

# ***Future Communications Need***

In a letter to RurAL CAP, Phil Smith, deputy director, the governor's Office of Telecommunications has requested input from the rural areas regarding future need for communications in the bush.

A similar letter was mailed to a number of state and federal agencies, as well as to many Native organizations.

In commenting on the effort by the governor's office, Smith stated, "I think this is a positive development. One of the problems in the past has been that there is no comprehensive needs

assessment available to the governor. Therefore, the state has no document against which to evaluate the acceptability of the RCA plan."

Expressing hope that the governor will hold off on judging the plan, now before the FCC, he continued:

"Until such time as a comprehensive assessment of the needs of rural consumers, in such areas as telephones, broadcasting, education, and health is completed, it is premature to comment on the technology. We have to know what we want a system to accomplish before we accept the hardware to do it."

Smith went on to say, "I certainly applaud the active advocacy of such individuals and organizations as Sam Kito, the Alaska Federation of Natives, Lillie McGarvey of the Native Health Board, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and the many others who are impressing the state decision-makers with these concerns.