

Constituents maintain support for Adams

by Geoff Kennedy
for the Tundra Times

Despite publicity about alleged kickbacks on North Slope Borough construction projects, Sen. Al Adams, D-Kotzebue, apparently still enjoys support from the people back home.

Suzy Erlich of Kotzebue, a member of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly, says she's heard very lit-

tle talk about the Senate Ethics subcommittee investigation into charges that Adams committed perjury and accepted large amounts of money for little or no work.

People are "feeling really bad for him," she said. "We wish this whole thing would get over."

Erlich said a number of people feel grateful to Adams for bringing ser-

vices and capital projects to Northwest Alaska during his tenure in the Legislature. She said people are supportive because "Al has done tremendous things for us."

Agreeing was June Nelson of Kotzebue, a member of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District board.

"His constituency prefers to look at the positive side. He's been an effec-

tive legislator. You can see what he's done for his district," she said.

Jim Barefoot of Noorvik, also a member of the district school board, said he's heard no discussion at all about Adams.

Lydia Scott of Kotzebue, a member of the borough assembly, said people in the region generally have not been

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discussing the subject.

"People are keeping pretty quiet, but that's the Native culture. They don't like to say negative things. I haven't talked about (Adams), even with close friends."

Lynn Johnson of Kotzebue, director of Chukchi College, said he doesn't know how people are reacting.

"That's a hard one to get hold of. They don't believe everything they read in the newspaper. People around here read with a jaundiced eye," he said.

The Adams situation, he said, "is not up for discussion."

Reggie Cleveland said he doesn't get newspapers very often at his home in Shungnak. Besides, he said when contacted by the *Tundra Times* last week, he was more immediately involved in the search for a Selawik man, who'd been missing for five days.

Later, searchers found the body of the missing man, Herbert Foster Sr. 25 miles south of Selawik. Foster, 68, had been missing since Feb. 14 on a snowmobile trip. Foster reportedly met 30-year-old Herbert Jones on a caribou-hunting trip, and the two later separated. Jones had been found safe near Deering Feb. 17.