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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 5, 2004

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ALASKA RURAL JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION INAUGURAL MEETING

Anchorage, Alaska – The recently appointed Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission will meet at the Captain Cook Hotel in the Resolution Room on October 12, 2004 from 1:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. continuing on October 13, 2004 from 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. The meeting is to determine the protocol, timeline and work plan of the Commission, and will be open to the public.

The United States Congress created the Commission this year and directed it to review federal, state, local and tribal jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters in rural Alaska. The Commission will then submit recommendations to the Congress and the Alaska State Legislature regarding ways to improve the quality of justice in rural Alaska. Rural Alaska is defined in the legislation as those areas outside the Municipality of Anchorage, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the City and Borough of Juneau, the Sitka Borough and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough.

The Commission will specifically be responsible for providing recommendations concerning areas that include:

- Creating a unified law enforcement system, court system, and system of local laws or ordinances for Alaska Native villages and communities of varying sizes, including the possibility of first, second, and third class villages with different powers;
- Meeting the law enforcement and judicial personnel needs in rural Alaska, including the possible use of cross deputization in a way that maximizes the existing resources of federal, state, local, and tribal governments;
- Addressing the need to regulate alcoholic beverages, including the prohibition of the sale, importation, use, or possession of alcoholic beverages, and to provide restorative justice for persons who violate such laws including treatment, and
- Addressing the problems of domestic violence and child abuse, including treatment options and restorative justice.