

Rural Teacher Scholarship Loans will continue, Sheffield says

JUNEAU — Although dropped from the budget during the waning hours of the 14th Legislature, the Teacher Scholarship Loan Program will continue to be available this fall on an interim basis until a supplemental appropriations bill can be taken up in the next session, Gov. Sheffield has announced.

"This important program encourages students from rural areas to attend a university, and then return to the village to teach. The students in the villages gain tremendously from seeing a neighbor leave, succeed, and then return to the village. In the process, all of Alaska gains," the governor said.

Since \$300,000 in funding was not provided by the Legislature for the program in Fiscal Year 1987, Gov. Sheffield has asked the Postsecondary Education Commission to award a standard Alaska student loan to all

Alaskans who would normally receive a teacher loan. The standard loan can then be converted to a teacher scholarship loan when the governor's supplemental appropriations bill is adopted.

The teacher scholarship loan carries the same interest rate as regular student loans, but the amount borrowed may include transportation to and from the village. Forgiveness of the debt is 100 percent if the teacher returns to the village and teaches for five years. Under standard Alaska Student Loan guidelines 50 percent is forgivable after five years.

"I feel confident the Legislature will approve my supplemental bill," said the governor. "The money for this important program just fell out of the system during the final rush to adjourn. This is a piece of governmental housekeeping that goes with the job."