

RurAlCAP Opposes Capital Move

The Board of Directors of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAl CAP), meeting in Juneau over the weekend, took a firm public stand in opposition to the pending capital move from Juneau to Willow.

In a lengthy resolution, the group cited such factors as the "astronomical" cost weighed against the "needs of Alaska poor," the loss of rural Alaskan political influence resulting from an even higher concentration of the states population in South-central Alaska, and impatience with the "expenditure of private

and public energy, emotion, finances and political expertise" on what is really a "non-issue."

The resolution proposes a 6-point program to "bring government closer to the people" by urging the administration and the legislature to establish satellite telecommunications throughout the state; decentralize the state administration; provide outreach facilities for the Legislative Affairs Agency; fund existing organizations to provide for greater participation of the poor in government;

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Move ...

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establish toll-free telephone service to Juneau; and change the time zone in Southeastern Alaska to Yukon Standard Time.

"We recognize that the voters have set the process (of the capital move) in motion," stated the agencies executive director, Phil Smith. "But now that the costs in relation to the benefits are coming into focus, it's apparent that the whole thing is a bad idea. We're urging our public officials to take a second look and to stop this nonsense before it gets out of hand. We've offered some sincere suggestions for getting the whole public policy process nearer to the people. After all, that's what our agency is all about." Smith resides in Anchorage.

The action followed a similar step taken by the Citizens Participation Conference, held in Juneau prior to the Rural CAP meeting. Delegates to the conference, which meets annually in Juneau to consider the affect of legislative proposals on the poor, solidly opposed those bills relating to the Capital Move, terming them "wasteful, considering the cost of abandonment of present government facilities." Delegates to the conference are selected to represent low income people from throughout the state, and include several from the urban areas.