

Governor Frank Murkowski's Comments
Faith-Based & Community Initiatives Task Force
September 24, 2003

Thanks for the opportunity to spend a few moments with you. I apologize for not having sat through the entire presentation with you this morning.

I want to commend you on your commitment to the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. As you know, this has been at the very top of our President's agenda. There is a recognition that faith-based organizations can come together and make a significant contribution to the quality of life, not only in Alaska but throughout the entire United States. I pledge my efforts, my support and my Administration to encourage this undertaking. The contribution of your efforts in helping others is meritorious and very much needed.

As you know we have significant problems with substance abuse, particularly in areas of Alaska where we don't have job opportunities. It is a great challenge because this is not something that government can do very well. Government can provide funding, government can provide analysis, government can provide studies but the real rehabilitation effort is human contact – and those who can best do it are those who are motivated to help others. This is a neighborly process associated with this effort.

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor for his work on this initiative. When we first discussed our Administration this was one of the areas that we felt very strongly about, and you, Lieutenant Governor Leman, agreed to take over the leadership of that role and you have done a good job. You have got a lot of work ahead of you and believe me you are not going to run out of work. The need is there. We want to help support you and others to meet that need.

Thank you and I hope your deliberations go well.