

# Editorial



## Benefits for rural Alaskans

Chuck Borg, state director of Veterans Affairs, has written a column on Page Four for the *Tundra Times* this week that deserves much attention.

He is calling attention to the fact that the state will provide a burial allowance of up to \$750 for burial in Alaska of a veteran who was a resident at the time of his or her death.

The *Tundra Times* has attempted to shed light on the problems associated with death in rural Alaska. Last year, we focused most of our attention on autopsy requirements and unexpected costs associated with funeral arrangements.

The fact that this state program is available for Alaska veterans could go a long way toward helping bereaved families because so many rural Alaskans are members of the Alaska National Guard.

Borg points out, however, that too few rural Alaskans are aware of the program and only a small number are actually receiving this benefit that is rightfully theirs.

He says the problem probably stems from the lack of knowledge about the state death gratuity program. Veterans and survivors of veterans living in rural areas are not aware of their entitlements.

Anyone who wants a form to apply for the benefit may get one from funeral directors, officers of veterans organizations and the Alaska Division of Veterans Affairs in Anchorage and Juneau.

We commend Chuck Borg for attempting to get the word out, and we will be making an effort to publicize the fact that this benefit is available.

Anyone who wants more information on this program may contact the: Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Death Gratuity Administrator, P.O. Box L, Juneau 99811-0900; or 3601 C Street, Suite 650, Anchorage 99503.

