trails in Alaska that provide winter access for hunting, trapping, mining, and a myriad of other legitimate purposes.

I would like to give you another example that may strike closer to home.

There is a trail between Selawick and Kotzebue that is used by many residents of the area in the winter. Use is limited to dogteam and snowmachine. Why in the name of heaven do we need the federal government to set any limits or conditions to the use of a trail which has been used for hundreds, if not thousands, of years? The answer is clearly no. People of the region are going to use that trail for travel, trade, and commerce no matter what the federal government tries to do in the way of "control."

I commend the Alaska delegation's efforts to fight against further unreasonable infringement into our lives by those in the federal government who are trying to "protect us against ourselves." Live and let live, I have always heard.

Sincerely,
Glen A. Hanway
McGrath, Alaska