

Candidate Kelly Proposes Alaska Develop Greatest Resource - People

A candidate for the District 15 seat in the State House of Representatives is proposing that Alaska develop its greatest resource—the people themselves.

A resident of Ruby, Kelly Painter has opened his campaign in the Interior with several proposals to put the people to work and alleviate conditions of poverty.

Having retired from the Air Force in November of 1968, the 41 year-old Democrat has lived in Alaska about seven years and in Ruby one and a half.

One of his major proposals is the establishment of a co-op in the Interior to process timber for sale and for the construction of native housing.

In 1968 he suggested a plan whereby natives in the Interior could cut down trees and raft them down the Nowitna River to a sawmill for processing and then float them down the Yukon to the villages for housing.

Introduced in Juneau, the plan, however, never got off the ground.

Such a program, Painter said would not only give the natives decent housing but some of the

lumber could also be sold bringing money into the villages. Most lumber is now brought up from Seattle, he added.

He also endorsed digging a 20-mile long canal connecting the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers and opening the entire Interior for logging.

Currently opposing Fred Notti in the primary, the candidate also suggested the creation of a fur co-op for the natives to handle the trapping, treating, sewing and selling of furs.

"We need to utilize the people in their own home area," he stressed, "not take them off their land," and the two co-ops would do this.

He added that he would also like to see the natives buy heavy equipment with money received from the land claims settlement and complete the construction.

Expecting to oppose Republican John Sackett in the November election, Painter said he felt the incumbent, a native from Galena, had been following the lines of the administration too closely.

He said that he plans to visit all of the nearly 30 villages in his

district, mostly by boat. The district includes Bettles, Allakaket, Galena, McGrath, Nenana, Tanana, and Huslia and last election, he said, had 2,182 voters.

In addition to talking about the co-ops, Painter said that he will be calling for more and better schools, more highways, and at least an outpatient clinic in each village where there is a year-round airport.