

# RURAL REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS DISCUSSED

## Local Affairs Agency, RurAL CAP Take Part

RurAL CAP Executive Director John Shively attended a conference sponsored by the Local Affairs Agency on the weekend of June 18-19.

The conference, called by Local Affairs Director Byron I. Mallott, was held in Gustavson to discuss future directions that the Local Affairs Agency might take in dealing with governmental bodies in Alaska.

Also attending the conference was the full staff of the Local Affairs Agency; Atty. General John Havelock; State Director of Planning and Research, Bob Pavitt; State Assessor Bob Dozier; Executive Director of the Municipal League, Don Berry; State Representative Dick Whitaker of Ketchikan, Gregg Machyowsky of the Legislative Affairs Agency, Billy Barrier, Borough Attorney from Greater Juneau Borough and Vic Fischer, Director, Institute of Social, Economic and Governmental Research University of Alaska.

Although the meeting covered all aspects of government in Alaska, the major emphasis was in government for the rural areas. All those present recognized the need for some form of regional government in rural Alaska.

It was acknowledged that the borough system, as it is presently constituted, has not worked for rural Alaska and there is no other form of regional government available under Alaska law.

There was considerable discussion of RurAL CAP's regional corporation system as a form of governmental bodies. Mr. Shively stated that he felt the State should work very closely with the regional corporation model if they decide to set up regional governments for rural Alaskans.

Byron Mallott and Atty. Gen. John Havelock discussed the administration's bill to create regional service districts in rural Alaska as a means of providing regional government.

The Governor introduced a bill embodying this concept into the Legislature during the last

session, but the bill was not passed.

A major problem in considering this bill was the amount of funding needed by the State to set up these regional service districts. It has been estimated that it would cost the State at least \$800,000 to set up such a system.

Also discussed at the conference was the Governor's proposal to change the Local Affairs Agency to a cabinet level department. There was general support of this concept by those members present at the meeting.

A great deal of discussion evolved as to how the new department would meet the very definite needs of urban and rural Alaska.