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no. 10  
March 12,  
1997

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# TundraTIMES

THE VOICE OF NATIVE EXPERIENCE

\$1.00

Volume XXXVII, No. 10 • Wednesday, March 12, 1997 • Anchorage, Alaska

## Lawmakers pressure Bush

by Tundra Times staff

Republican lawmakers can't decide how to keep their promise to cut another \$70 million from the state budget without hurting urban voters. So, much of the first half of the legislative session has been substantially consumed by proposals that would cut rural Alaska down to economic and political size.

That's the consensus of several veteran capitol watchers in Juneau. The irony, they say, is that while Republican legislators have made headlines with their attacks on Native tribes, several bills moving quietly through committees would also hamstring the small state-chartered municipalities that conservatives insist should be the local government of choice for Native villages.

Although none of the bills are moving quickly at the moment, many may have a good chance of passage. Among them are proposals to: restrict funding for and levy taxes on property in unincorporated areas, eliminate the Coastal Zone Management

Page 6, please

## ASTF wires schools to Net

In a major step to bring the international knowledge of the Internet into classrooms across Alaska, Gov. Tony Knowles and the Board of Directors of the Alaska Science and Technology Foundation announced the award of \$10,000 to each Alaska public school to wire its classrooms for Internet access.

In addition to the \$4.5 million set aside for school connectivity, ASTF awarded another \$18,800 to the statewide NetDay program, a non-profit business that helps schools get wired and connected to the Internet by organizing volunteers to do the work and seeking corporate funding sources.

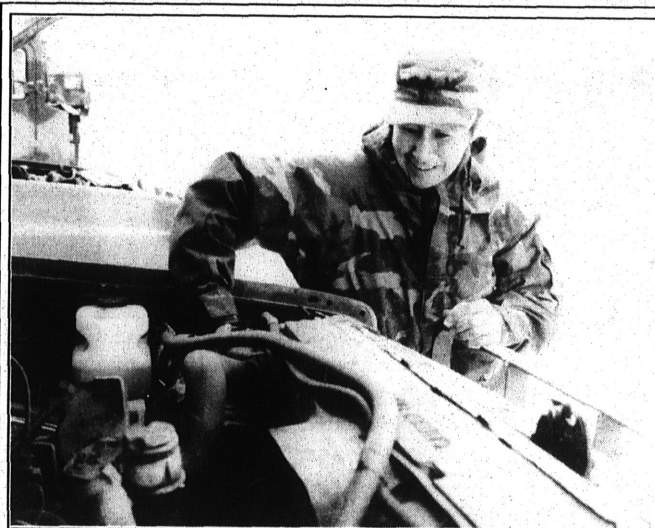
"The key to Alaska's continued economic success is making sure our children are prepared for the increasingly competitive challenges of the global

marketplace," said Knowles, who joined ASTF board members at Anchorage's Chugach Option School for an Internet demonstration. "This decision by Alaska's leading technology agency is a major step in that direction. It will help keep Alaska competitive internationally by providing our students the most current educational tools."

"This has all the appeal of an old fashioned community barn-raising with a 21st century angle," said Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer, an ASTF board member and the administration's technology point person. "The ASTF board thought there was an urgent need for this kind of help, and we had the desire and financial resources to step in to provide that help."

"It's the bottom-up entrepreneurial spirit to which ASTF is responding," said Jamie Kenworthy, ASTF executive director. "We think that if we provide the funding

Page 5, please



### Keep them rolling

More than 800 Alaska Army National Guard members, like the soldier pictured here, recently completed essential training in Anchorage. Troops came from Barrow, Gambell, Little Diomed, Nome, Bethel, and many other communities.

Photo by Alaska National Guard

## Alaska Native tour coalition forms

The Nature Conservancy of Alaska, an independent, nonprofit conservation organization with offices in Anchorage and Soldotna, together with several Alaska Native Corporations and ecotourism operators, is seeking input from Native communities to help create an Alaska Native Ecotourism Coalition. The coalition will foster ecotourism-related development for Alaska Native villages and corporations by Native individuals and other entrepreneurs interested in ecotourism.

An initial meeting and plenary session, funded by the Environmental Protection

Agency, will be held in conjunction with the 4th Annual Conference of the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA) in Fairbanks from March 20-22. The meeting is open to attendees of the conference and interested members of the public. Those interested in being part of the first meeting are asked to contact Ellen Maling at AWRTA.

Tentatively titled "Designing an Alaska Ecotourism Coalition," the workshop will be interactive and inclusive. Participants will help develop the coalition and its

Page 8, please

## NCAI announces mid-year meeting for Juneau

Juneau will be the site for the National Congress of American Indian's annual Mid-Year conference from June 8-11, 1997. This meeting will be the first of its kind in Alaska; more than four hundred tribal delegates and leaders from around the country are expected to attend.

The National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest, and the most representative American Indian and Alaska Native advocacy organization in the United States. It is comprised of over two hundred member tribes and more than two thousand individual members.

The conference will join tribal leaders, Native organizations, and government officials in six General Assembly sessions, to address issues such as Indian gaming, education, housing and welfare reform. The mid-year meeting agenda will also offer policy planning and strategy sessions for the tribal delegates;

guest speakers from local, state and federal governments; as well as a special potlatch celebration hosted by area tribes.

NCAI is working closely with its two host tribal councils, the Tlingit and Haida Central Council and the Ketchikan Tribal Council, to promote the conference throughout Alaska and the lower forty-eight states. Many Alaskan corporations and tribes have expressed interest in sponsoring the meeting, offering funds as well as special products and services. For more information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact NCAI offices at (202) 466-7767.

The National Congress of American Indians, founded in 1944, was organized as a representative congress of tribal governments and individuals to address priority issues at the national level.

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