

2000-78-24

Neal Brown, interviewee

Karen Cedzo, interviewer

Series: University Focus series

1981

University of Alaska Fairbanks in Fairbanks, Alaska

Produced by the University of Alaska Public Affairs Office in cooperation of KUAC-FM

Neal Brown said there are a number of experimenters who have come here in the past want to repeat and come again. New experimenters want to come in. There has been a closing of other facilities such as the Canadian facility on Hudson Bay. Poker Flat is one of the major facilities left in the northern hemisphere. There is a comparable facility in Andoya, Norway. For six launches at Poker Flat there is one launch at Andoya. Poker Flat, part of the Geophysical Institute, is moving into its second decade of operation. It is the only university owned rocket launching facility in the world. Brown said there is renewed interest in the work at Poker Flat particularly since the space shuttle has been delayed. There are twelve launches scheduled for this spring. He said the first launch is for the Air Force. It is an experiment that has been at Poker Flat twice before. They refine the type of experiment. It is a recoverable payload. It will be the third flight for this system. It will have to be launched into a very bright aurora and will probably be launched in the midnight hours. All that will be visible will be the launch itself. There will also be a series of experiments with barium chemical release. It will be in March. They are the most colorful of the launches at Poker Flat. The chemicals are released in the upper atmosphere and are moved about with the same forces that move the aurora borealis about. They can get a better understanding about what is happening in the aurora. Each of the experiments is planned around a certain phase of the aurora they are trying to learn more about. He expects to see a concentration on use of the facilities. Brown sees an increased need to expand certain experiments. He said a few years ago they got quite concerned about the ozone and effect of aerosol spray cans. That program has been steadily built. They are now in the process of calibrating satellites twice yearly. There is a need to monitor small increases in pollutants in the upper atmosphere levels. There has been an interest in the ozone layer in particular in the Arctic and the north. They are now operating since last fall a weekly balloon monitoring measurement of ozone as well as calibrating the satellite. He said there will more interest in the atmosphere itself from the region of the surface of the Earth up to the altitude of the aurora borealis.

Karen Cedzo talks about the campus calendar and activities