

State of Alaska
LT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Loren Leman
Lt. Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001



Nona Wilson
Special Assistant
Communications

NEWS RELEASE

907-465-3520
FAX: 907-465-5400

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 18, 2003

Lt. Governor Hosts Faith-Based Initiatives Meeting

(Juneau)--Lieutenant Governor Loren Leman will host an Alaska Faith-based and Community Initiatives scoping meeting in Anchorage on Thursday, Feb. 20. The meeting will be held from 10 am until noon in the Wilda Marston Theater at the Loussac Public Library.

"Meeting the needs of people is one of our highest priorities," Leman said. "Enabling the faith community to be partners in this initiative will help broaden support, bring in a wide variety of new participants and achieve a more fulfilling level of success. I am pleased that President Bush and Governor Murkowski have made this a priority."

Presenters will highlight successes of current faith-based and community programs and outline the goals of the Murkowski-Leman Administration to build on President Bush's initiatives. Among those scheduled to speak are Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Commissioner Joel Gilbertson, Department of Corrections Chaplaincy Coordinator Chaplain Mikeensch, and Anchorage Municipality Health and Human Services Director Jewel Jones. The White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives will participate via teleconference.

Presentations will be followed by an opportunity for other attendees to offer comments.

###

Contact: Gwen Hall
Special Assistant to the Lieutenant Governor
269-7456

Alaska Faith-Based and Community Initiative
Scoping Meeting
Loussac Public Library, Wilda Marston Theater
February 20, 2003 10 am - Noon

AGENDA

10:00 – Welcome, Invocation & Pledge – Marilyn Stewart

Opening Remarks - Lieutenant Governor Leman

10:15 - Balan Ayyar - White House Office of Faith-Based and
Community Initiatives

10:30 - Commissioner Joel Gilbertson – State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services

10:40 - Deputy Commissioner Karleen Jackson – State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services

10:50 - Chaplaincy Coordinator Chaplain Mike Enschede – State of Alaska
Department of Corrections

10:55 - Mayor Wuerch – Municipality of Anchorage

11:00 - Director Jewel Jones - Municipality of Anchorage
Department of Health and Human Services

11:05 - Input from Faith-Based and Community Programs
(5 minutes per presenter)

- Michelle Foreman - Peter's Creek Christian Center – Emergency Property Locator
- Tami English – Crisis Pregnancy Center – Let's Talk
- Cheryl Sheldon - Family Path Finder Project – Catholic Social Services and Lutheran Social Services
- Judy Dellinger – Love Inc.
- Pastor Ken Friendly - Lighthouse Christian Fellowship

11:35 - Discussion

11:55 - Closing Remarks – Lieutenant Governor Leman

Lieutenant Governor Loren Leman
Alaska Faith-based and Community Initiatives Scoping Meeting
Loussac Library
February 20, 2003 at 10:00 am

OPENING

Good morning. I am pleased to see so many of you who are dedicating your lives to serving people. You are serving in a very important role in our State's social service safety net.

One of the first things Governor Murkowski asked me to do after we were sworn in on December 2 was to begin working with our faith-based and volunteer communities in Alaska to determine how we in State government—and you in the volunteer communities—can work together to better serve the needs of people.

We are 80 days into our Administration and are tackling the challenges of redesigning government, addressing our priorities, and making government smaller and smarter. You are already doing a lot to help. But we need more.

You will hear Governor Murkowski and me talk a lot about our resources—and they are important. We have been blessed with a resource-rich State with unparalleled natural beauty. As valuable as our natural resources are, however, they pale in comparison to our richest resource, the people of Alaska. Serving the needs of people is our highest priority—you have our commitment.

The measure of our success will not necessarily be by a new program from Washington, D.C.—or Juneau—or even high oil prices. Rather, it will be by each of us stepping up and taking individual responsibility. Caring for the most vulnerable among us is a measure of that responsibility.

Fourteen years ago, when I was a freshman member of the State House, I suggested that a lot of the social service programs we were doing really shouldn't be primarily the responsibility of government. Rather we should take on this responsibility individually—as family, friends, neighbors, social groups and churches to really care for the needy among us. That, as you know, takes personal investment.

I am pleased that we have a President who also believes this—and who is taking constructive action to make it happen. I just returned last Saturday from Washington, D.C. where I met with President Bush's staff

to discuss their Faith-based and Community Initiatives. The President is committed to helping organizations such as yours. His Administration has proposed changes in regulations, called "Charitable Choice", to level the playing field for faith-based charities. He is working with members of Congress to enact legislation to encourage more charitable giving. And his is actively promoting volunteerism. In a few minutes, you will hear more about the President's vision from Balan Ayyar, from the White House.

I am also pleased to be working with Governor Murkowski who shares this vision. He has selected Commissioners and key staff to work to make this happen in Alaska. DHSS Commissioner Joel Gilbertson is online from Juneau. He has told me several times how important this is to him.

I know many of you know Karleen Jackson, incoming Deputy Commissioner for DHSS. She extended her stay in Anchorage to attend this meeting. Although Catholic Social Services is sad to lose you, we are excited about the net gain you bring to the Department and thereby to all service providers.

I also commend Chaplaincy Coordinator Mike Ensich for his dedication in the Department of Corrections. Also Anchorage DHHS Director Jewel Jones, who has provided a friendly relationship for the faith-based community in Anchorage for several years.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

Our purpose is not to tell you how to do your job. You are already doing it. We do not want to assert more government control over your organizations. We do want to identify success stories and celebrate them. We also want to identify what could work better if government would make changes in its rules and remove barriers. Finally, we'd like to know what we are not now doing, but could, if government could remove barriers and allow people to step up.

By our constitution, State government has a responsibility for providing for the health and welfare of Alaskans. However, it does not have a monopoly on compassion—and it does not have to be the total vehicle for accomplishing its goal.

You who work in the faith communities know that the real answer to many of the challenges we face in society is to put hope in hearts—and a sense of purpose in lives. You do it by saying, "God loves you, I love you and you can count on us both."

My goal is to start scoping out things that we can address in the short-term and then map out a strategy for accomplishing longer-range goals during the next four years.

I am anxious to hear from you on how we can make this happen.

**Alaska Dept. of Health & Social Services Commissioner
Joel Gilbertson's remarks to
"Alaska Faith-Based And Community Initiative Scoping
Meeting"
approx. 10:35 am, Thu. Feb. 20, 2003,
via teleconference from Juneau to
Loussac Public Library, Wilda Marston Theater, Anchorage**

Thank you Lt. Governor for taking the time to lead in implementing Gov. Murkowski's Faith-Based Initiative. It's an important effort for the State, and it's an important effort for this Department. I think we have a great opportunity to seize upon efforts in the past and opportunities in the future to greatly improve the quality and level of services provided throughout the state.

As a Department, we stand ready to work with Lt. Governor Leman to build the partnerships and collaborations that we're going to require to meet the needs that exists throughout the state. I firmly believe that individuals in need do not care who is providing these services: they care that the need is being met, and that the services are available. We're working right now on our budget proposals. State resources are finite, budget concerns affect the decisions we make about services delivery, and we all have to work to ensure that we're maximizing resources and that basic needs are being met.

As a department, we are working in coordination with the Lt. Governor to empower organizations, and to provide them technical expertise. We stand ready to hold workshops on applying for state and federal funding, on grant development, on developing successful collaborations, and on establishing volunteer programs. We also want to work to coordinate efforts with all of the faith-based organizations.

One of the things that we're working towards is having a faith-based initiative liaison for every Division in our Department. These liaisons will work to develop regional conferences that bring together state and federal agencies, local departments, community groups, and faith-based organizations throughout the state to discuss how we can target the unmet needs in our communities. The liaison will help groups apply for and use government funds, and identify ways they can collaborate with other organizations who share a common mission and a common goal.

Gilbertson on faith-based initiative

I think there's some confusion about what is and what is not accessible to faith-based organizations. This Department needs to clarify that all faith-based organizations can apply for our grant programs.

This is a unique time in the state of Alaska. We have financial concerns at the State level, but the need for services still exists. One thing we must do is work together to make sure that those needs are being met. The view of who should be providing services and who should be working to provide those services is changing. As a Department, we need to understand that there are a number of individuals and organizations that stand ready to meet needs. They simply need advice, technical expertise, grant writing assistance, and a partner who can help them build coalitions and partnerships. That's what this Department's mission will be. That's what we're going to be doing as our part in this important initiative.

I really appreciate the Lt. Governor taking on this task. I appreciate that our Department will be playing a larger role in the faith-based initiative. Twenty three percent of the top 100 employers in Alaska are nonprofit organizations. There is also a large number of faith-based organizations throughout Anchorage and Fairbanks and throughout the state who stand ready to aid. We're going to need the help of all these organizations, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you to serve the people of Alaska.

Joel Gilbertson, Commissioner

Chaplain Mike Enschede
Chaplaincy Coordinator, Department of Corrections
Alaska Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Scoping Meeting
Loussac Library
February 20, 2003 at 10:00 am

There are two main things I want to share with you this morning. The first is about our success - what has worked in the Department of Corrections Chaplaincy Program. Our program is probably the best example of a government faith-based partnership in this State. We are talking about a major league community involvement and partnership and how desperately needed it is. When it comes to Corrections there are some things our State can do well, Public Safety for example. On the other hand, there are some things that perhaps are not that impressive, in particular, prisoner reformation.

The most effective prisoner reformation program in Corrections is the community-based chaplaincy program. This partnership consists of about 500 church and religious organizations within the State. That partnership is providing about 1500 approved lay and clergy faith-based providers within all of our institutions within this State. It is also providing substantial private sector faith-based funding to augment the State resources that are being provided. That ratio is about 50 percent State funded to 50 percent privately funded. I honestly do not know what we would do without the partnership with the private sector. I can assure you there would not be much of a Chaplaincy program within the Department of Corrections.

Those private funds help to provide personnel, programs and even building prison chapels. This last fiscal year we had over 100,000 in total prisoner attendance in religious and faith-based programs in our institutions. The only reason this happened was because of the involvement of the faith community and this wonderful partnership between church and State.

This partnership works and crime is in its final analysis a community problem. Through the chaplaincy program the faith community is having a positive and impressive impact in the process of prisoner reformation.

I suggest this State take a serious look and perhaps follow the example of the State of Texas.

Government's Aversion to Faith-Based Treatment: Unfortunately, current Texas law crowds out valuable faith-anchored programs by failing to take into account their unique nature and philosophy. By exhibiting a strong sense of "credentialism" and dismissing religious volunteers as "amateurs," Texas has a history of brushing aside religious efforts as unprofessional and unsystematic. As a result, many addicts – with lives often marked by criminal behavior, lack of health insurance, welfare dependence --are denied a proven way to escape their destructive lifestyle.

The Texas Legislature passes a House Bill, which created an alternative accreditation process for faith-based providers. Texas can now strike a strong and tightly-drawn balance between the need for accountability and the realization that overly intrusive and burdensome regulations drive committed caregivers from the market and deprives Texas of their contributions.

Jewel Jones, MOA Director of Health and Human Services addressed the group outlining initiatives in place with faith based groups in Anchorage. She began her presentation by reminding them that the first head start programs in Anchorage begun as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, was operated by the Archdiocese of Anchorage at the old Catholic High School, now North Star Elementary School on Fireweed Lane. Sister Mary Clare was the administrator and this federal funding when directly to them from the Community Action Agency. Another early initiatives was the Brother Francis Shelter, operated by Catholic Social Services, the only homeless shelter for single men and women in Anchorage - soon to be replaced after 20 years.

Additionally, in the early 90's, the first transitional housing programs under the HUD "dollar per year" lease were operated by the Municipality in partnership with Prevailing Word Outreach Church under the leadership of Rev. Bernard Smalls. Two members of his congregation, Ron and Annie Phelps, were selected as house monitors and lived on site in one of the apartments which were side-by-side four-plex units in Mt. View. Another four-plex also located in Mt. View was part of the program and over a five year period, successfully assisted 132 clients to find a more stable life and move on to their own permanent housing.

The most promising of our government and faith initiatives is the successful Anchorage Caring and Emergency Social Services program known as ACCESS formed in 1997 as a partnership between the MOA, United Way, and several churches to assist people in need. Through memorandums of agreement, we have developed policies, procedures, intake assessment tools and application forms that help all the participating groups work in coordination. We have over 70 ministries actively involved in the program that recognize government, agencies and faith can work together using the strengths of each segment to support the other. Churches like Abbott Loop Community Church, First CME Church and Eagle River Missionary Baptist Church support the effort thru regular monetary contributions that are accessed by the MOA to help pay utilities, rent, purchase food, or other necessities to keep people from becoming homeless. This organization holds the greatest promise to continue the work of faith groups and government working together for the community.

During the month of February, the MOA Dept. of Health and Human Services sponsored a "Pastoral Crisis Intervention" training program conducted by Chaplin Bert McQueen to assist ministers and other lay groups in acquiring more tools to assist with mental health counseling as we face more stressful issues and concerns in our community and nation. Many people turn to their churches and ministers in these times and it is our desire to give them additional counseling skills as more people seek comfort.

These are just a few of the many ongoing opportunities and collaborations between the MOA and others that help us everyday to a better job for our citizens.

March 4, 2003

Dear ,

I am sorry you were unable to attend our first Faith-Based and Community Initiatives meeting in Anchorage. We had to change the venue at the very last minute in order to accommodate the number of people who wanted to participate. More than 100 people attended!

I gave a “keynote” address and we also heard from Balan Ayyar, a representative from the White House; Department of Health & Social Services Commissioner Joel Gilbertson; Department of Corrections Chaplaincy Coordinator Mike Ensich; Mayor George Wuerch; and Director of the Anchorage Department of Health & Human Services, Jewel Jones.

Five very successful faith-based programs were also featured. We received valuable insight from these groups as well as input from the community on ideas for change. Enclosed is a brief synopsis of issues raised at this meeting.

Based on the success of our meeting, I plan to host similar forums in Fairbanks and Juneau. I also plan to assemble a working group of committed Alaskan to help us.

We have a lot of work ahead of us and I am excited by the possibilities. I am encouraged by the enthusiasm about this endeavor that people are expressing to me across our state.

Thank you and God bless.

Sincerely,

Loren Leman
Lieutenant Governor

Enclosure

Alaska Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Scoping Meeting Synopsis

Loussac Library, Anchorage

February 20, 2003 at 10:00 am--Noon

The people who attended our scoping meeting were excited about the possibilities of increased cooperation among State and federal governments and faith-based organizations. However, several expressed concern about government intrusion into their ministries. How much of their mission/message would they have to sacrifice in order to receive government help? They do not want government to restrict their activity and keep them from practicing their faith while ministering to those in need.

Faith-based and community organizations could do some things better with a little help. Help not just from the government but by associating with other people and pulling together to combine resources.

We are not proposing something radically different from what government is already doing with volunteer organizations. We simply want to take the next step by identifying what we can do to make things better.

One idea came from a pilot who provides services to missionary organizations. The FAA says that if he accepts reimbursement payment for fuel he moves into a more restrictive category. His insurance rates, if even available at all, will rise perhaps to the point where this pilot can no longer afford to maintain his charitable services. He wants the federal rules can be changed to allow for cost reimbursement for his service. Can we change other rules to encourage people to participate in ministries?

Following up on Chaplain Mike Ensich's presentation, a question was posed about how the Texas model he highlighted might be replicated in Alaska. Currently the number of certified providers for court-ordered services is limited. This creates waiting lists and barriers to service choices as well as time delays. The certification process is cumbersome and in many instances appears to be biased toward secular services. Faith ministries wanting to provide court ordered parenting, domestic violence, anger management and substance abuse services find it difficult to obtain certification and recognition as an alternative option.

Another idea that is being explored and considered is the recent 211 initiative. The FCC has designated 211 as the number for health and human services information and referral. A national goal and vision exists for 211 to be the nationwide number to access community resources.

Given that many faith-based organizations are providing social ministries, a question was asked about establishing a central clearinghouse database. AKInfo was identified as the Internet-based directory of health and human services in Alaska with 24-hour toll free telephone support. The web site for AKInfo is www.ak.org; the toll free number is 800-478-2221. The database, which is funded by DHSS and United Way of Anchorage, contains more than 2000 listings of a wide range of human services. Faith organizations are welcome to list quality-of-life ministries they offer to the public.

Balan Ayyar, a representative from The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, spoke of President Bush's desire for government to work side by side with faith-based communities. He encouraged us to visit the White House's web site at: www.fbc.gov. This site offers a wealth of information ranging from grant applications to remarks of the President.