

# Hickel sets ceiling on employee numbers

JUNEAU — His first full day on the job, Gov. Walter J. Hickel last week took the initial step toward fulfilling his campaign promise to reduce the size of state government by setting a ceiling on the number of state employees.

"Our goal is to reduce the size of government through retirements and attrition," said Hickel. "I have urged my commissioners to review their departments and to come back to me with a plan of how to make their departments function best."

The ceiling will be set at 21,432, the number of employees currently authorized at the 1991 statewide operating budget, as reported by

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former Gov. Steve Cowper's administration Nov. 30.

This figure includes full-time, part-time and temporary personnel who report to the 15 departments in the executive branch, as well as employees who work for the University of Alaska, the state court system, the legislative branch and the Marine Highway System.

"This is not a hiring freeze," said Hickel. "It is a commitment not to ex-

ceed the current total of state employee positions."

Earlier, Cowper requested the resignations of commissioners and deputy commissioners. Last week, members of Hickel's cabinet also requested letters of resignation from policy-making personnel down to and including division directors and special assistants on the commissioners' staffs.

In addition, to analyze their staffing needs and identify ongoing projects and issues, the commissioners are requesting many of their partially exempt and exempt employees to submit resumes and a description of their duties for review.

Six of the seven commissioners who have been appointed were sworn in last week and were already at work. They are Millett Keller, department of administration; Charles Cole, attorney general; Lloyd Hames, commissioner of corrections; John Sandor, commissioner of environmental conservation; Dr. Ted Mala, commissioner of health and social services; and Harold Heinze, commissioner of natural resources.

Alaska Railroad President Frank Turpin, who was appointed commissioner of transportation and public facilities, will assume his new post in January, when a new president and CEO is in place at the railroad.