

# Miller, Hensley challenge educators

Lieutenant Governor Terry Miller and Native leader Willie Hensley opened the 28th Annual National Education Association (NEA) Teachers Conference, with a challenge to the state to create a social policy and educational system for all Alaskans.

Alaskans must invest in themselves, Miller said.

"We should be able to arrest alcohol and drug abuse. We should be able to train and employ all Alaskans," Miller said. "But, we cannot afford to throw away money on more crash programs."

Miller believes that the state must scrutinize the current social system and throw out the programs that do not work or do not meet the needs of all Alaskans.

In many cases this may mean breaking away from the past, turning down federal programs that do not meet Alaska's needs, Miller said.

"Alaska has the financial resources to solve the problem," Miller said. "If not us, then who else?" Miller asked. "If not in Alaska, then where?" Hensley agreed with Miller that Alaska's social systems must change to serve all Alaskans.

"We as a state must have an open mind and must not be afraid to start something new," Hensley said.

Hensley then challenged the NEA and the state Department of Education to create a totally new educational system that would not only develop good urban Alaskans but good rural Alaskans as well.

"I challenge you to help our children take pride in who they are. Work with the elders who have the knowledge, to integrate Native history, art and language courses into the current system so that we as Alaskans might understand ourselves."