

Jack Diamond seeks Native teamster vote

The three year term for Secretary/Treasurer of General Teamsters Local 959 in Alaska is up for grabs this week as teamsters of local 959 will vote to keep or change leadership provided by Jessie Carr, secretary/treasurer of the statewide Teamsters Local 959. A change which has not occurred since 1956 when Carr became secretary/treasurer.

For nearly a quarter of a century (25 years out of ones lifetime) Teamster boss Jessie Carr was unchallenged for the top union post. Until Fairbanks' Jack Diamond decided to op-

pose him.

Diamond says the weeks he has spent on his campaign against incumbent Carr have been interesting. "He's using the power of the incumbency shall we say," Diamond said, "the pressure is there, but I don't think it will work."

Diamond says that is not all the present union leadership has done to make his campaigning interesting.

"First he moved the election up on me by 30 days and has refused to debate me," Diamond says.

Diamond's real complaint



Jack Diamond

with union management of the election comes from the number of polling places. "I talked with Native teamsters at the recent Alaska Federation of Natives Convention," said Diamond, and even they are very concerned." Diamond says that the 12 authorized polling places in the state do not substantially cover the state. Teamsters in Barrow, Nome, Kotzebue or smaller villages for instance will have to request absentee ballots.

"There's probably 800-1,000 Native teamsters statewide who will have to request absentee ballots," Diamond said. That's fully 10 percent of the teamster membership," Diamond said, "I requested a mail-in ballot for all members, but that was rejected."

Diamond suggested the use of an independent auditing firm to count the ballots, to replace the election committee which is selected by the incumbent and the executive board. The idea was rejected. "Needless to say, my attorneys will watch the election closely...we are prepared to contest it."

Diamond, who claims he has

forced Carr to keep it honest said that he is keeping a close eye on preparations for Friday's election. Diamond says the Alaska League of Women Voters will supervise and certify the election, while Smith Loomis security will guard the boxes. Diamond said that if he sees any sign of an irregularity that he would go to court. He has already done that.

On Saturday, Diamond said that Carr put out an inter-office memo changing earlier rules on absentee voting.

"Members desiring absentee ballots may either request them in person at the Teamster offices, or by writing," a letter dated September 26 and signed by Jessie Carr said.

Diamond says he saw hanging on a Teamster bulletin board Friday a second memo which "clarifies" the first:

"Members must go to a Teamster building to pick up their ballot," the memo reads, according to Diamond. He added, "They'll have to fly from Nome to Fairbanks to get an absentee ballot? That alone could throw out the election."