



PRUDHOE WORKHORSE—The Sikorsky S-64 Helicopter, appropriately nicknamed the "Sky Crane," is widely used in petroleum activity on the North Slope. Entire drilling complexes are transported across the tundra by the craft, specifically designed to carry massive loads. This Sky Crane is dropping a platform at Atlantic Richfield's S.E. Eileen State No. 1 drilling site. The helicopter requires a crew of two pilots and a winch operator. Oil company officials admit its cost of operation is high, reportedly over \$2000 per hour, yet it has proved invaluable in enhancing mobility. The use of the Sky Crane has proven less costly to Atlantic Richfield than the extensive use of tracked vehicles or the development of massive land transportation, which also may inflict irreparable damage to North Slope ecology.

—THOMAS RICHARDS, JR. Photograph