Democrat Jerry McCune Seeking District 32 Nod

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Now that the dust has settled in the primary election, District 32 Democrat Jerry McCune finally knows who he’ll be facing in November’s general - Louise Stutes of Kodiak.

McCune, a third generation Cordova commercial fisherman, was in Kodiak last week on a campaign swing, as Cordova, Kodiak Island, Yakutat and south Kachemak Bay are all in Alaska House District 32 under this year’s redistricting plan.

“When the redistricting changed and Mr. Austerman retired, I felt it was a wide-open seat and I wanted to give people a choice since I’m running as a Democrat and there’s three Republicans in Kodiak.... So I wanted to give people a choice. I wanted to get out and talk about the issues in this district, ‘cause I know this district pretty well.”

McCune is the current president of the United Fishermen of Alaska and as such, has spent a lot of years in the halls of the capital pushing for commercial fishing legislation.

“I have real ties to the fishing industry. My grandfather came to Cordova in 1908, ran a claim, cannery, fished, worked on the railroad, for the Copper Northwestern Railroad, ran the first hydro. And then I’m pretty tied to the two villages in the sound and then I know a little bit about Seldovia. So our district is pretty much commercial fishing, but there’s charter boats and there’s other industries running there too that need their fair share, too.”

McCune says he knows a lot of fishermen in Kodiak, and got “an ear-full” about fishing while walking the docks last week, but he says there are many other issues important to District 32 as well.

“I’ve heard a lot about roads and particularly in Yakutat they’re looking to build a hatchery to supplement the small fishery they have there – it’s mostly setnet and sportsfishing that share that fishery. But they need cheaper power. Now everybody you talk to needs cheaper power. In the villages, in Tyonek, they haven’t really receiv3ed a lot of state funding over there. Those kind of villages are really tough – you’ve got to be invited to talk to the elders and try to make some inroads about what their needs are. But sometimes they’re tough, but you’ve got to keep talking in those particular places.”

McCune, who raised five kids in Cordova, thinks the legislature should better fund schools.

“I think our BSA is too low. I think there’s talk of accountability of schools and how they do that. But when I talk to teachers, classrooms are being overloaded and it’s getting to be hard to keep good teachers, especially in remote areas. I think we need to get the communities involved, too, quite a bit, with the teachers and see what we can do to help out to make it palatable to keep good teachers and keep the system moving.”

McCune will face Republican Louise Stutes in the November 4th general election.