

AHFC after the reorganization

When the Alaska State Legislature created a state housing finance corporation in 1971 they most likely did not envision this new entity as it exists today. Recent legislation has further transformed the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to serve Alaska's changing needs.

The recent merger between the corporation and the rural housing programs administered by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs was intended to improve the efficiency with which housing is available to meet demand.

New to the delivery of AHFC's core programs has been the addition of a public housing program. The agency has been developing necessary staffing to administer public housing and has high hopes for this new effort. Staff are quick to point out that they have much work to do. They envision many internal discussions about new policy directions.

AHFC's main priority during the merger has been to avoid any disruption of pro-

gram delivery by any agency involved. Duplications between agencies have been eliminated and a very fundamental aspect has changed dramatically: housing programs are no longer funded through the state's General Fund.

Though critics of the proposed merger said that AHFC was largely indifferent to rural housing needs and that the merger would jeopardize the delivery of critically needed housing services to rural communities, AHFC staff say this situation has failed to come about. The corporation recently sent staff to rural communities in order to gain a better understanding of rural housing needs and is looking to form partnerships with local entities.

AHFC branch offices have recently been equipped with new computers to enhance the free flow of information. Stressing a "can do" attitude, the corporation is refusing to say no to any idea prior to exploring it to its fullest.

Will Gay has recently been appointed as the new head of AHFC. His tenure be-

gins at a time when corporation directors have been giving tremendous energy towards determining the corporation's future direction. The members of the board have been traveling to areas outside of the urban centers to assess needs firsthand.

The board is comprised of Ted Mala, Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services, Edgar Blatchford, Commissioner of the Department of Community and Regional Affairs, and Darrel Rexwinkle, Commissioner of the Department of Revenue. The commissioners are joined by four at large members: Mark Korting, Vic Kohring, Gale Kincaid and John Gunn. The board is chaired by Korting.

As the new executive director, Gay is sensitive to anything that can harm the corporation or stand in the way of the delivery of housing services. When he first started at AHFC, the corporation only had eleven employees. He says AHFC is one of Alaska's most important assets, one with tremendous potential for improving the

quality of life for its residents. He says he will continue to look to the people and to the legislature for guidance.

The capability of AHFC to be a meaningful provider of housing in Alaska is great. The most prevalent attitude in AHFC's corporate culture is its devotion to purpose. They take the job of housing very seriously and ask only to be judged by their actions. There appears to be a certain satisfaction among staff with their new direction.

Most importantly from a rural perspective, AHFC knows that they cannot fulfill this mandate from "an ivory tower." They know that they must get out into rural communities, and staff has embraced this as critical to developing effective rural housing programs.

For further information please contact **AHFC at 561-1900** or write to 520 E. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. ■