

Mayor's staff is on the move

Like ice below the runners of a sled, the staff of the North Slope Borough Mayor's Office speeds Borough business along the ever changing administrative terrain that faces one of the nation's newest and largest local governments.

"My staff is constantly improving," says Borough Mayor Eugene Brower. "They have caught up with all the issues facing a new administration and are starting to really move."

Leading the way are the Mayor's Special Assistants Ralph Andersen and Becky Reynolds. Mayor Brower describes their duties. "They handle day-to-day matters, Department or employee problems. Then there are issues both State and Federal that affect the Borough which they research and make recommendations on." In other words, Andersen and Reynolds do a bit of anything and everything to keep the Borough moving swiftly and smoothly.

Staying informed on issues that affect the Borough, like the proposed national gas pipeline, or an international caribou treaty, requires the Special Assistants to be constantly researching, constantly checking contacts and reporting findings and recommending actions to the Mayor.

When the State Pipeline Coordinator, the Governor or some other high ranking official comes to town it is one of the Special Assistants who makes sure they get the proper reception. If a Borough project runs into a roadblock at the State or Federal level, it is often the Special Assistant's role to drop other things and find a way to get the project moving again. And last but not least, if a North Slope resident calls with a problem or question, the Special Assistants make sure it is resolved quickly. This is at least a partial listing of the Special Assistant's job responsibilities.

"Everyday there are new issues, every day there are new

problems," says Andersen.

With years of administrative service behind them, both Andersen and Reynolds have proven their ability to resolve problem corners.

Andersen has served as a Special Assistant to all the mayors in North Slope Borough history — Eben Hopson, Jacob Adams and Mayor Eugene Brower. Before coming to the Mayor's Office, he managed Eben Hopson's campaign for Congress at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Before then he served as Fairbanks Native Association Assistant Director and moved into a reporting position with the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. Attacking a typewriter or tracking the progress of an issue over the phone, Andersen seems to breathe in the pressure and thrive on it.

"We've got to be prepared and know our stuff. We've got to have an understanding of the issues facing all the Departments so if they come up with a problem we can at least offer alternative solutions."

Reynolds came into the Mayor's Office for the first time this fall but she is not new to a key support role in Borough government. In the Public Works Department she worked her way up from secretary to Assistant to the Director, who at that time was Eugene Brower.

"When you work in Public Works you deal with the things that Public Works deals with, like construction, maintenance. When you are in the Mayor's Office you deal with everything that every Department deals with and a little bit more."

They stress that they aid, not insulate the Mayor. "We don't stand between the Mayor and his Department Heads or anyone else," says Reynolds. "(Mayor Brower) has an open door policy and we uphold it."

The Barrow Special Assistants are key components of a team that has players in Wash-

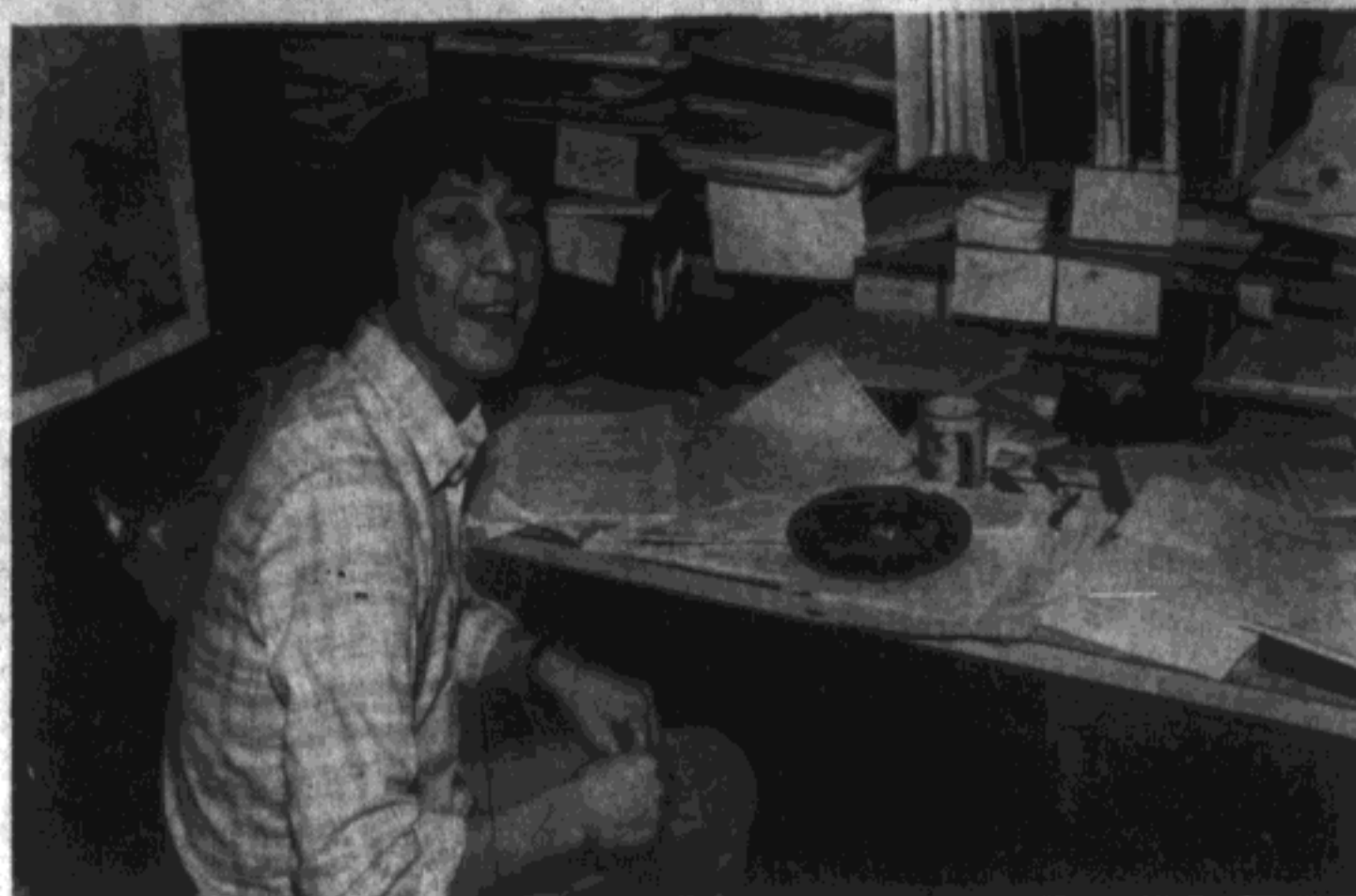


PHOTO BY ROBERT W. HARPER

Mayor's Special Assistant Ralph Andersen, "We've got to be prepared and know our stuff."



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Mayor's Special Assistant Becky Reynolds on the left, "When you are in the Mayor's office you deal with everything that every Department deals with and a little bit more."

ington, D.C. and Anchorage. In Washington, the Chief Liaison for the North Slope Borough is Tom Smythe who keeps an eye on North Slope Borough interests as they are handled by Federal agencies and Congressmen. In Anchorage, Eben Hopson Jr. serves as a part-time Special Assistant to the Mayor. Gloria Williams pro-

vides secretarial support in Anchorage along with part-timer Steven Peters.

Back in Barrow, those wishing to see the Mayor are greeted by Margaret Opie, the Mayor's Executive Secretary. Among other duties she manages the Mayor's schedule. Behind Margaret you can see Betty Swan who serves in the

Mayor's Office as an Administrative Assistant.

Together the special assistants, the aides and secretaries in Barrow, Anchorage and Washington, D.C. play a key but quiet role in keeping Borough services running swiftly on their way to the citizens of the North Slope.