

'The Only Dream Out There'

Anchorage, Alaska and the Bidding for the 1992 Olympic Winter Games

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Using Anchorage, Alaska's bid for the 1992 Olympic Winter Games, this article seeks to explore an Olympic bid developed from a specifically "northern theme." In the case of Anchorage, many of the social, cultural, and economic improvements host cities predict to reap were not just mere profits appropriated by boosters, but they were positioned through the bid as a dire necessity to prevent further economic collapse and deterioration. Moreover, with a largely resourced-based economy in a remote and somewhat exotic locale compared to other Olympic bid cities both in location and size, Anchorage faced a much more challenging Olympic journey as any changes in the global oil economy could lead to a significant influx of financial resources or, as happened in 1992, significantly constrain Olympic bidding goals. Anchorage's resource-based economy and the bid committee attempt to rely on an Olympic economic rejuvenation provides further illustration of the risk-reward scenario often faced by Olympic cities and bid committees. Whereas major metropolitan cities with various direct sources of revenue find it easier to frame the risk-reward debate, remote cities such as Anchorage have little choice other than to position, from their own economic perspective, an Olympics as more than just "games."



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