

Barnes says: cost efficient energy her only priority

by Jeff Richardson
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You can't talk about rural energy programs without talking about Ramona Barnes. The determined speaker of the state house of representatives says she has been working on energy policy for the past 10 years with only one thing in mind: "To have an integrated, reliable energy source that will serve us over the long term."

According to Barnes, as government revenues decrease, the state will no longer be able to afford its rural energy subsidy. She wants to get rural power systems on-line and producing

cheaper energy against that day.

"I have done everything in my power to see that happen," Barnes said.

In Barnes' judgment the old Alaska Energy Authority did little to accomplish the goal. Referring to last spring's legislative push—led by Barnes—to privatize rural energy services, Barnes added: "I had every intention to cut out the fat at AEA."

She said she has asked to sit on the DCRA subcommittee of the House Finance Committee in order to continue her monitoring of rural power program reorganization.