

Recount Possibility Looms

By MARGIE BAUMAN

Republican gubernatorial candidate Jay Hammond has climbed to a 661 vote lead over Gov. William A. Egan, but some ques-

tion remains as to whom Alaska's next governor will be.

Hammond's relatively strong lead made him appear the probable winner, but as the Tundra

Times went to press there were still more than 2,600 votes uncounted and a top level administration decision was to be announced on whether some 2,500 of them would be counted at all.

The bulk of the uncounted votes come from the Anchorage area which gave Hammond his latest lead in the gubernatorial race, but election officials were waiting for a decision on whether to count them because the ballots were marked in the wrong place. In addition, there were over 100 absentee and question ballots and the voting precincts of Alatna and Nulato were not in yet.

Will Lawson, press secretary to Governor Egan, said that Egan now seeking a fourth term, had made no decision yet on whether to concede or demand a recount, "but I get the feeling it's going to go to a recount," Lawson told the Tundra Times early Tuesday.

Lawson noted that this was the closest race Egan had run to date, but that the governor was in a "real good" mood and was looking "cheerful, sharp and full of energy." (Monday night Egan had 43,177 to Hammond's 43,841.)

Although Egan has said no-

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thing to his aide yet about the uncounted ballots. Lawson said the governor did feel strongly that all the ballots should be counted.

State elections supervisor Dorothy McKenzie, in Juneau, echoed that sentiment. "My feeling is that those ballots should be counted or the voters will be disenfranchised," she said.

"I don't think about the candidate; I think about the voters," she added.

A decision on whether the 2,500 votes will be counted was expected possibly Tuesday. McKenzie noted that the bulk of those votes were indeed from Anchorage, where Hammond has the margin.

Officially, however, the outcome of the gubernatorial and other races won't come until the state election canvassing board meets in Juneau November 20. Then the election will be certified and the winners officially announced.

In other major statewide races, U.S. Senator Mike Gravel, D-Alaska and U.S. Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, have been re-elected by wide margins.

One race still uncertain is a house race in the Interior, where former legislator Martin Moore of Emmonak is battling James Huntington of Galena. Both men ran on a write-in ballot.