

University of Alaska recognized

FAIRBANKS — A project which applied satellite technology to land selection decisions by Doyon, Ltd., has resulted in special recognition for the University of Alaska, Fairbanks as part of the bicentennial "Horizons on Display" program.

The American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) presented the UA Geophysical Institute's Remote Sensing Program with a bicentennial flag in recognizing the "problem solving capacity" of the institute in "improving the quality of life for all."

The institute's project was one of 200 Horizons on Display projects chosen for inclusion in the program sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the ARBA.

The Remote Sensing Program is under the leadership of John Miller, head of Scientific Services at the institute. He said satellite pictures were used in helping Doyon, the largest of Alaska's Native regional corporations, make land and resources selections.

Miller said, "Space technology was effectively used to maximize the resource management decisions by Alaskan Natives in a manner which is both economically sound and which is consonant with their cultural heritage."

Sponsors of the Horizons project hope it will "open dialogue among communities and provide a forum for information exchange among citizens, private organizations and all levels of government."

Doyon's boundaries encompass an area that is complicated by existing federal and state

withdrawals and is large, varied and far-flung, containing a variety of resources from petroleum and minerals to commercial quality and quantities of spruce and birch timber.

Miller said, "The Native Land Claims Settlement Act authorized Doyon to select about one out of every three acres that were withdrawn for their selection. In effect this meant that for each acre Doyon selected, it was rejecting two other acres and, therefore, it was important to know well the resources within the Doyon withdrawal."

Satellite photographs from NASA's LANDSAT spacecraft were used in conjunction with other information to map the extent of commercial timber and mineral potential in seven key areas in the Doyon region.

Miller said, "These results enabled Doyon's land selection decisions to be based upon better information than could possibly have existed otherwise."

Also heading up the project with Miller was Albert Belon, a professor of physics with the Geophysical Institute.

The majority of the analysis of the satellite data was conducted by Assistant Professor of Geology Lewis Shapiro, Assistant Professor of Life Sciences James Anderson and Research Associate William Stringer, all of the Geophysical Institute.

Information about the Remote Sensing Program and the other 199 national award-winning projects is available at the LANDSAT library browse facility, 208 Elvey Building, on the UA, Fairbanks campus.