



John Schaeffer of Kotzebue is to be the Alaska Army and Air Guard leader in Gov. Steve Cowper's new cabinet.

photo by Carl Gidlund

Schaeffer appointed Adjutant General

Northwest Arctic Borough Mayor John Schaeffer will be the commissioner of Alaska's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

The appointment of the 47-year-old Kotzebue Native was announced late last week by Gov. Steve Cowper.

Schaeffer said that, because of his mayoral duties, he had been reluctant to take the state job which carries with it responsibility for commanding Alaska's 4,000-member Army and Air National Guard.

He accepted, he said, because

fellow Native leaders want a friend in the new governor's cabinet.

Outgoing Alaska Adjutant General Edward Pagano had recently named Schaeffer as assistant adjutant general for the Army National Guard. That was a part-time job, but his new full-

time position will necessitate a move from Kotzebue to the department's headquarters in Anchorage.

Now a colonel, Schaeffer was nominated for brigadier general in Oc-

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New AG is Alaska Guard veteran

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tober and is awaiting federal recognition of that rank. His new job as adjutant general calls for him to wear the two stars of a major general.

Schaeffer will take over the department on a full-time basis on Jan. 15. Until then, he will commute between Kotzebue and Anchorage.

A special election will be held to fill

the vacated mayor's job.

In addition to commanding Army and Air Guardsmen, Schaeffer's department also is responsible for overseeing veterans programs within the state and for preparing for and responding to natural disasters.

The department's budget is about \$70 million.

Since he enlisted in the Alaska Army Guard in 1957, Schaeffer has held a number of full- and part-time positions. Those include command of the Guard's 1st Scout Battalion in Nome,

3rd Scout Battalion in Kotzebue, and several key staff jobs in the Alaska Army Guard headquarters.

While performing his guard duties, he's held a number of other jobs, including the presidency of NANA Regional Corp. for 14 years.

Schaeffer has been a University of Alaska regent and served on many state and national boards and commissions, including the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission.

He is a graduate of the Infantry Of-

ficer Candidates School, the Army's Command and General Staff College, and is airborne and Special Forces qualified.

His military decorations include the Alaska Distinguished Service Medal and Army and Alaska Commendation Medals.

Schaeffer and his wife Mary have nine children, including John Schaeffer III, an enlisted member of the 3rd Scout Battalion.