

Barrow judicial candidates named

Barrow-based Legal Services lawyer Michael Jeffrey, who has represented villages and individuals in the North Slope since 1977, is one of two candidates seeking to be appointed to the newly created Barrow Superior Court judge's position.

The other candidate seeking the \$82,386 per year job, is Anchorage attorney Timothy Stearns, a civil rights lawyer.

Both men applied to fill the position which was created by

the 1982 Legislature. Two other judgeships, one in Palmer and one in Wrangell, also were created but the Wrangell position only drew one candidate and will be re-advertised according to Judicial Council Executive Director Buddy Troxell.

The new attorney will preside over all court proceedings in the North Slope.

Jeffrey said he has been urged by people in Barrow to apply for the judgeship for

some time.

He said that he applied primarily to bring issues important to the North Slope to the attention of the Alaska Court system.

Those issues include expansion of the court facilities, providing Inupiaq translators so court proceedings are well-understood by all involved; adding to the court staff; providing village travel budget

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Jeffrey a candidate

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and implementation of many laws that apply specifically to Alaska Native people such as the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Jeffrey said he discussed his application with Sadie Neakok, who was the first magistrate ever appointed in Barrow and found his reasons for applying turned out to be the reason she first became a magistrate — both want to make the legal system with all its ins and outs more understandable to people.

He said he also applied because he wants to see someone who is well acquainted with

the Barrow North Slope people and who really cares about the community, appointed to the job.

Stearns couldn't be reached for an interview.

Although no official decision had been announced late Monday night, it was not expected that the job would be re-advertised.

Once the applications are accepted, a poll of attorneys and police officials will be taken for comments on the candidates' qualifications.

The council then will send its recommendation to Gov. Jay Hammond for his final appointment.