

Shively will bring many strengths to job

By Linda Lord-Jenkins
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The greatest asset that John Shively brings with him as the governor's new Chief of Staff is his willingness to work, and his knowledge of the needs and wants of all the people of the state, say two men who have worked closely with him.

Shively, who has served for the last eight years as vice president of the NANA Regional Corp. and NANA Development Corp., was named chief of staff to Gov. Bill Sheffield last week. He replaces former chief of staff Larry Crawford who will assume control of the Alaska Power Authority.

Shively's appointment is seen on one front as a move to shore up Sheffield's sagging popularity and respect in rural Alaska where he has been criticized as being unresponsive to rural needs.

"Well, the appointment couldn't hurt," admits Shively who has spent more than 16 years in Alaska, much of it in rural areas.

He came to Alaska in 1965 as a VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) volunteer and spent time in Bethel and Yakutat working primarily with the Alaska Native community.

He headed the Rural Alaska Community Action Agency for a time and joined NANA eight years ago upon the behest of NANA president John Schaeffer.

At NANA he worked and lived in Kotzebue until Al Adams, then in charge of NANA operation in Anchorage left the corporation. Schaeffer then moved him to Anchorage.

At NANA he has handled many of the details of the Red Dog; handled much of the corporation's D-2 work, worked with the VECO-NANA operation which became Alaska United Drilling Corp., and was a tough negotiator for the protracted 7i negotiations.

In fact, when 7i was finally resolved on the regional corporation level, Shively was kidded because of his negotiating stance.

He shoves some of that good-natured kidding aside, however, by saying "NANA decided early on we wanted some rules and we decided we wanted the people to work together. The corporation acted as a middle ground in many matters," said Shively.

His experience as a mediator will be necessary for Shively who walks into a situation where the Legislature and Sheffield were constantly fighting. Because of the rift between Sheffield and the Legislature, little work got done in the last session of the Legislature.

But he is optimistic about the situation.

"Obviously last year's session by anybody's measure was a disaster. It was no one's fault in particular. Every-

body was new . . . there were 23 new legislators alone.

"This year people will understand some of the things that are going on. Sure, there is some bad blood but people want this to work," he said.

Shively is fairly modest about his appointment to the office. "It's hard to turn down the governor when he asks," he will say and won't comment on the fact that this is not the first time that Sheffield has asked him to assume key administration positions.

"It is certainly one of the most exciting jobs in the state as far as non-elected jobs."

He also is non-committal about the effect of his leaving NANA. "You'd better talk to NANA about that," he says.

NANA President John Schaeffer is very open about

his feelings. "If it was up to me I wouldn't have let him go but I don't make all the decisions.

"We felt some commitment to the governor to help out if asked and he asked for John specifically. I think he made a good choice."

Schaeffer said Shively's biggest asset in working with NANA was his "understanding of our people and their needs and desires. He accepted that as his choice. Everything we did and do isn't strictly by the book and he understood that. He was the closest thing we could get to a Native in a non-Native doing the job."

Schaeffer said that Shively's identification with rural Native Alaska won't hinder his dealing with urban areas.

"I think if you look only

at the surface you might get the impression (that he will only work for rural Alaska) but you have to know John. He is one of the most idealistic and honest persons I know.

"People who try to paint him into a corner can't paint him into one. He's the type of person you want in government. He'll do what's best for the state."

Sam Kito, former chairman of the Alaska Federation of Natives and one of the most powerful lobbyists in Juneau, said Shively's greatest strength is his ability to spend a high amount of energy toward his work.

He also has a "great understanding of the economic and social issues affecting all of the state."

He said Shively's "abilities

to frame the issues for the governor will be very visible very soon."

Kito said Shively's association with rural Alaska will be an asset in terms of dealing with urban Alaska. "If you have an understanding of something doesn't mean you have a bias."

Anchorage Mayor Tony Knowles said he has known and respected Shively since 1968 and feels his appointment will be a boon to all Alaska.

"I would hope that he would have a tendency to be a calming influence in what I think has always been a losing proposition of pitting rural versus urban Alaska in squabbling over funds. We each need the other. If rural Alaska fails, Anchorage fails," said Knowles.