

Emil Notti Hints He May Seek Begich's Seat

Candidates who would draw strong bush area support are important to the U.S. House as to the Natives they represent, said Democratic State Chairman Emil Notti recently. He also outlined party procedure for choosing a nominee but left open the possibility of his own candidacy "sometime in the future."

Notti, Alaska Native Foundation president and an Athabascan Indian, told almost 50 Bartlett Democratic Club members that the Central Committee would use no "smoke-filled room" schemes, but would pick a candidate only after questioning rank and file members.

"Sometime in the future there might be a time to talk about it, but of course that

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Emil Notti . . .

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time is not today," Notti replied when questioned about his possible participation in a race to fill the seat of missing Congressman Nick Begich.

Notti denied rumors that State Sen. Chancy Croft has "sewn up" a majority of the 29-member committee votes, and he said, "I firmly believe that village voters will decide this election."

"Notti sharply criticized Republican party members for choosing a candidate before the presumptive death hearing, set for Dec. 11, for Congressman Begich and his companions. He called it "improper . . . both in the eyes of the law and in the spirit of common decency."

Included in groups to be polled on possible candidates are organized labor, Natives, teachers, legislators, businessmen and fishermen. "Regular" democrats, according to Notti, must be consulted and young Democrats too, "shall be heard" — a statement that drew applause from his audience.

At one point in his speech, Notti noted the Alaska Natives' "contribution now must be a central one if the Democratic party is to earn the chance to carry on Nick's work." He also told the World Affairs Council, "At the proper time, I might have an interest in the seat, but I'm not declaring myself a candidate right now."