

North Slope officer asked to resign position

An era has ended at the North Slope Borough. Jon Buchholdt, the crusty, out-spoken assistant to the late Borough Mayor Eben Hopson has been asked to resign effective May 15.

"In a letter dated April 6, borough Mayor Jacob Adams asked Buchholdt to tender his resignation pending reorganization of the Anchorage liaison office just as President Reagan asked Carter officials to resign before he moved to Washington," said borough spokesman and mayoral assistant Ralph Anderson.

Mayor Adams' action came a day before the borough assembly voted to consider the deletion of three positions in

the Anchorage Liaison office. Buchholdt has served as head of the office since its inception in 1978.

During his tenure as Mayor Hopson's assistant, Buchholdt was often criticized for his aggressive statements to the public by the traditional political factions on the North Slope.

According to Sharon Brown from the borough administration offices in Barrow, the Borough Assembly's action is not final. A special meeting for continued public comment and a possible deletion vote will be held April 28.

Brown expects the assembly to delete and add positions in other key departments as well.



Jon and Thelma Buchholdt

Leonard Lane and associates, the management consulting firm which restructured Hammond's

administration, is currently conducting a management study of the Borough Mayor's offices.

The study has been funded by Borough Mayors office. The consulting firm has submitted recommendations for Mayor Adams' consideration but they have not yet been implemented. Therefore Buchholdt's resignation was not requested because of the study," Anderson stated.

In earlier newspaper reports, Buchholdt confirmed Anderson's statement and blamed his split with Mayor Adams on "personal reasons."

Buchholdt has long been well known for his surprise tactics, used against the oil companies, the federal government and the state. The tactics often gave the borough the time and ammunition needed to prepare an opposition suit. But, they also often caused problems among borough leaders.

When Buchholdt raised his voice against the seven-year tanker study being conducted by the Maritime administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce because they sent the Coast Guard Icebreaker Polar Sea on this winter's trip to Point Barrow, Buchholdt may have led the Borough into battle for the last time. On March 4, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission at Buchholdt's request passed a resolution asking the secretary of Commerce to facilitate AEWC's participation in the study.

Buchholdt said he might continue to work on the North Slope. Buchholdt will shortly be traveling to Melbourne, Australia with the AEWC for a meeting with Australia's aboriginal leaders and key Australian parliamentary figures. Australia's aboriginal community has offered to lobby for a change in Australia's policy to opposing Eskimo Subsistence whaling.