

DOE asks Cowper for super collider public hearings

JUNEAU — Gov. Steve Cowper said earlier this month that the state has reserved a site and dates in Fairbanks for public hearings on the federal government's superconducting super collider, should Alaska be selected as a finalist for the \$4.4 billion project.

The hearings, scheduled between Feb. 1-19 at the Alaskaland Civic Center, were recently requested by the federal Department of Energy, which is overseeing selection and construction of the high energy particle accelerator.

Federal officials also told the governor that selection of finalists for the "Best Qualified List" has been delayed a month, at least until mid-January.

The request for public hearings was contained in a letter to Cowper that details their format and the reasons for them.

Alaska is among 25 states that have applied for the project, which is designed to accelerate and collide atomic particles. The research is expected to lead to technological advancements in many scientific areas.

Alaska's proposed site is about 10 miles west of Nenana where the state owns the 16,000 acres required for the 53-mile underground oval super-collider. Construction would employ about 1,500 workers for six years and lead to another 3,000 permanent jobs. The annual operating budget would be about \$300 million.