

Huhndorf favors opening ANWR

by Holly F. Reimer

Tundra Times reporter

photo by M.A. Klueber

Whether or not to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain to oil and gas development was the topic at a recent Anchorage Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

Roy Huhndorf, president and chief executive officer of Cook Inlet Region Inc. and Margaret Sagersen-Brown, project director of the Native Lands Group said they are both in favor of opening the ANWR coastal plain to oil and gas development.

Huhndorf explained how opening the ANWR coastal plain could help the declining Alaskan economy.

"It would be the first time Alaska companies have a major stake in Alaska development if ANWR is opened," Huhndorf said.

"It would mean local hire, shareholder hire, dividends for shareholders and shareholders spend money on goods and services in Alaska," he said.

"And it would also mean that money would flow back into Anchorage since a major portion of dividend dollars spent in rural Alaska returns to Anchorage."

Six separate Native groups will convey 891,000 acres of prime wildlife habitat inholdings within seven Alaska refuges to Fish and Wildlife Services for 166,000 acres of oil and gas rights in ANWR.

The six Native groups that wish to transfer lands are; Akhiok-Kaguyak,



Cook Inlet Region Inc. President Roy Huhndorf talks about opening ANWR.

Doyon Ltd., Gana-A-Yoo Ltd., Koniag Inc., the Native Land Group, and Old Harbor Native Group.

Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act the land selection pattern of inholdings of wildlife refuges

is scattered throughout the state, with expanded refuge lands of 77 million acres.

"There are condemnation problems in the lower 49," Sagersen said. "But not in Alaska."