

## Dignitaries Take Trip On Inlet

By BEV ISENSON  
Daily News Staff Writer

Local and state leaders and businessmen took their first look at a Hovercraft yesterday afternoon in the Port of Anchorage.

About 300 citizens, led by Governor William A. Egan, Senator Bob Bartlett and Mayor Elmer E. Rasmuson, gathered in the muddy parking lot at the port and took turns riding in the new craft.

**GOVERNOR** Egan initiated the month-long demonstration program by breaking a bottle of champagne on the vehicle's nose. He termed the program "an important venture for Alaska."

The Hovercraft took riders over the tidal flats and on to the Cook Inlet waters, crossing smoothly to Point Mackenzie and back. It sent a fine spray out as it moved.

Skimmers Inc., an Alaska corporation, and Bell Aerosystems Co. of Buffalo, N.Y. are co-sponsoring the demonstration rides in an effort to promote a commercial charter service using Hovercraft.

**SKIMMERS** was formed in March of this year by Alaska and Seattle businessmen. Officers include president Hugh B. Mitchell, Seattle, also president of Alaska Van and Storage Co.; Julian Rice, Fairbanks attorney, vice president and general counsel; Lawrence H. Landry, Anchorage, Alaska manager of Alaska Van and Storage Co., and vice president for operations; and Paul A. Pollack, Seattle, secretary-treasurer.

The craft, called an air cushion vehicle, resembles a boat floating on an inner tube. It was developed initially by a British firm, and by Bell Aerosystems Co. in the U.S.

The Hovercraft demonstrated in Anchorage is one of a number of air cushion vehicles used for military and civilian purposes throughout the world.

**THE U.S. NAVY** is currently using three air cushion vehicles in Viet Nam along the Mekong River Delta. A Hovercraft is also in use between England and France on the English Channel, in Scotland and Norway.

A large buoyancy chamber, subdivided into watertight compartments, prevents the craft from sinking, even with power failure, in any sea condition, according to Bell.

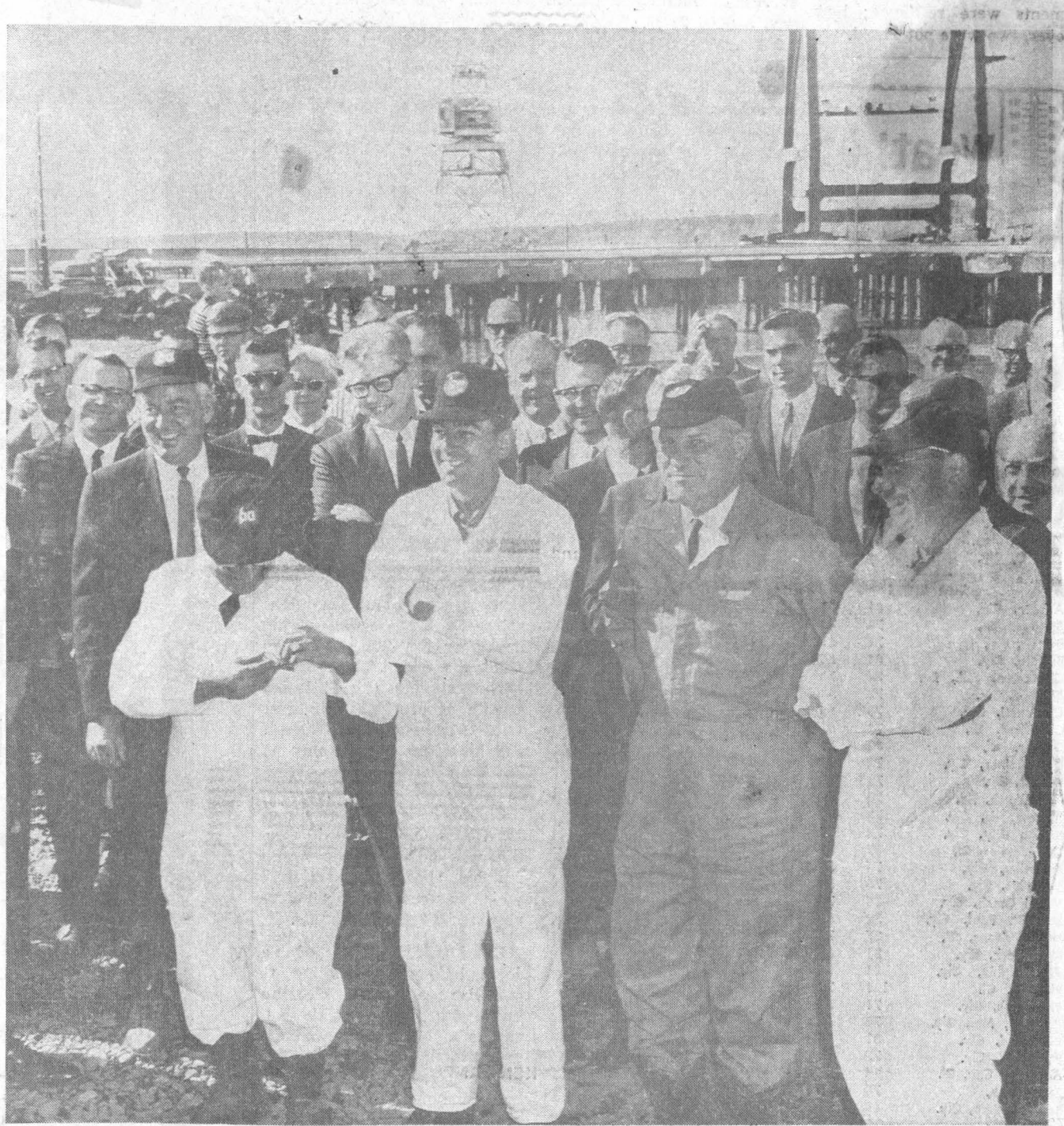
The air cushion vehicles here in Anchorage — a Bell SK-5 — is 39 feet long and 22 feet wide. It can carry 15 to 18 passengers plus an operator. Maximum speed is 70 miles per hour.

The craft can clear solid walls 3½ feet in height or vegetation five to six feet high. Ditches up to 12 feet wide and 8 feet deep can be crossed at 20 knots, according to Bell information.



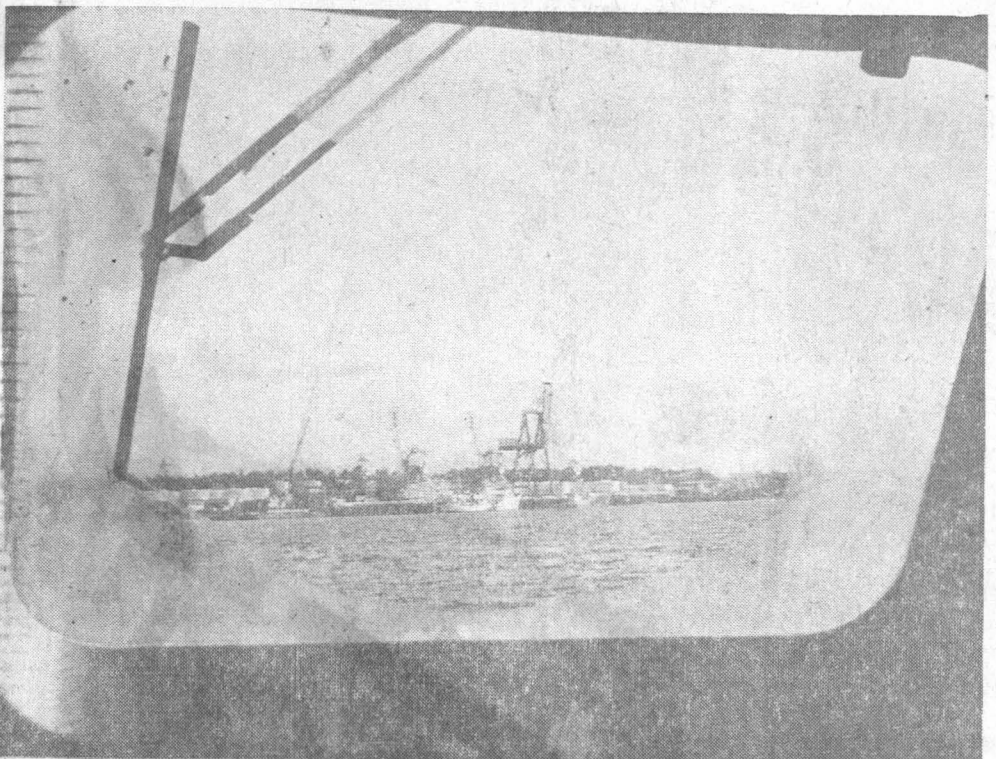
**SENATOR E. L. (Bob) Bartlett**, right, and Gov. Egan chat during ceremonies at the Port yesterday. Bartlett and Egan won their respective battles for nomina-

tions in Alaska's primary. The two were among several officials and executives invited to the inaugural voyage of the Hovercraft.



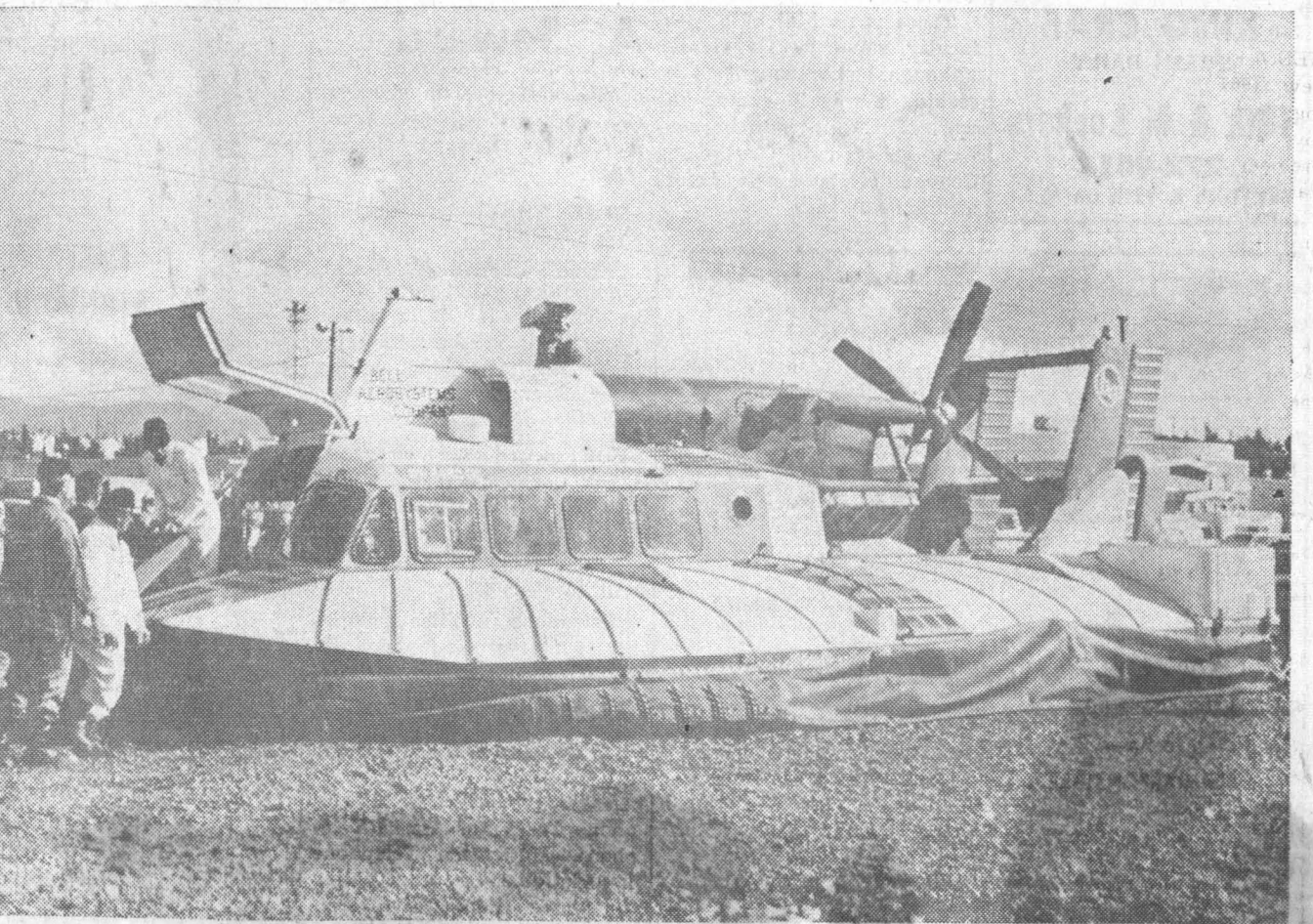
**OFFICIALS AND** crew members of the Hovercraft pin the familiar Walrus emblem on their coveralls before getting under way on the first journey across Cook Inlet. A one-month demonstration program, co-spon-

sored by Skimmers Inc., an Anchorage corporation, and Bell Aerosystems Co., of Buffalo, N. Y., began yesterday.



**THE PORT OF** Anchorage, as seen through a somewhat dirty windshield of the Hovercraft. A fine spray generated by the whirling blades and air pressures of the Hovercraft makes heavy duty wind-

shield wipers a necessity on the new ship. But to passengers inside the craft, protected behind ports, the ride was dry and comfortable.



**A LARGE** buoyancy chamber is inflated which will enable the Hovercraft to remain afloat in any sea condition. The chamber is divided into several watertight

compartments. Top speed of the ship is 70 miles per hour, with 15 to 18 passengers aboard.

## Harbor Dredging To Resume Soon

Anchorage Daily News, Thursday, August 25, 1966

Dredging work in Anchorage's harbor is expected to be resumed in about two weeks. The 110-foot long dredge, according to Col. Clare Farley, came into Anchorage from district engineer for the Corps of Engineers.

**THE DREDGE** "Husky" will be used in the increasing the length of the spud at the vessel's stern to 110 feet. A new spud also is being built.

**THE DREDGE** pivots on the spuds which are lowered to the bottom from the vessel's stern.

Dredging operations will be resumed in the area of the Port of Anchorage municipal terminal and will continue along the face of Ocean Dock, now being demolished by the Corps.

The dredge can clear a path 250 feet wide in one sweep. An estimated 210,000 cubic yards of material will be removed from the harbor floor in the dredging operation and disposed of in deep water.

The operation is expected to be concluded by the end of October.



**INSPECTING THE** cutter of the Dredge "Husky", which will begin deepening Anchorage's harbor in about two weeks, is Floyd Barney, center, with crew mem-

bers. Barney is dredge superintendent. The Manson-Osberg dredge will work under a contract with the Corps of Engineers.

## Unique Craft Skims Over Inlet Waters

Anchorage Daily Times  
Wednesday, August 24, 1966

What could be a complete new era in Alaska transportation opened here today as a Bell hovercraft lifted off from the Anchorage port area on the first trip of a month-long demonstration program.

The air cushion vehicle — brought here to demonstrate its potential for cargo and passenger charter operations in the Cook Inlet area — was spending the afternoon taking more than 100 government, civic and business leaders on trips around the inlet area.

The demonstration on Cook Inlet, are being sponsored by Skimmers, Inc. and Textron's Bell Aerosystems Co.

Skimmers is an Anchorage-based corporation formed early this year by four Alaska businessmen to promote and operate a commercial charter service utilizing the unique air cushion vehicles.

Following today's opening ceremony, the craft will be placed at the disposal of oil companies and other potential users to demonstrate its capabilities for hauling cargo and personnel and fulfilling other transportation requirements in the area.

Officers of Skimmers, Inc., all active in Alaska business affairs, are Hugh B. Mitchell of Seattle, president; Julian R.

Rice of Fairbanks, vice president and general counsel; Larry Landry of Anchorage, vice president for operations; and Paul A. Pollack of Seattle, secretary-treasurer.

Rice and Landry conceived the idea for organizing an air cushion vehicle service in Alaska early this year after learning of the successful passenger service being conducted across San Francisco Bay.

The Bell vehicle uses a 1,000-horsepower gas turbine engine for both propulsion power and to operate the giant enclosed fan which creates its air cushion on which it skims across all types of terrain. Cruising speed is 70 miles an hour and the craft is equipped with radar and lights to allow it to operate in all types of weather conditions.

In investigating the possibilities of the hovercraft Rice and Landry observed the craft in operation in Norway, England and Scotland. They returned convinced that the vehicles could effectively perform a variety of transportation missions unique to Alaska.

The demonstrations started today are to prove the potential users the effectiveness of these unique craft for all-weather operations here.

Anchorage Daily News, Saturday, August 27, 1966



**COMING DOWN** is the entire front of the military's Ocean Dock in Anchorage's port area. The dock is considered a navigational hazard because of the extensive damage it suffered in the 1964 earthquake. About 2,000 square feet of the

dock will be demolished with the project to be completed within a few days. Photo shows piles along the dock front being removed. The Corps of Engineers is supervising the project.

(Corps of Engineers photo)