

Gruening Says Tourism Could Help Village Economies

U.S. Senate Candidate Clark Gruening says tourism is one way to broaden the economy of Alaska's rural villages.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Alaska Native Tourism Association, Gruening said that encouraging tourism in villages would help provide a cash economy in rural areas.

"My extended stay in Wainwright gave me a real closeup view of how important subsistence is to rural Alaskans," Gruening said, referring to a campaign stop in the coastal

community that stretched five days because of weather. "Unfortunately, soaring energy costs have threatened the very existence of many villages."

High energy costs are forcing people who have traditionally relied on a subsistence economy to seek cash jobs to pay for fuel, Gruening said. In the United States Senate, he pledged to work for demonstration energy projects in villages using renewable resources, including wind power, and to work to promote tourism in rural areas.