

## ASRAA budget slashed

We are disappointed to learn that the budget of the Association for Stranded Rural Alaskans in Anchorage has been cut from \$174,400 last year to \$62,000 for this fiscal year.

While it looks as though this cut may save the state more than \$100,000, what it really means is that villagers who come in to Anchorage and need help *won't* get it. This agency serves rural Alaska Natives — the very people who are frequently the victims of crime in Anchorage.

ASRAA currently employs five people, and the agency's highest salary is \$34,000 a year. The staff members include an executive director/cross cultural facilitator, a community services specialist, a crime prevention specialist, a victims' advocate and an administrative assistant.

The staff is available 24 hours a day.

The need for these people will only become more critical in this time of Alaska's economic woes. More people are expected to leave their villages to come to Anchorage, looking for new opportunities.

Ninety percent of ASRAA's clients travel to Anchorage for medical reasons. Without the skills, sophistication and/or financial ability to cope in an urban setting, many rural Alaskans become victims of crime or violence or encounter problems obtaining basic services.

Besides the direct services ASRAA provides to rural Alaskans in Anchorage, the agency works with many different organizations in the city. Just one example of this is the cross cultural workshops held for health professionals.

We would hope that the governor will take another look at what his budget knife has done. There may be other sources of funding that perhaps could be used this year to continue the operations of ASRAA.

### LEKANOF PROMOTED

We are pleased to announce the recent promotion of Mary L. Lekanof as business manager of the *Tundra Times*. Lekanof is beginning her second year of employment with the paper and brings many years of administrative experience to her new job. She has lived in Anchorage, Point Hope, Barrow, Juneau, Naknek and Washington, D.C.

Lekanof is also coordinating the *Tundra Times* Banquet for this year, which will be Oct. 24 at the Egan Convention Center. She is encouraging anyone who wants to attend to make their reservations as soon as possible. You can contact her at 274-2512 or write our office at Box 104480, Anchorage 99510-4480.

The newspaper is observing its 25th Anniversary at this banquet, so it should be an exciting event.