

Murkowski calls for Soviet participation in WEIO

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Following President Reagan's and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev's signing of a new cultural exchange agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, Sen. Frank Murkowski today called on Alaskans to take the lead role in the "people-to-people" interchange between the two nations, including sending an invitation to Soviet Natives to participate in the Eskimo Olympics.

"Alaska is the only state that borders the Soviet Union," Murkowski noted, "and Alaska is the only state that was once the territory of the Soviet Union. Because of this close geographical and historical relationship, Alaska is the best place to implement the new open door policy with the Soviet Union in these areas."

The Alaska Senator noted that Alaska is already participating with the Soviet Union in certain cooperative efforts in the areas of scientific research, communications and fisheries.

"Inviting the Soviet Natives to par-

ticipate in the Eskimo Olympics could prove to be a true ice-breaker in U.S.-Soviet relations and result in a snowball effect of diplomatic goodwill," Murkowski said.

During his address to a joint session of Congress Thursday night, President Reagan outlined his discussions with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to improve "people-to-people" relations between the two nations.

Reagan said, "...we discussed the barriers to communication between our societies and I elaborated on my proposals for real people-to-people contracts on a wide scale. Americans should know the people of the Soviet Union — their hopes and fears and the fact of their lives. And citizens of the Soviet Union need to know of America's deep desire for peace and our unwavering attachment to freedom."

(Continued on Page Two)



Sen. Frank Murkowski says that inviting the Soviets to the Eskimo Olympics could be the "true ice-breaker in U.S.-Soviet relations."

Murkowski wants Soviets at WEIO

(Continued from page 1)

Murkowski said the two nations should actively seek to lift the cultural "ice curtain" which currently exists between Alaska and Soviet cultures. He added that this could lead to several mutually-beneficial exchanges.

"We share a common heritage with the Soviets," Murkowski said. "Alaska has many Eskimo families who have been separated from their relatives in Siberia because of the political tensions between our two nations. Several Russian Orthodox churches still remain active in Alaska, particularly in the Aleutian Islands.

"I think it would be an excellent idea for the Alaska Eskimo community to extend an invitation to the Soviet Eskimos to attend a goodwill ceremony in Alaska, ideally somewhere in the Seward Peninsula. Maybe participation in the Iditarod festival in February would be feasible. With the help of the State Department, this may become a reality.

"It's only about 70 miles between the two countries, and the Eskimos used to travel back and forth across the Bering Sea before political relations became strained. It's truly unfortunate because the Eskimo people have been trying for several years to be reunited with their families in Siberia."

Murkowski added that it's important the Soviet Union and United States also expand the spirit of cooperation through scientific exchange activities.

"Scientific cooperation in selected non-military areas would greatly benefit both nations," Murkowski said, "and kindle the spirit of cooperation which the President called for."

The Alaska Senator said a scientific information exchange in several areas could increase the progress of arctic research. These areas include:

- Physical sciences in the Arctic;
- Health sciences in the Arctic;
- Mutual cooperation in the use of scientific resources, such as ice stations and ice breakers, for improved Arctic research programs;
- The sharing of data on appropriate Arctic technologies of non-sensitive military material, such as the construction and use of Arctic greenhouses, etc.

Murkowski is the author of the Arctic Research and Policy Act, which is designed to develop a research policy and a comprehensive program for America's arctic region.

He said Alaska and the Soviet Union currently are involved in joint fishing ventures and fishery research, satellite communications in search and rescue programs, and the recently implemented tripartite agreement between the United States, Japan and Soviet Union for improved airline radar tracking and communications.

He added that it was his hope that a proposed agreement between the University of Alaska and Soviet medical authorities to expand exchanges, conferences, and mutually beneficial research in the field of arctic medicine would be accepted soon by both governments in the wake of the newly-signed cultural agreement.