

## ***Focus on the FY2002 Budget:***

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### **Protecting the Public's Safety**

Over the past ten years, Alaska's public protection systems have not kept pace with the increase in population or the complexity of issues in law enforcement, corrections, protection of vulnerable children and seniors, victims' services and emergency response. Nor has there been an all-out effort to combat alcohol abuse – the single most important factor in domestic violence, child abuse, other personal and property crimes, poor health and homelessness.

Governor Knowles' FY2002 budget adds \$19.0 million in state, federal and other funds to improve the safety of the Alaska public in three major areas: criminal justice; protecting children and seniors; and emergency preparedness and response. Public protection is a basic state service, so nearly 75% of the increase would come from the state's general fund.

#### **Criminal Justice: \$8.5 million state and other funds**

##### ***Troopers and Statewide Support: \$2 million state and other funds***

There are 12 fewer troopers today than in FY1994 despite a 9% increase in population in the areas served by state troopers. The budget would put ten more troopers on duty and support statewide services such as assistance to rural VPSOs and search and rescue.

##### ***Rural Law Enforcement: \$2.1 million state and other funds (plus \$828,500 already shown in Maintain Services)***

A new level of public safety presence in rural Alaska would begin with 8 of the proposed 20 constables to be hired over the next three years. The budget also funds 20 more VPSOs, half the increase proposed for the next three years. A 15% VPSO salary increase to help reduce turnover is part of the \$80 million needed to maintain the same level of services in FY2002.

##### ***Victims' Services: \$1.45 million state and federal funds***

An aggressive program to improve services to victims of crime will include new staff to collect victim restitution and funds to continue victim witness and volunteer advocate programs. Support for domestic violence shelters will increase by \$450,000 in new federal funds and \$500,000 in Permanent Fund dividends collected from convicted felons.

##### ***Juvenile Offenders: \$1 million state general funds***

Nine new juvenile probation officers are proposed to reduce caseloads that are twice the nationally recommended level. The sole attorney handling juvenile delinquency cases in Anchorage will get help from a second attorney to handle the 29% increase in cases over the past two years. Youth at McLaughlin who have drug, alcohol or mental health problems will receive more treatment to help them break out of the cycle of crime.

### ***Adult Offenders: \$276,200 general funds and fees***

Electronic monitoring and batterers programs will be increased. The largest increases in the Corrections budget, \$3.4 million to open the new Anchorage jail and \$400,000 for operations in the 15 Community Jails, are already included in the cost of Maintaining Existing Services.

### ***Fish and Wildlife Enforcement: \$1.6 million general funds***

Only 86 officers are available to enforce fish and game laws in the largest state in the union and the nation's largest commercial fisheries. The budget proposes adding ten new officers to help protect Alaska's fish and game resources.

## **Child & Senior Protection: \$3.1 million state and other funds**

### ***Child Protection: \$1 million state and federal funds***

To further significant progress toward zero tolerance in Alaska for child abuse and neglect, child protection workers will receive risk/safety assessment training recommended by a legislative audit and be able to increase their productivity by dictating case notes for transcription by a private contractor. Office of Public Advocacy staff will be added in Anchorage and Fairbanks to handle increases in Child In Need of Aid and guardian ad litem cases. The Children's Trust will receive federal funds to distribute for community child abuse awareness projects.

### ***Child Support Enforcement: \$337,100 federal funds***

Funds a joint project with the Alaska courts for a pro se center to provide legal services for family matters such as non-custodial parent access and visitation as well as improvements to the child support automated phone inquiry system.

### ***Senior Care and Protection: \$1.8 million state and other funds***

In the past year, the number of licensed assisted living homes for seniors has grown 35%, greatly increasing the workload for licensing and investigation of reports of harm. Federal funds will be available for protection, nutrition and other support services. The Mental Health Trust Authority will fund several projects for seniors such as improving family caregiver support and training for in-home providers.

## **Emergency Services: \$1.6 million state and other funds**

### ***Emergency Preparedness and Response: \$527,000 state and federal funds***

A new state emergency response center (\$200,000) would be staffed 24 hours a day to coordinate response among state, federal and local agencies. A rural coordinator will focus on recruitment and advancement opportunities for National Guard members. The federal government will be providing special anti-terrorism training.

**Fire Prevention and Response: \$350,000 general funds; \$379,100 other funds**

Alaska has one of the highest fire injury and death rates in the nation, three to four times the national per capita average. Increased fire prevention training, education and plan review services are essential to bring down this staggering rate. To reduce the spread of wildland fires in inhabited regions of the state, twenty trained fire attack crew members would be stationed in high risk areas.

**Avalanche Safety and Rescue: \$350,000 general funds**

Fifteen people have died in avalanches in the past two years. Although state law requires an avalanche warning program, it was eliminated in 1986. A cooperative effort with snowmachine and other recreation groups, victims' families and others will include public service announcements, signage at avalanche-prone recreation areas and stockpiles of search and rescue equipment.

**Emergency Medical Services: in the governor's capital budget**

Small communities throughout the state are in dire need of ambulances and basic emergency medical equipment. A state match of \$533,400 is in the capital budget to secure federal support for Code Blue, a comprehensive program to equip communities to handle basic medical emergencies. Another \$2 million in state funds and \$15 million in federal funds is targeted in the capital budget for emergency communications systems.

**Alcohol Initiative: \$5.8 million state and other funds**

***See the attached plan for stronger enforcement and better treatment.***

**Total for Governor Knowles' Public Protection Initiative:**

<b>State general funds*</b>	<b>\$ 14.1 million</b>
<b>Federal and other funds</b>	<b><u>4.9 million</u></b>
	<b>\$19.0 million</b>

***\*does not include amounts already shown in the \$80 million "Cost of Maintaining Existing Services"***

## ***Focus on the FY 2002 Budget:***

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### ***An alcohol initiative to fight crime and abuse with effective enforcement and treatment***

#### **An integral part of the Governor's \$19.0 million Initiative for Protecting the Public's Safety**

In the past year Alaskans have been shocked by the death and destruction caused by drunken drivers on our highways. For the Alaska law enforcement community, these headlines have simply highlighted what has long been known: alcohol is the single biggest contributing factor to crime in Alaska. It is also a major factor in child abuse, domestic violence, health problems and poor educational achievement.

In May 2000, the *Final Report of the Alaska Criminal Justice Assessment Commission* reaffirmed the connection between alcohol and crime. In addition to the carnage caused by drunken drivers in Alaska the report notes that:

- Alcohol is implicated in most homicides resulting from arguments or disputes and is often a contributing factor in incest, child abuse, spousal abuse, robbery with injury, and family violence;
- Crime-related costs of offenders who do not receive alcohol treatment far exceed the costs of treatment; and
- Recidivism rates for offenders who receive clinically appropriate treatment are significantly less than for offenders who receive no treatment or inadequate treatment.

The governor's FY2002 budget includes resources to address Alaska's pervasive alcohol abuse problem.

#### ***Increase monitoring of adult offenders: included in the cost of maintaining current service levels***

The Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP) will be restored to provide more statewide substance abuse screening and monitoring of treatment ordered by the courts for DWI and other alcohol and drug related misdemeanants. Evaluations of ASAP show that it has been extremely successful in reducing recidivism of DWI offenders. Increased funding will allow existing ASAP sites, including additional staff in Anchorage, to adequately serve increased caseloads and ASAP programs will be restored in Sitka, Cordova, Barrow, Seward and Valdez. The total increase for ASAP will be \$1.4 million general funds.

#### ***Treat offenders in adult correctional facilities: \$352,300 general funds; \$185,200 mental health trust funds***

The Department of Corrections will identify alcohol treatment needs of inmates early during their incarceration. Approximately 2,000 inmates are admitted to treatment each year. The Spring Creek Correctional Facility will improve services for adults with both mental illness and substance abuse diagnoses. Juveniles at Spring Creek who are convicted as adults will receive specialized mental health and substance abuse services.

***Increase treatment in rural Alaska: \$1.1 million general funds; \$200,000 mental health trust funds***

Individuals returning to rural Alaska from out-of-town treatment or incarceration are at risk of losing their sobriety without adequate community based supports.

Ten additional communities will be served by Rural Human Services Workers trained in both mental health and substance abuse case management and counseling. Eight to twelve more highly effective 30-day Spirit/Recovery camp sessions will expand culturally appropriate family substance abuse treatment in rural areas.

***Increase substance abuse treatment for adults: \$2 million general funds; \$180,000 federal funds***

General funds are needed to reduce outpatient services wait lists for criminal justice system clients and develop safe and sober housing for clients receiving these services. It will also reduce the residential treatment services wait list by increasing bed capacity at existing facilities.

***Provide meaningful consequences and more treatment for minors convicted of alcohol-related crimes: \$1.7 million state funds***

Research shows that youth who begin to consume alcohol before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependency than people who wait until age 21. In 1999 the Alaska Court System recorded over 2000 citations for minors under the age of 18 consuming alcohol. Today, minors cited for consuming or possessing alcohol are not required to be screened and assessed for alcohol dependency. Outpatient treatment for minors exists only in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Palmer.

Juvenile Alcohol Safety Action Programs will be established in 6-8 communities to provide alcohol screening, assessment, outpatient treatment and monitoring of court ordered sanctions for minors cited for consuming or possessing alcohol. McLaughlin Youth Center will provide highly structured services to alcohol and drug dependent offenders who require institutionalization. Other youth frequently detained for alcohol related offenses will be diverted to appropriate community-based services.

***Total for the Alcohol Initiative (part of the \$19.0 Public Safety Initiative):***

<b><i>State general funds*</i></b>	<b><i>\$ 5.2 million</i></b>
<b><i>Federal and other funds</i></b>	<b><i><u>.6 million</u></i></b>
	<b><i>\$5.8 million</i></b>

***\*does not include amounts already shown in the \$80 million "Cost of Maintaining Existing Services"***

***New Legislation***

In addition to these budget initiatives, the Governor is preparing bills to reduce the blood alcohol limit for drunk driving to .08 and increase penalties for bootleggers and repeat drunk driving offenders.