

# Dividend may go out "lightning fast"

by Andy Ryan

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JUNEAU — Alaskans would get their permanent fund dividend checks "lightning fast" — rather than waiting for the normal nine-week mailing process under a plan being considered by the Department of Revenue.

Under a proposal submitted to the department by Moore Business Forms, Inc., the state's nearly half-million dividend checks would be printed at an East Coast plant, and mailed within a five-day period.

Last year, at a rate of 50,000 a week, it took about nine weeks to mail out dividend checks to the bulk of some 480,000 Alaskans receiving them.

Ervin Jones, director of administrative services for the department, confirms that the proposal is being considered. But he says it's questionable whether there's enough time to put the program in place this year.

"We haven't completely written it off for this year or for next year, we're still considering it," Jones says.

He says that under Moore's plan the state would provide the company with a computer tape containing the information needed to cut the checks. The checks would be processed on a high-speed ink jet printer.

"When they were talking about it, they were talking about lightning fast," Jones says of the Moore proposal.

"They were saying that if we'd provide them with a tape that was compatible and all of that, they could have the checks mailed in a week to 10 days."

Because of the complexity of the system, Jones says, the department has a lot of considering to do before deciding whether to go ahead with it.

"We haven't put together a big final study on the thing, or anything like that, we're just talking about it, basically."

To put the proposal into effect, the state would first need to request bids from companies interested in providing the service. And before any contracts are awarded the department would first want to see a test run

performed.

All things considered, is there time to put the plan into effect this year?

"I don't know," Jones says. Of course, anything is possible. The time frame of getting anything of this magnitude done is very long, and it would be very difficult to pull it off."

Jerry File, of Moore Inc.'s Anchorage office, who developed the high-speed dividend check plan, says the proposal would cost the state about \$67,000 if Moore gets the contract.

The checks, he says, would be printed at Moore's plant in Turmont, Md.

"We have a commitment from our facility to turn the checks around in five working days," says File — who says the state's initial response to the proposal has been "very positive."

File says Moore Business Forms, Inc. is the world's largest computer forms manufacturer.