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ALASKA RURAL JUSTICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION HEARINGS

Anchorage, Alaska – On Wednesday, November 10, 2004, from 1:30 P.M. to 3:00 P.M., the Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission will hear testimony from members of the Alaska Municipal League in Fairbanks, Alaska at the Westmark Fairbanks Hotel and Convention Center located at 813 Noble Street. During this time, the Commission will take invited testimony on a variety of issues, including tribal justice initiatives that address domestic violence, child protection, alcohol interdiction, and juvenile justice, as well as law enforcement concerns. Following the invited testimony, the Commission will meet at the Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge located at 4477 Pikes Landing Road. Both the invited testimony and the Commission meeting are open to the public.

This hearing is the second of many hearings that the Commission will conduct throughout rural Alaska over the next six months. The next hearing will be held in conjunction with the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council Annual Convention, on December 10, 2004. Because practical limitations make it difficult for the Commission to take oral testimony from everyone who would like to share insights, perspectives, and opinions with the Commission, the Commission invites and encourages anyone who would like to offer written testimony to do so at any time over the next six months. Written testimony can be submitted to the Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission in care of the Alaska Native Justice Center, 121 West Fireweed Lane, Ste. 240, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. The Commission's goal is to provide a written report to Congress and the Alaska State Legislature by the end of June 2005.

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 is specifically responsible for providing recommendations concerning areas that include:

- 1) 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;

(more)

- 2) 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;
- 3) 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;
- 4) Addressing the problems of domestic violence and child abuse, including treatment options and restorative justice.

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