

# View from the Governor's Office

by Governor Bill Sheffield

It's been a good week for me. For the first time in a month, I've been able to devote 100 percent of my time and energy to the job the people hired me to do. It was great to spend a week with no Senate hearings, no lawyers, and no screaming headlines.

Instead, I've been able to focus my attention on more productive issues: roads, schools, subsistence, the Permanent Fund, and balancing our many needs with our limited ability to pay. The new fiscal year is less than 60 days old, and we're already preparing for the next one. The Senate just went home, and we're already preparing for the Legislature's return in January. There's a lot to do.

Like most Alaskans, my outlook about policies has been changed over the courses of this short summer. When the Legislature reconvenes in January, I suppose we will all carry some of the baggage we picked up in July. That's only natural.

But all things considered, our government and institutions weathered the crisis very well. That's because our system of government was designed to be a lot more resilient than the people running it. For that, we can be thankful.

Ever since the session ended, people have been asking me what the fallout will be from all this. I think it's too early to speculate on that question. People are still sorting what they read and heard. I suspect they'll be thinking about for some time — and well they should.

Whatever the ultimate results of the recent special session may

be, at least one thing is clear: From this point forward, Bill Sheffield's administration will be watched more closely than any state government in America.

That's fine with me; the close scrutiny will provide my administration with a unique opportunity. The closer we're watched by the people and the press, the better we prove we have a state government of which every Alaskan can be proud.

To make sure that every administration — including mine — meets the highest standards of public trust, it's important to have a comprehensive ethics code in place. That way, there can be no mistake about what the rules are, and how they should be enforced.

In 1983, I proposed an executive branch code of ethics to the House and Senate; neither body took a vote on that proposal.

Now, the need for a such a code is even more pressing than ever. To that end, this week I ordered a special committee to write an ethics code and have it ready for review by the people and the Legislature in the coming session. I have also ordered the Department of Administration, working with the Attorney General's office, to take a hard look at the rules and regulations governing the state's procurement practices.

In addition, I ordered each of the members of my cabinet to make sure their departments comply strictly with the spirit and the letter of the laws guaranteeing the people's access to their government. We do the public's business — in public — and let you be the judge of how well we do it.