

# Firefighters discuss cutbacks in funding

Members of the Alaska Fire Service from Ketchikan to Barrow met recently at the new Kodiak Conference Center and spent considerable time discussing the operation of an effective fire service during this time of falling revenues and layoffs.

One hundred forty-five members of the Alaska State Firefighters and Fire Chiefs met for the first ever joint conference.

Another key issue discussed was how the cutbacks in state support to agencies such as the State Forestry, State Fire Service Training and the State Fire Marshal will affect local departmental operations.

Several resolutions were passed by conference participants to support continued or additional funding for primary state agencies that directly support local fire departments.

The conference consensus was that cutting these vital support agencies will erode fire prevention and suppression, as well as rescue efforts throughout the state and will ultimately result in additional property loss and even deaths and injuries to Alaskans.

After the closing business session, the annual firefighter competitions in such areas as ladder raising, fire extinguisher use, airpack donning and others were held. Valdez Volunteer Fire Department took home the trophy as the overall competition winner.