

Small Communities & Fuel Crises

State Energy Office Director, Bill McConkey, addressed the Palmer Chamber today emphasizing the need for more leadership and planning as the energy crisis deepens and touches

those in small communities.

"No one really planned five years ago when someone said 'oil,'" McConkey stated, "so let's do something now when someone says 'gas and coal.' We have the chance to decide what we are going to do about it individually."

McConkey told the Chamber group of the efficient use and

misuse of fossil fuels and said, "We have the dubious distinction of locating, developing, and using all of our fossil fuel within 150 years."

"Governor Jay Hammond thinks Alaska has the chance to do it right, and will not form quick-easy-and wrong reactions to the energy crisis. He doesn't want the chances of Alaska to be gone in the next 100 years."

McConkey told the members of the chamber that they would see the day when it was not cost efficient but still obviously necessary to raise food, due to the rising cost of fuel.

And he said we soon must count calories produced against the calories used to produce them.

"Such an example would be a fish farm at Umnak Island, now in

the idea stage, that could produce 10 million pounds of fish a year," he said. This farm could use volcanic heated water and wind power, increasing the survival role of fingerlings by 300%. This is energy cost efficient, giving us a lot of calories back for the number spent.

"Alaska has the chance to be a leader in alternate energy resources, as we are as a storehouse of fossil fuels," he said, "and with individual effort, and involvement in the decisions your community must make in the years to come, you can assure the quality of life you enjoy now, and better."

McConkey told the group about the energy activities going on in the Palmer and Wasilla area, including the availability of natural gas, hydroelectric power and coal.
