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Lou Rowinski and the Museum of Alaska Fairbanks

Dan Hickey, William Nicks and the drug law legislation

Karen McPherson, interviewer

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Karen McPherson talks about the planned move of the University of Alaska Museum to their new facilities. Lou Rowinski, director of the museum since 1964, said the present museum building has never had much done to it since it was built in 1935. They moved into the building in the early 1960s and it was supposed to be temporary. They expanded into all of the building and used other buildings as well. They were looking for adequate space that would provide safe, secure housing for the types of materials in the collections and make them accessible. Karen McPherson asked about the new facilities. Lou Rowinski said in general the whole situation for the collections and the public will be much better. The new building will have an environmental system that will provide conditions for holding specimens. They will be able to regulate the temperatures, humidity and they will have dust control. It will provide a much easier viewing situation for the public. There are no controls in the older buildings there was quite a bit of difference in temperature and humidity. Karen McPherson asked if there has been much damage to the collections. Lou Rowinski said there has been deterioration of materials. It is not good for organic materials such as skin, wood or ivory. They have a good collection of boats that are all splitting. Karen asked if this is more than a university museum. Lou said they perform all sorts of activities that aren't normally associated with a university museum. They have school tours, the general public, and touring company tours. They do not get community funding. It is supported by the state as part of the university. The funding for the new building came directly from appropriations from the state legislature. There have been donations from private people and businesses in the community. Karen asked about the new exhibits. Lou said they will be displaying a small carved ivory figure found by Otto Geist in the 1930s. It is of great interest to archeologists but they have never had it on exhibit because of security and atmosphere. Karen asked about the two headed caribou. Lou said it will not be displayed. They are trying to have a broad, complete, and accurate picture of Alaska at the museum. They will display the big brown bear.

Karen McPherson said Governor Jay Hammond has said no drug bill will be too harsh for him to sign. There are three bills currently proposed to revise and consolidate Alaska's drug laws. One bill is Senate Bill 65 from the House Judiciary Committee. Another bill is drafted by Commissioner of Public Safety, William Nicks and Dan Hickey, chief prosecutor for the state of Alaska and supported by General Attorney, Av Gross. Their bill is patterned after the federal controlled substances act of 1970 and the uniform substances act. Both the federal and uniform acts have served as models for 44 states that have recently revised their drug laws. The purpose of Nicks and Hickey's bill is both to insure proper handling of legitimate substances and to discourage trafficking of drugs by providing penalties for use and

possession. The proposed bill classifies all substances in schedules based on the relative danger of the drug. Six schedules are used as in the federal and uniform acts. Heroin is in schedule one and liquor and marijuana are in schedule six. The act establishes a committee which is responsible for adding, deleting and rescheduling substances as information becomes available concerning drug abuse. Dan Hickey, chief prosecutor for the state co-authored the bill was asked about the necessity for the legislation. Dan Hickey said the existing drug laws are a mess. They are inconsistent; they contain many loopholes such as cocaine isomers and the species defense for marijuana. He said this is a good bill, the kind we need, it's clear, and it ties into the criminal code. The scheduling of the drugs is rational and the penalties are rational. It takes care of the legitimate handler question. William Nicks agrees with Hickey. He said they have spent a lot of time talking about the differences in the bills and the needs. The governor has brought up drug legislation early because he wants to get public input. They will go anywhere in the state to talk about the legislation.