

# LAST WEEK IN ALASKA

**A weekly summary of Alaska News prepared for  
TUNDRA TIMES by the ALASKA RADIO NETWORK**

**THE ALASKA RADIO NETWORK** has learned that the trans-Alaska oil pipeline has been selected as the outstanding civil engineer achievement for 1977 by the American Society of Civil Engineers. The presentation was to be made at the society's annual convention held in Pittsburgh last week.

**THE ALASKA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION** Board of Directors endorsed a rural loan program aimed at easing the mortgage loan situation for bush residents. Under the plan, the corporation would purchase the mortgages from the local housing authorities once the authorities set up the loans and began servicing them. The endorsement is hoped to satisfy a reported demand from Senate Finance Committee Chairman John Sackett who has been holding a \$1.7 million appropriation in his committee pending development of such a plan.

**APRIL 24 WAS THE DEADLINE** for industry nomination for oil and gas lease tracts in the Beaufort Sea. The target date of the joint Federal-State lease sale is December of 1979. State coordinator of the sale, Bob Waldrop, says the nine nominated areas represent a good response from the industry. Waldrop said, "It's not a startling expression of interest, but it's very, very encouraging. You have to keep in mind...it's a high risk venture...and you don't get the kind of turnout that you would in Prudhoe or East Texas."

**THE DIRECTOR OF THE GOVERNOR'S** Office of Telecommunications says punitive measures should be taken against RCA Alascom until the company agrees to provide complete telephone service to the ten villages in the Kotzebue area. The villages have requested expanded telephone service, but RCA based its filing to provide the service on being given complete ownership to the 100 bush earth stations. G.O.T. Director Bob Walp said, "We feel that in this case that...RCA is reneging on their agreement with us, and rather than having us back down from our position, the Alaska Public Utilities Commission should order RCA to interconnect. The APUC certainly has the authority to do this."

**GOVERNOR JAY HAMMOND WILL BE** spending all of the summer in Anchorage. The governor has located his office in Anchorage for a few weeks during the summer in past years. The governor's office says the reason for the move is that half of the state's population is in Anchorage, and many people who would like to see the governor can't when he's in Juneau.

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOE HAYES OF** Anchorage has called for an audit of the procedure whereby union members are verified eligible for unemployment insurance compensation. Under an agreement with the state, a union official is to sign a certification form made available to union members at their local's offices. But Hayes said, "It appears that, in fact, the union is not checking to see that...this guy is in good standing, or that he's even who he says he is."

**THE MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES** Committee Subcommittee has approved a measure which would take 11 million acres of state land out of d-2 wilderness designation and reclassify it as refuge, allowing for some mineral development. The committee made other changes, but Congressman Don Young says it's not enough. "If we do not make substantial changes in this bill before it goes to the floor of the House for a vote, I will vote against the bill, and work to make sure that, in its present form, it does not pass."

**LABOR COMMISSIONER ED ORBECK SAYS** he's sure mistakes are made in the department's system of allowing labor union officials to certify union members' unemployment for benefits. But Orbeck says the system does not lend itself to fraud as State Rep. Joe Hayes has alleged. Orbeck said, "If Mr. Hayes was to send someone out to check on the halls, it would require one person in each of the 127 halls in the state, each day of the week to watch to see who accepted a job and who refused. And we just don't have the employees to do that." But Hayes says that statement is misleading, and that, "What the commissioner should have clarified is the fact that the Department of Labor is supposed to have contracts with unions as to how union employment claims should be validated by the union and monitored by the state. Many contracts do not exist. The Department of Labor has done nothing to rectify this."

**THE FULL HOUSE MERCHANT MARINE** and Fisheries Committee has begun considering d-2 legislation and has adopted the print which came out of the Merchant Marine Subcommittee. Congressman Don Young says the print is not all that he wanted, "...because we did not achieve the Arctic Wildlife Range refuge-it's still a wilderness-but we'll have to let the Senate do it on that side."

**HALIBUT COVE SENATOR CLEM TILLION** says he may not run for re-election when his term expires. The 16-year veteran of the legislature says he's disgusted with legislative inaction, particularly in the Senate. "...The Senate working a three day week, which is what we've been working, hasn't produced much, on the other hand, I don't think that the Senate ever intended to produce much."