

Editorial

Knowles deserves our praise for support of liquor ad ban

Some years ago, this newspaper made what seemed then like a very difficult decision. We decided that we would no longer accept beer, wine and liquor advertising.

In retrospect, even with financial challenges still before us, it's a wonder the issue created such anxiety. It's not simply that being right in the abstract constituted its own reward. In order to further the well-being of the people we serve, it was vitally important that we separate ourselves completely and irrevocably from a force that undermines Alaska Native cultures, communities and individuals.

Thus, having taken this step ourselves, we appreciate the recent announcement by Gov. Tony Knowles nine states have joined Alaska's request for federal action to ban hard liquor advertising from television and radio.

"I'm very pleased by the growing support in this effort," Knowles said. "In seeking to ban this new advertising, we are just trying to preserve the current protection of children and families. For the past 50 years liquor companies have voluntarily withheld advertising from television and radio. In fact, I've offered to withdraw the filing if the Distilled Spirits Council resumes its voluntary self-regulation."

Advertising in any medium is inherently powerful. It can also be destructive and anyone who denies it is naive, self-deluded or bought-and-paid-for. Notwithstanding our strong tradition of free speech, some restraints on the advertising of harmful products (or using techniques such as sexual innuendo) are not only appropriate, they are essential for our collective well-being.

We salute Gov. Knowles for his leadership in seeking appropriate limitations on the advertising of hard liquor on television and radio.