

Rural television channel hosts first successful fundraiser

BETHEL - The television channel that serves most of Alaska received overwhelming support during its first-ever fundraiser last Friday and Saturday. John McDonald, General Manager of the Alaska Rural Communications Service, said over 80-thousand dollars was pledged from all around the state during the event.

The largest pledge came from the northern most reaches of the state, as the Arctic Slope Region Corporation phoned in with a 15-hundred dollar pledge. First National Bank of Anchorage supported the fund-raiser with a five-thousand dollar donation that was used to provide the sweatshirts given away with pledges of one-hundred dollars or more.

Said McDonald, "It went beyond what I thought was a reasonable goal. It shows a lot of support for ARCS, and that people are willing to pay for it."

He added that he hopes the public support will translate into legislative support during the upcoming session in Juneau.

The fund-raiser was hosted by Sharon McConnell of North Country News; Russell Nelson, the chair of the former Rat-Net; and three members of the K-Y-U-K News department: Rhonda

McBride, Jennifer Duford, and Jay Barrett.

Volunteers from the Bethel area answered the telephones. They included public health nurses, students and staff from the Kusko-kwim Campus, the Lion's Club, and the Bethel Actor's Guild.

The show featured several performers from around the state, who volunteered their time as a show of support. Appearing live were Fred Weltz and Barry Beckett, of Cordova, otherwise known as The Jazz Duo "Arctic Cool;" Kris Tierney-Sord, a Country-Folk-Spiritual singing teacher from Dillingham; Chris

Cooke, a Bethel folk singer/songwriter; the Upallrit (ooh paul rit) Dancers, a Yupik Youth Dance Troupe; Cheryl Hickson, a circus-trained fire swallower, and Michael Faubion (fah bee on) a singer who brought down the house with his Alaskanized version of the Hank Snow classic "I've-been everywhere, man," in which he mentioned nearly every community in the state. Appearing via video tape, were the Tanana School Fiddlers.

Said McDonald, "I really appreciate all the people who came in from around the state to perform for our fund-raiser."