

Sheffield asks zone change

By Hal Spencer

The Associated Press

Juneau — Gov. Bill Sheffield said that he is sending a letter to the Federal Government asking that Alaska's four time zones be reduced to two.

Sheffield wants Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole to approve putting the Railbelt and southeast Alaska on the same clock while moving western Alaska to what is now Railbelt time.

The proposal, which matches a resolution approved by the Legislature last month, would:

- Move the populous Rail-

belt, comprising Fairbanks, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula, an hour ahead from Alaska Daylight Time to Yukon Daylight Time.

- Move the southeast Alaska panhandle an hour back from Pacific Daylight Time to Yukon time.

- Move far western Alaska an hour forward from Bering Daylight to Alaska Daylight Time.

Sheffield, like the Legislature before him, said the attempt to unify time zones was long overdue and would bring Alaskans closer together.

Impetus for the proposal comes partly from the long and bitter battle to move the capital from Juneau to the railbelt area, where the majority of Alaskans live.

Sheffield said he hoped Dole's department could hold public hearings around the state this summer and approve the time zone changes so as to occur in the fall when the state switches back to standard time.