

# *Professor suggests Alaska, Hawaii trade cooperation*

FAIRBANKS — The United States has had 50 stars on its flag for more than 30 years — long enough that most Americans don't even remember the days when Alaska and Hawaii were not full-fledged members of the union.

Many of the Alaskans and Hawaiians John Whitehead, a University of Alaska Fairbanks professor, has been talking to, though, remember that time very well.

A professor of history at UAF, Whitehead started taping conversations with statehood advocates from the two territories in 1981 and is currently writing a book about their efforts.

"I was hoping to find that Alaska and Hawaii cooperated with each other as they went through the process," Whitehead said. "While each knew that the other was pursuing statehood, in fact, there was very little cooperation between the two."

According to Whitehead, the two territories had two different motives for pursuing statehood. Alaskans had grown resentful of the Outside control of its people and resources and viewed statehood as a means for gaining political and economic self-determination.

Three decades later, America's newest states still lack more than a token amount of economic and political cooperation — something that Whitehead can't figure out.

"I've asked people involved in the statehood movements if they have ever thought of coordinating Pacific trade and investments. They say it has crossed their minds, but gone no further," he said.

According to Whitehead, the match is a natural. A century ago, fur traders and whalers often traveled between the two regions, and even today, the U.S. military organizes its forces in both states under the Pacific command.

Both states lie on or within the Pacific Rim and have resources the other could use.

"It seems very logical. Alaska has the natural resources, and Hawaii has the expertise with the politicians, banks and other major institutions in Asia. I think there's an awful lot of opportunity to cooperate, but right now, it's definitely not there," Whitehead said.