



Steve Cowper
Governor, State of Alaska

Governor's Message

The fundamental purpose of the Department of Community and Regional Affairs is to provide assistance to individuals and organizations at the local and regional level. I have, however, initiated changes within the department organization to focus on the development of strong local governments and rural economies so that communities can achieve self-sufficiency. Despite the declining revenues available to the state, I have made the commitment that the department's regional offices will continue to be the critical frontline of this support. I am pleased to report that the progress in restructuring the department has been remarkable. This brochure will provide a departmental overview of the new Department of Community and Regional Affairs.

Commissioner's Message

Governor Cowper has stated that rural Alaska is a vital and important part of our State. He noted that villages are fundamentally different from urban Alaska, economically, historically, and culturally and that state government must recognize these differences and develop appropriate programs to help rural Alaskans address the considerable challenges and changes they face today. The Governor has made a strong commitment to help rural Alaskans preserve their unique qualities of life while developing more self-sufficient economies and stronger local governments. These are things I believe in strongly myself and it was therefore with a great sense of excitement that I came to work for Governor Cowper as Commissioner of the Department of Community and Regional Affairs. I see my job as Commissioner of this department as a challenge, and an opportunity, to have a positive effect on the development of rural Alaska.

To achieve the Governor's two major goals for rural Alaska — stronger local governments and stronger local economies — the Department has been restructured into two major service delivery divisions. The Municipal and Regional Assistance Division (MRAD) will focus on support to local governments to assist communities become more effective and self-sufficient in providing needed community services. Stronger local governments will give rural Alaskans a greater voice in determining their own future and will help them to resolve social and economic problems affecting their communities.

The newly established Rural Development Division (RDD) will focus on support for local economic development appropriate for the rural setting. The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Program has been created to coordinate the Division's existing community development programs and focus them more effectively on community eco-

nomic development concerns.

The Department is the principal agent of the Governor's Economic Dislocation Task Force which is examining ways to address the financial crisis now threatening many rural communities due to drastically declining revenues. The department is also working closely with other state departments to coordinate rural economic development assistance and to develop a coordinated approach to local hire issues that includes the special employment needs of rural Alaskans.

An important element of the Department's assistance that I want to continue to reinforce is the recognition of the valuable qualities inherent in traditional Alaskan lifestyles and a continuing sensitivity to these values in the promotion of rural economic development. To accomplish this end, the Department has a broad array of specific programs to respond to local problems and challenges in a manner sensitive to community values and desires. I have also moved a number of staff positions from urban to rural offices in order to increase the Department's involvement with regional issues and to provide greater access for community residents to departmental services.

This brochure describes the Department's programs to give readers a better understanding of how we can help communities and local residents to help themselves to achieve their goals of greater self-determination at the local level and increased economic self-sufficiency.



The Department has a new logo which reflects the full spectrum of communities which the Department serves

PROFILE



Bert Greist
Deputy Commissioner, DCRA

Born in Selawik, Bert Greist is a lifelong Alaskan with firsthand knowledge of living within the subsistence environment as well as experience in private enterprise ventures, and working in local government. Bert recalls with longing the days spent in subsistence hunting, trapping, and fishing and how he used to run alongside the family dogteam on the long trips between his hometown and their trapping cabin. Today, to satisfy the complex demands of his job as Deputy Commissioner of DCRA, Bert does most of his running between offices, conference rooms, and meeting places.

Bert's involvement with local government began in 1970 as a city council member of Selawik, a community which became a first class city the following year. He served as mayor of Selawik in 1976 and successfully led an effort to change Selawik from a first class to a second class city.

Bert was appointed to the Local Boundary Commission in 1980 and remained on the Commission until his appointment as Deputy Commissioner for DCRA in April(?) 1987. In addition to serving on the LBC, he has served on commissions dealing with subsistence and federal lands in Alaska, and at least a dozen committees and boards dealing with

PROFILE



David G. Hoffman
Commissioner, DCRA

David Hoffman came to the Department of Community and Regional Affairs with a good knowledge of rural Alaska, having spent thirteen years of living and working in the Bush as a carpenter, an anthropologist, a community planner, an economist, the general manager of an air service, executive director of a non-profit corporation and a management consultant.

David has a strong background in public policy issues as they affect rural Alaska. At Harvard University he earned a degree in anthropology and a Master's degree in Public Policy. He served as an Administrative Assistant to the "Bush Caucus" of the State Legislature in 1978 and 1979 and directed staff work on Alaska's first subsistence law. He was the founder and Executive Director of the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association in 1980. He is no stranger to local government, having served as Mayor of the Interior community of Ruby in 1984 and 1985.

David founded two rural newspapers, the *Bering Sea Fisherman*, and the *Interior Job Finder*, and authored the publication *Prepare for Success: How to Start a Village Business*. He has been the Economic Editor and a frequent contributor for *Alaska Native Magazine*. This varied experience in both the governmental and economic spheres has convinced David of the strong relationship between the two and the need for a healthy economic base to support a strong local government.

David's family plays an important role in his life. Dee Olin Hoffman is David's wife and past business partner. They have four children, Tara, 16, Margaret, 6, Lena, 4, and Dewey, 2.

health, education and the private sector enterprises.

From 1973 until his appointment as Deputy Commissioner, Bert was employed with the NANA Regional Corporation in various capacities including Resource Manager, Director of the Land Department, and Special Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer. He has been a member of the board of the NANA Corporation for the past ten years.