

Hickel calls for open border

Gubernatorial candidate Walter Hickel called for the opening of "our common border with Russia for tourism and cultural exchanges."

In remarks prepared for a speech before the Nome Chamber of Commerce Hickel said, "Alaska and Siberia are only a few miles apart. We share a common history, common resources, common people, and common opportunities."

Hickel said the economic possibilities of opening the border are tremendous. He said, "We should also signal the world that our peaceful intentions start where we touch each other."

Hickel told the Chamber members that Alaskans should "behave like we own (our fisheries)." He said Alaska's fishermen can rival those of Japan and

Russia, but he cautioned, before we kick out the foreign fishermen we should ask: "Are we going to kick out the market with them?" And he said, "Let's not overlook the opportunity to sell our fish to the Japanese."

Hickel said we can have safe, clean water along with a viable placer mining industry. He said, "Make no mistake, I will never allow the degradation of the water, but we won't require the water to be returned to the stream cleaner than it was picked up."

On other issues, Hickel said, "Sovereignty, access, the 1991 question and land classification are all questions of public policy that must and can be decided by the state of Alaska. They are state questions with solutions within our state constitution."