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New Year Brings Streamlined Delivery of Local Government Assistance

January 20, 2015 JUNEAU – To improve efficiency and balance budget reductions with the delivery of essential services, the Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) has launched a plan to streamline its operations. The new structure will provide better opportunities to cross train employees and will improve communications between related programs. Restructuring the division's ten sections into four is more than just a shuffle of employees' desks—the division reduced middle management by five supervisors and eliminated two positions.

"The Division of Community and Regional Affairs is committed to doing our part to assist Governor Walker in his efforts to streamline state government," said Katherine Eldemar, director of DCRA. "We also take very seriously the responsibility entrusted to us to provide local government assistance. We remain steadfast in our dedication to deliver critical services to rural Alaska while simultaneously recognizing the state's budget deficit."

Restructuring the division will open opportunities for collaboration and alleviate some concerns about succession planning. The elimination of positions was not a decision made lightly; it was an important part of the prioritization of functions. Conversely, the newfound efficiencies that come from simplifying operations are already boosting employee morale.

The transformation of the division was organic from within DCRA. Confronted by budget reductions, the division's leadership team arrived at this solution as a way to continue to fulfill DCRA's duty to advise and assist local governments. This year's state operating budget is \$4.8 billion, down from \$6.1 billion one year ago. Proposed FY2017 state funding for agencies is \$140 million less than FY2016 and \$544 million less than FY2015—a cut of 11 percent from state operating costs since FY2015.

As mandated in Article 10, Section 14 of the Alaska Constitution, the Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) advises and assists local governments. DCRA is a division within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) tasked with promoting a healthy economy, supporting strong communities, and protecting consumers in Alaska. For additional information about the division, visit commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra. For information about the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and its other agencies, please visit commerce.alaska.gov.

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