Kenaitze Indian Tribe
2013 Annual Report
About the Kenaitze Indian Tribe

Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina people have inhabited the Kenai Peninsula since time immemorial. The Kenaitze Indian Tribe is federally recognized under the Indian Reorganization Act as a sovereign independent nation with more than 1,400 members.

During its annual meetings, the tribe elects the members of its Executive Council to serve two-year terms and govern the tribe in accordance with the tribe’s Constitution, bylaws, ordinances and resolutions. The Council appoints a Chief Tribal Judge who oversees the Tribal Court and upholds tribal law.

The Council also appoints an Executive Director, who implements established Council policies and procedures and is responsible for the day-to-day operations that enhance and support the continued growth and success of the tribe.

Programs and services ensure that tribal members have access to health care, social services, justice, education, and employment services and opportunities.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe strives to both grow and improve the level of support it offers members so that each may achieve the tribe’s Mission: To assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

The tribal organization is comprised of three divisions and four functions, which are each overseen by a director.

The directors manage Health Systems, Community Programs, Housing Services and administrative functions such as Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources and Tribal Government.

The tribe places special emphasis on the hiring and training of Kenaitze Indian Tribe members, and on increasing the awareness of Dena’ina language and culture both in the workplace and within our community.

The Kenaitze are Dena’ina people, a branch of the people who are Athabascan Native Americans. Linguists have shown that Athabascans migrated throughout North America from Alaska’s Interior to Mexico.

The Kenaitze dialect of the Dena’ina language is one of the most complex and diverse of all Athabascans. It contains both coastal and marine terminology, in addition to more than 400 Russian loan words.

Many centuries ago, Athabascan people, nomadic hunters of the boreal forest, traveled from west of the Alaska Range to the shore of Cook Inlet. Recognizing the abundance of the Kenai Peninsula land they called Yaghanen, “the good land,” they settled along the banks of Cook Inlet and its rivers. Ts’itsatna, the Kenaitze ancestors, traveled throughout Yaghanen, fishing the shores of the rivers and Cook Inlet.

All species of salmon were harvested with dipnets, weirs, dams or traps. Men, women, children and Elders all worked together to harvest and preserve this most important food.

After the fish harvest, the ancestors traveled inland to hunt bear, caribou, mountain goat, sheep and moose.

Women and children gathered berries and snared small mammals.

Winter was a time for trapping and for traveling from one village to another to share stories and to trade. Today, Yaghanen is still “the good land” and the Kenaitze continue to prosper. By honoring family, respecting the land, respecting spiritual beliefs and through education, the Kenaitze will thrive forever.
Our Mission
To assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever

Our Vision
By 2025, the Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina have enhanced and strengthened the prosperity, health and culture of their people and tribe by:
- Working toward united effort with Native organizations and other governments that impact our people
- Developing and implementing a tribal education system
- Living our traditional values and practices
- Empowering our sovereignty
- Continuing to demonstrate resiliency
- Striving for excellence in all of our programs
- Elevating the wellness of our people
- Using our talents and resources to ensure we are able to take care of ourselves and share with others

Our Values
- Family – honoring and sustaining health and happiness of family as a "first responsibility.
- Stewardship – respectful use of land, resources and all creations.
- Spiritual Beliefs – acknowledging the existence of a higher power and respecting spiritual beliefs.
- Education – passing down cultural knowledge and traditions and supporting formal education.
From the Chairperson

Greetings!

This has been an extremely busy year!
I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the Council for their hard work this past year - thank you for being willing to be present where needed at state and national meetings on behalf of our programs and services. You have done a great job!

I would also like to thank our many Committee members who take time out of their lives to come together and consider many issues – your strong and well thought out recommendations are greatly appreciated!

It takes a whole tribe and community to pull together to accomplish what we set out to do – the continued support of our tribal members as we move forward toward our Mission: To assure that Kahtnut'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.

Our Mission, supported by our Vision and our Values, will continue to be of utmost importance!

– Rose Tepp
Council Chairperson

Meet the Executive Council

Seven council members, elected at the annual general membership meeting each October, govern the tribe in accordance with the tribe’s constitution, bylaws, ordinances and resolutions.

Council Chairperson Rosalie Tepp, right, talks to the tribe’s attorney Melissa Flannery in May during the Alaska Tribal Health Compact FY 2014 Indian Health Service/Tribal Negotiations in Anchorage. Tepp was a co-lead negotiator.
ART AND INTERIOR COMMITTEE
Purpose: To procure art and displays for the new Dena’ina Wellness Center.
Members:
  Jennifer Yeoman, Chair
  Mary Lou Bottrorff
  Jon Ross
  Liisia Blizzard
  Dave Segura

AUDIT COMMITTEE
Purpose: To provide the Financial Department support in working with the audit firm.
Members:
  James O. Segura, Chair
  Rosalie Tepp
  Jon Ross
  Wayne Wilson

CONSTITUTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
Purpose: To review and consider revisions to the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Constitution and to make recommendations to the tribal membership for adoption.
Members:
  James O. Segura, Chair
  Mary Ann Mills
  Jon Ross
  Wayne Wilson
  Liisia Blizzard
  Allan Baldwin

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
Purpose: To work in partnership with key management staff, governing bodies, parents, and volunteers to facilitate compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards, to assist in accomplishing the program mission and to serve as an advocate between the program and the community at large.
Policy Council:
  Steffani Coxwell, Chair
  Aurora Hawkins, Vice-Chair
  Bianca Chase, Secretary
  Aimee Veideffer
  Sharee Jones
  Anya Kratsas
  Ashley Poulin
  Amber Douglas
  Michelle Teates
  Mary Lou Bottorff

Elders Commission
Purpose: To provide oversight for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Tyotkas Elders Program.
Members:
  Phyllis Bookey, Chair
  James Showalter, Vice-Chair
  Rita Smagge, Secretary-Treasurer
  Marie Anderson
  Betty Porter
  Mary Ann Mills
  Fiocla Wilson, Lifetime Member
  Robert Fulton, Lifetime Member

Election Board
Established by Election Ordinance No. 98-02.
Members:
  Phyllis Bookey, Chair
  Kathy Rodgers
  Bernice Crandall

Enrollment Committee
Purpose: To provide oversight for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s enrollment procedures as defined in the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Constitution and in Kenaitze Indian Tribe Enrollment Ordinance No. 98-01.
Members:
  Kathy Rodgers
  Mary Lou Bottorff
  René Edelman-Azzara
  Liisia Blizzard
  Bernice Crandall
  Bonnie Juliussen

Health Committee
Purpose: To review and make recommendations regarding Primary Care, Behavioral Health and Dental programs at the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. The Health Committee meets the statute requirements for the State of Alaska Community Mental Health Center grant.
Members:
  James O. Segura, Chair
  Clare Swan
  Allan Baldwin
  Patsy Marston
  Jeannie D. Smith
  Manuel Linderman
  Jennifer Yeoman

Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commission
Purpose: To provide oversight for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s traditional hunting, fishing and gathering activities.
Members:
  James O. Segura, Chair
  Clare Swan
  Mary Ann Mills
  Liisia Blizzard
  Elsie Kanayurak
  Micah Johnson

Land Committee
Purpose: To research all lands presently owned by Kenaitze Indian Tribe and recommend policies that will assist the tribe in meeting its vision, objectives and strategic plan.
Members:
  James O. Segura, Chair
  Mary Ann Mills
  Liisia Blizzard
  Wayne Wilson
  Jennifer S. Yeoman

Traditional Healing Committee
Purpose: To provide oversight and planning for traditional healing in the Dena’ina Wellness Center.
Members:
  Jon Ross, Chair
  Dr. Tim Scheffel
  Donita Slawson
  Mary Lou Bottorff
  Faith Allard
  Sarah Smith
  Nancy Nelson
  Jackie Jager
  Audre Gifford
From the Executive Director

Yaghali du!

I am pleased to provide you with another promising and informative annual report for the programs and services provided by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.

In reflecting on the events and accomplishments of this past year, I am incredibly thankful for the resiliency of our staff and tribal leadership.

We are nearly complete with the construction of the Dena'ina Wellness Center – for those of you who are not within driving distance to see the facility, you may see updates on our website at www.kenaitze.org.

Our healthcare leadership staff have been working hard to prepare for occupying the building and for the new integrated system of care that serves the whole human being, in one location – body, mind and spirit. The sometimes overwhelming task of selecting furniture, fixtures and equipment has been completed by staff and the Art and Interiors Committee. Our Health Committee and Council are working in partnership with our healthcare leadership staff to set policy as we prepare for national accreditation of our programs, and for our move into the new facility next spring.

Last year, we set forth strategic goals to move forward with the formation of the Kahtnuht'ana Development Corporation. A board of directors has been appointed and has met several times, most recently in a strategic session to set forth an initial operating budget and to begin recruitment for a new President/CEO to lead the company. The goal remains that KDC will, in the future, offset our reliance on outside sources of funding for programs and services. KDC is an investment in our future. Many thanks to the Board of Directors of KDC for your hard work and vision!

In this year, we have completed a comprehensive needs assessment that will assist us greatly in planning intentionally around our 2025 Vision, “by 2025, the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina have enhanced and strengthened the prosperity, health and culture of their people and tribe.”

We will be holding a series of planning sessions to set long-term, measurable goals for the next several years leading up to 2025.

A question comes to my mind whenever discussing this vision - how old will we (Elders and adults) be in 2025? What needs do we recognize now that we will need to prepare for? How old will our children and grandchildren be in 2025? How are we preparing them for our shared future? One significant way we will meet this goal is to continue to invest in our children and youth through a tribal education system, a formal mentoring program and through succession planning – we will act intentionally and with great care around growing leadership within our tribal membership and staff. All of these goals have been set forth by the Council as we move forward into 2014.

Clare Swan said once that, “time is running by us on little children's feet.” She was right! In response, the tribe set out to embrace our children and families through our Kuya Qyt’anan Head Start program, our Jabila'ina dance group, and our Yaghanen Youth Programs.

As we look forward, we rely on the strength and leadership that has come before us. We have much to be thankful for and a bright future lies ahead of us. We are committed to our legacy, to assure that Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.

Chiqinik!

Jaylene Peterson-Nyren
Executive Director
The Council and Constitution Committee continued efforts to draft changes to our Constitution through committee meetings, mailing of proposed changes, and information meetings open to all tribal members.

These efforts included spring meetings in Lynnwood, Wash., and Anchorage. It is the Executive Council’s intent to continue informational meetings in Washington state and Anchorage as funding allows.

Changing our Constitution will require an election conducted by the Secretary of the Interior. All tribal members 18 and older will vote.

In response to the motion presented at the 2012 Annual Meeting requesting absentee balloting, the Tribal Election Ordinance was revised and a process initiated allowing for voting by absentee ballot.

Limited Waivers of Sovereign Immunity

**Resolution 2012-45** – A Resolution Authorizing a Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to Purchase Real Property Located at 507 Upland Street, Kenai, Alaska 11/02/2012

**Resolution 2012-46** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the Department of Health and Social Services’ Community Initiative Matching Grant Program in State Fiscal Year 2013 11/02/2012

**Resolution 2013-06** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the State of Alaska, Office of Children’s Services Time Limited Family Reunification Services Grant Program in State Fiscal Year 2014 03/15/2013

**Resolution 2013-07** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Service Community Initiative Matching Grant Program in State Fiscal Year 2014 3/15/2013

**Resolution 2013-08** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Service’s Comprehensive Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery Services Program in State Fiscal Years 2014-2016 3/15/2013

**Resolution 2013-11** – A Tribal Resolution Authorizing the Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity for Title and Settlement Services Agreement with First American Title Insurance 5/12/2013

**Resolution 2013-13** – Issue a Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds from Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for Dena’ina Wellness Center Construction for State Fiscal Year 2014 5/21/2013

**Resolution 2013-15** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services Community Initiative Matching Grant Program in State Fiscal Year 2014 3/15/2013

**Resolution 2013-06** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the State of Alaska, Office of Children’s Services Time Limited Family Reunification Services Grant Program in State Fiscal Year 2014 03/15/2013

**Resolution 2013-08** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Service’s Comprehensive Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery Services Program in State Fiscal Year 2014-2016 5/21/2013 (supersedes and replaces Res 2013-08)

**Resolution 2013-17** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the State of Alaska, Office of Children’s Services Time Limited Family Reunification Services Grant Program in State Fiscal Year 2014 5/17/2013 (supersedes and replaces Res 2013-06)
The Kenaitze Indian Tribe broke ground for its new Dena’ina Wellness Center in August 2012. Most of the facility’s construction occurred during the 2013 fiscal year, with the goal of opening the building in the spring of 2014.

The Dena’ina Wellness Center is one of only three projects nationwide selected in 2011 by the Indian Health Service for its highly competitive joint venture program.

Under the joint venture, the tribe designed and is constructing the new facility, and IHS will provide funding for its operation and maintenance for a minimum of 20 years.

The two-story, 52,000-square-foot building sits on Kenaitze Indian Tribe land in the heart of Old Town Kenai and will house the entire Health Systems division.

Staff will offer medical, dental, wellness, behavioral health, chemical dependency, physical therapy, pharmacy and traditional healing services all in one location – enhancing both the convenience and continuity of care for our customers.

The facility will serve more than 5,000 Kenaitze Indian Tribe members, Alaska Native and American Indian people, and other residents of the central Kenai Peninsula.

All State of Alaska-sponsored programs, including Community Mental Health Services, will be open to the public.

The tribe is thankful for the help it has received from its partners on the project, which include Cook Inlet Region Inc., the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust, the Rasmuson Foundation, The Alaska Mental Health Trust and the State of Alaska.
AT LEFT. An artist’s rendering shows the new center’s face. BELOW LEFT, Laborers worked all year, augmenting the local economy. BELOW RIGHT, Indian Health Service’s Director of Environmental Health and Engineering Gary Hartz, second from left, listens as Director of Health Systems Dr. Tim Scheffel, Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren and Director of Operations Faith Allard look at floor plans during a construction tour.
Health Systems

“We believe … that by incorporating our traditional values and Dene’ Wellness Model into all of the health services that we provide, we can meet people where they are in their journey to wellness and support them in taking the next step.”
– Faith Allard, Director of Operations

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe has adopted the Dene’ Wellness Model of Care recognizing that the journey towards wellness is a personal one.

All of the tribe’s health programs are joining together in the new De-na’ina Wellness Center to provide integrated services.

Our medical, dental, wellness, behavioral health, and chemical dependency professionals will work as a team to help each person achieve their wellness goals.

The last year has been a year of planning and growth as we build the new Wellness Center and prepare to transition from our existing operations, located in separate structures, to the integrated model that will be housed under one roof in our own beautiful building.

Primary care is provided by four care teams, with each team consisting of a primary care provider, a clinical medical assistant and a case manager.

These primary care teams will work in partnership with reception, laboratory, imaging, behavioral health, a diverse wellness staff, business office, custodial and management. Everyone is working toward the same goal: quality care.

Our wellness staff offers diabetes prevention and maintenance, tobacco cessation and support of smoke-free homes, wellness education, stress management, activity classes and fitness evaluation, nutritional counseling, and arts and crafts. There’s even a lending library with educational resources available.

The staff also works with other dental decay and dental emergencies.

Our dental staff also partners with the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Head Start Program to provide annual dental exams and biannual fluoride treatments.

Staff provides assistance with referrals to the Alaska Native Medical Center, when necessary.

The dental clinic staff worked closely with Architects Alaska and Burkhart Dental for the integrated dental clinic design.

Close attention was given to allow efficient patient care in a warm friendly environment that was designed to help reduce the anxiety of having dental treatment done. To name just one of the improvements, new private operatories will have centralized nitrous oxide to help the anxious and pediatric dental patient.

Our behavioral health professionals

“We believe … in health care that doing the right thing is the best thing.”
– Dr. Tim Scheffel, Director of Health Systems

Clinic Office Manager Wendy Rice participates in a team-building exercise during an all-staff customer service training event.

Our behavioral health professionals for the benefit of our patients.

Our dental professionals provide primary dental services covering a wide range of general dentistry needs, including exams, x-rays, cleanings, fillings, emergency treatment and some specialty treatments.

Emphasis is placed on prevention and education to reduce the amount of
Health Systems employees eye the oculus structure in the Dena’ina Wellness Center’s gathering space during their first tour.

offer mental health and chemical dependency services to tribal members, Alaska Native and American Indian people, and the local community. Services include individual, group, and family therapy, interactive play therapy for children, and crisis intervention.

Chemical dependency services include early intervention, outpatient treatment, relapse prevention, and continuing care. The chemical dependency team also assists clients with selection and transition to inpatient treatment when required.

Treatment is always provided in a culturally relevant environment and incorporates traditional values and activities such as arts and crafts, fishing, drumming, and Talking Circles.

2013 Highlights

- The Cavity Free Club continues to have success. Since its inception in August 2011, the number of cavity free youth has grown. Cavity free youngsters have their picture taken and their name entered to a drawing for movie tickets.
- Eileen Sverdrup, MD, has been hired as the Medical Director.
- We have completed one full year using the RPMS electronic health record and have met meaningful use stage 2 recognition.
- Work towards meeting Joint Commission accreditation has been started.
- Two staff members have been trained in Mental Health First Aid, a national organization to reduce stigma and promote mental health awareness and support for those struggling with mental health problems. Additional training is planned for all tribal staff.
- Development of a traditional healing program has begun under the guidance of the Traditional Healing Committee.
- New equipment allowed an increase in exercise and activity opportunities. The activity space/gyms was open Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:00 pm.
Getting our children off to a good start is important for preserving the future of our people. The Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Kuya Qyt’anen (“Little Children of the Kenai River”) Early Childhood Center offers a Head Start Preschool program, an Alaska Native Education preschool and After School program for kindergarten to 3rd grade.

These programs use The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood philosophy (Teaching Strategies, 1999). The curriculum incorporates the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s traditional Dena’ina language and values, along with the Project ACHIEVE “Stop and Think” social skills/problem solving curriculum. The curriculum is also aligned with the State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines.

The Center emphasizes family engagement and involvement and offers regular family events, trainings and activities. The center also works closely with community partners to provide dental and health screenings, nutrition services, daily physical activity and a variety of programs for children with special needs.

2013 Highlights

- Thirty-two preschoolers smoothly transitioned into kindergarten.
- Completion and implementation of preschool “School Readiness Goals” and a center-wide “Ongoing Monitoring” tracking system.
- The center was awarded a three year Alaska Native Education grant.
- Eighteen After School students completed the “100 Books for a Bike” program and were awarded a new bike and helmet.
- The center provided an 11-week summer camp for pre-kindergarten to 3rd grade students.
- A Head Start alumnus was hired as a student intern in the After School program.
- Monthly Story Nights and Saturday Gross Motor Play were provided during the school year.
- The center successfully completed its triennial federal monitoring review with only two minor findings out of over 2,500 performance standards.
- The 2nd – 3rd grade Summer Camp students visited the Tribal Fishery beach site and learned as Elders processed two seals that came to the tribe.
- The center continues to maintain membership with the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center Head Start Steering Committee and served on two ‘Communities of Learning’ to explore shared interests related to early childhood development in tribal communities.

“We believe ... today’s children are tomorrow’s leaders.”
– Every staff member at the Early Childhood Center
Tyotkas Elder Services, which means “Auntie’s Place,” recognizes that honor and respect for Elders is a central element of Dena’ina culture.

Tyotkas serves more than 125 Elders and aims to improve Elders’ lives through in an environment of quality, dignity and pride.

Tyotkas works to prevent isolation, provide healthy activities and access to healthy choices, and ensure independent living for Elders. Tyotkas also provides information and resources to family members who care for parents, grandparents or older relatives.

Services include the Elders’ lunch program, the caregiver support program, transportation to doctor appointments and other activities, home visits, abuse and neglect prevention, the Elder advocate program, exercise programs, field trips, traditional and non-traditional crafts, and more.

2013 Highlights
• Tyotkas held the children’s Easter party at Kenai Middle School. More than 300 people – 185 of them 12-years-old or younger – attended. More than $260 in cash, more than 300 door prizes and 35 bikes and skateboards were distributed.
• Tyotkas hosted ten trips to the tribal net to fish, enjoy the beach, visit, potluck and enjoy grandkids around the camp fire.
• Twenty-two Elders went on a trip to Seldovia to pick berries.
• The kitchen was remodeled and staff was given training on healthy cooking techniques utilizing fresh produce and meats.

“We believe ... our elders are the wisdom of our tribe.”
– Bonnie Juliussen, Elder and Adult Advocate, Vulnerable Adult Advocate and Tyotkas Activities Coordinator

Fiocla Wilson gets help with her birthday cake candles during a celebration for her at Tyotkas Elders Center. She is the tribe’s most senior Elder.

“When I turned 55, I heard about Tyotkas and started coming. The reason I like the place is that it is very helpful and people-friendly – friendly atmosphere. I like the people that work here. They’re really great people. If I wasn’t here I’d be sitting home and not be doing much. This is a chance to get out be with other people. This is a very friendly place.”
– Gary Engelstad

GARY ENGELSTAD has been coming to Tyotkas Elders Center three times a week for about six years. He lives alone and does not drive.
Yaghanen Youth Programs

Yaghanen means “A Safe Place.” It is a good description of the tribe’s youth programs.

As a prevention and early intervention program, Yaghanen helps youngsters understand our culture and develop life skills through fun activities. Yaghanen Youth Programs include the Jabila’ina Dance Group, the Del Dumi Intertribal Drum Group and the Ggugguyni Native Youth Olympics Team.

2013 Overall Highlights
- Worked with 101 youngsters
- Hosted a Harvest Festival Carnival
- Gave cultural presentations at five central peninsula schools
- Hosted a family ice fishing day at Sports Lake
- Hosted an overnight Father’s retreat at Kelly Lake
- Hosted cultural orientations for the tribe’s new employees
- Gave cultural presentations twice weekly for the Head Start program

Ggugguyni Native Youth Olympics hosted the Peninsula Winter Games NYO Invitational in partnership with Alaska USA Federal Credit Union and the Soldotna Chamber of Commerce.

- Athletes also competed in the Cook Inlet Tribal Council Junior and Senior NYO Statewide Competition and the Seward Quteckak NYO Invitational.
- 27 youngsters participated in Junior NYO.
- 18 participated in Senior NYO.

Jabila’ina Dancers had 19 young participants and performed at the following functions:
- Festival of Native Arts in Fairbanks
- Peninsula Winter Games
- Ida’ina Powwow in Anchorage
- Groundbreaking ceremony for the Dena’ina Wellness Center
- Kenai Fourth of July parade

Ribbon cutting ceremony for dorms at Kenai Peninsula College
- Quteckak Healthy Community Picnic in Seward
- Stanley Ford community appreciation event in Kenai

Del Dumi Drummers had 9 youngsters participate. They performed at the following events:
- Groundbreaking ceremony for the Dena’ina Wellness Center
- Fourth of July Parade in Kenai
- Green Adventures Tour group visit
- For tribal family at the American Legion in Kenai

JULIANNE WILSON uses a survey instrument to measure an archaeological site in the woods above the Kenai River near Cooper Landing during a Yaghanen Susten Camp. She has participated in a number of Yaghanen’s activities but said she most likes the archaeology camp.

“I like how they’re teaching us how to survey and to find cache pits and house pits. My ancestors lived here or somewhere around the Kenai Peninsula and it’s fun to learn how my ancestors lived.”

– Julianne Wilson

Archaeology and Fish Camps reached 56 youngsters, partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Susten Camp 1 and Susten Camp 2, and with Cook Inlet Tribal Council for Fish Camp.
We believe that we are successful at helping keep our kids off drugs, alcohol and tobacco. We believe that they can grow and learn here by participating in culturally-based activities in a safe and positive place.

– Michael Bernard, Yaghanen Youth Programs Coordinator

FAR LEFT, Kenaitze’s Shane Fortune competes during the Peninsula Winter Games. AT TOP, Tristin Segura, Lucas Standfier and Cooper Barnard cheer participants. ABOVE, Travis Stuller works on homework in the activity area. LEFT, Yaghanen archers take aim.

“We believe that we are successful at helping keep our kids off drugs, alcohol and tobacco. We believe that they can grow and learn here by participating in culturally-based activities in a safe and positive place.”

– Michael Bernard, Yaghanen Youth Programs Coordinator
Na’ini Social Services

Na’ini (“Bravery and Courage”) programs are committed to continuously improving services to best meet the needs of the people we serve. Our reorganization of social services last year has allowed us to enhance collaboration and add continuity of care and convenience for our customers.

Na’ini Social Services include energy, general, burial and funeral, and emergency assistance; wild game harvest and food bank; child care assistance; services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and/or stalking; career planning, job placement, and education services; conservatorship for vulnerable adults; advocacy and case management; and the Child Protection Team.

2013 Highlights:

• Ongoing Tribal Scholarship Awards for Kenaitze Indian Tribal members totaled $69,709 and $27,553 for Alaska Native/American Indian students.
• Financial assistance awarded for vocational training in the amount of $38,270 for tribal members and other Alaska Native/American Indian customers.
• Student housing awarded to 24 of our college students.
• Added ability to serve men and adolescents who have experienced sexual assault through the funding of the State of Alaska’s Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Alaska (CDVSA) program.
• Partnered with Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Tribal Court to write a grant to assist in removing barriers for parents seeking substance abuse assessment, treatment and counseling.
• Hired a Tribal Wide Social Worker to manage cases between the tribe’s divisions and to advocate for vulnerable adults and families who utilize services between divisions.

“**We believe ... everyone should be treated with respect and integrity. Everybody is a person no matter who they are or what their situation is.”**
– Roberta Turner, Social Services Team Lead

KRIS FRANKE is working at CIRI in their information technology department after using Kenaitze Indian Tribe scholarships to graduate from the Alaska Vocational and Technical School’s Information Technology Program.

“I have a wife and four children. I thought it was outside of our range of being able to go back to school. … It’s tough to make a shift like we did and without the help of the tribe and others it just wouldn’t have been possible. In my last job I was happy, but it wasn’t me. And now, you have a hard time pulling me away from work.”
– Kris Franke
The Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Tribal Fishery teaches the importance of preserving the cultural and traditional way of life established by the early Dena’ina.

The program brings together people of all ages and creates a sense of unity that helps ensure cultural and traditional values thrive for future generations.

The tribe sets two six-fathom nets at traditional fishing sites along the Kahtnu (Kenai), Ggasilahtnu (Kasilo) and Yaghehtnu (Swanson) rivers. The tribe’s fishing permit allows 8,000 salmon each year. Priority for scheduling the net is given to tribal members who wish to gather their food for the year.

Kenaitze programs conduct fish camps, some of which are open to Alaska Natives and American Indians from elsewhere in the state. Participants follow a curriculum where youths and Elders practice traditional methods of setting the net, identifying salmon species, cleaning fish and preserving fish for winter.

The Tribal Fishery is administered by the Tribal Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Committee.

The tribe recognizes that many people depend on these fish. It appreciates the sharing between families that took place this year as a result of restrictions due to low numbers of returning king salmon.

2013 Highlights

- This year’s crew featured Kenaitze Indian Tribe members Michael Segura, Kaleb Franke and William “Billy” Segura, a tribal Elder with many years of experience with the Tribal Fishery.
- Attention was focused on communication with tribal members regarding scheduling and any closures or limitations that were put on the fisheries.
- The tribe published a tide book, a fisheries brochure and confirmation cards when scheduling for the net was done.
- Staff attempted to remind people of tides they were scheduled to fish and to give enough notice of any cancellations due to weather or Alaska Department of Fish and Game emergency closures.

Comparing Tribal Fishery Numbers

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“We believe ... the return of the king salmon is directly related to our culture, our heritage, our past, and our present and our future.”

– David Segura, Director of Community Programs

“Our livelihoods depend on the fish. That’s pretty much what we grow up on. People down south, they grow up on beef. This is just our way of life. … (The tribal smokehouse) is our traditional way. Those Little Chiefs and stuff you buy in the store, that’s more like baking salmon. This’ll turn out just like jerky. We make some good stuff.”

– Scott Juliussen

SCOTT JULIUSSEN and his family have always fished the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s net on the shore of Cook Inlet at the mouth of the Kenai River.
LOIS MARSDEN, pictured in the kitchen of her Sterling home, attended many of the Project Green Village classes.

“She brought samples real often of the food that you can make yourself from stuff that’s right around here. I really liked that.”

— Lois Marsden
There are several ways that the Kenaitze Indian Tribe assists its membership with housing.

The Safe Home Program is designed to renovate and repair the homes of qualified Kenaitze and Salamatof tribal members, Alaskan Native, and American Indian people residing in tribal jurisdiction.

The program addresses weatherization, health and safety issues, and handicap accessibility.

Emergency Housing addresses the need for assistance in rental deposits, as well as financial assistance to prevent homelessness due to delinquent mortgage payments or property taxes.

The Plowing and Sanding Program is available to eligible Elders and handicapped individuals. It provides snow plowing and sanding service at no charge, helping make winters safer and a bit easier.

The Housing Assistance Program also operates Ninash Q’a, a tribal transitional home. Ninash Q’a offers a safe haven for families in need of temporary housing while in crisis. Families using this facility are expected to work in conjunction with other tribal programs that promote self-sufficiency and healthy relationships.

Rental Housing offers affordable housing for qualified families.

Student Housing is provided for qualified, full-time students who are enrolled in an accredited college, in Alaska or elsewhere.

Soon, financial literacy classes will be available to all Alaskan Native and American Indian families and individuals who wish to learn finance basics, including setting up a budget, balancing checkbooks, the fundamentals of interest rates, how to purchase a home and more. Housing Representative Shayna Franke has been certified to teach the nationally accredited Pathways Home program and will be conducting the classes.

The Wildwood Project is currently in its fifth field season conducting remediation work at Kenai Natives Association’s Wildwood property. The project is a joint effort between the tribe and the Army Corp of Engineers and is currently managing two Cooperative Agreements.

The objective of these agreements is to clean up environmental hazards left behind by the Department of Defense, which had operations in the area more than 40 years ago.

This summer the crew completed one of the agreements and is nearing completion on the second. Work includes removing contaminated soil at the Building 100 site, and removing Building 100 and its adjacent garage. The removal is done and the crew is in the final stages of removing four utility wells and preparing the site for reseeding.

The crew also started a new cleanup project this summer involving contaminated soil behind Wildwood Correctional Facility. This project is in the early stages and is expected to be completed next summer.
Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s CASA program is a leader among CASA programs. Currently it is the only active tribal CASA program in Alaska. It is also the first program in Alaska to dual-train volunteers in both tribal and state court proceedings.

Through a partnership with the Office of Public Advocacy, CASA is able to serve all children in our community who have been removed from their home due to abuse and/or neglect. CASA program recruits and trains volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children in court, speaking to the best interest of the child. Advocates are empowered and educated to speak for children with strength and understanding of tribal values and traditions.

Today, the Nitghu k’t’uch’ qenashen Tribal Court (meaning “One Who Talks for Equity”) aims to acknowledge and honor our traditional customs for the purpose of preserving, strengthening and ensuring justice on behalf of our families into the future.

The Court’s Tribal Youth Justice Program serves Alaska Native and American Indian youth dealing with issues that have led to delinquency, or that threaten to do so. The program provides Talking Circles to allow youth, their family and community members to address core issues in an environment of respect, honesty, responsibility and honor.

2013 Highlights:
- Increased collaboration with other Alaska Native tribes, as well as community partners.
- Worked with other tribal court judges to establish the Alaska Tribal Judges Association.
- Kenaitze’s Tribal Court judges represent Alaska as board representatives for National American Indian Court Judges Association.
- Tribal court offers trainings to Alaska Native tribes who are establishing their own tribal courts.

Chief Judge Kim Sweet
Judge Mary Ann Mills
Judge Susan Wells
Judge Rusty Swan

Tribal Court

Dena’ina Athabascan people have historically resolved dispute and conflict, maintained community peace and delivered justice among each other using traditional laws, customs and practices.

Written tribal codes give authority and jurisdiction to hear and adjudicate matters concerning child protection, voluntary relinquishment and involuntary termination of parent rights, tribal adoption, child custody, domestic violence, marriage, divorce and annulments, protection for Elders and vulnerable adults, and conservatorship and guardianship.

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Court Appointed Special Advocates

2013 Highlights:
- CASA hired two new employees, Joy Petrie and Tyler Nichols.
- A Memorandum of Agreement between Kenaitze Indian Tribe and the Office of Public Advocacy was renewed, allowing CASA to continue to serve children in both tribal and state court.
- Through the service of five dedicated volunteers, CASA was able to serve a total of 15 children.
- CASA had its first Superhero 5-kilometer run/walk in August. A total of 69 people registered, bringing $1,500 into the program. The money will be used to recruit and train more volunteers. This event will become an annual event for the tribe, as well as the surrounding community.
- The program had a class of eight new volunteers go through training in August and September, more than doubling the number of children CASA will be able to serve in 2014.

5k runners celebrate their success while adding to CASA’s success.
Kenaitze ancestors, recognizing the abundance of the place they called Yaghanen, “the good land,” settled in areas along the banks of its rivers and Tikaitnu (Cook Inlet).

One of these areas is Sqilantnu, meaning “the grocery store,” located in the area now called Cooper Landing.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe partners with the Chugach National Forest to preserve, protect and provide interpretation for this location at the K’Beq’ “footprints” interpretive site.

At K’Beq’, tribal members share traditions and culture with visitors through interpretive walks that feature an archaeological site and interpretive signs. They also teach traditional plant use from June through September.

This year at K’beq’, the tribe hired two tribal members to work at the site. As of early August, 2,558 people visited K’beq’. Of those, 2,065 took time to visit with staff or to take one of the free guided tours.

As part of its summer camp series, Yaghanen Youth Programs brought about 60 youngsters to the site to visit, take a tour and do some drumming and dancing.

One of K’beq’s highlights this past year was being awarded a small museums grant from the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Heritage Association. The grant made it possible for the tribe to reprint interpretive signs onto aluminum.

The tribe works cooperatively with Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI), the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address management issues at the confluence of the Russian and Kenai rivers in Cooper Landing.

The area is one of the most popular sports fishing attractions in Alaska and is the site of a growing number of adverse interactions between people and brown bears, with both looking for easy fish.

For the past two summers the tribe has worked to reduce the amount of human-generated fish waste lining the riverbanks. The carcasses are a major attractant for the bears.
Human Resources

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Human Resources Department oversees functions such as recruitment and hiring, employee benefits, compensation, employee relations, workplace safety and training.

The operational goals for the Human Resources Department this year centralized around the preparation for a dramatic increase in the number of Health System workers that will be needed for the new Dena’ina Wellness Center.

Human Resources expects to hire, orientate and train an additional 40 people for the facility.

2013 Highlights

- Launched a new online employment application system. Open positions, job descriptions and applications can all be found on the tribe’s website.
- Increased program and service support positions by hiring a Procurement Specialist, Grant Writer and Communications Specialist.
- Implemented a new paperless employee communication system.
- Supported a tribal-wide customer service training event for employees featuring Petra Marquart, author of “The Power of Service: Keeping Customers for Life.”
- Began a partnership for safety with a safety-enhancement service known as DriverCheck. Part of the service includes “How’s My-Driving” decals for tribal vehicles, and training information for applicable program supervisors.
- Implemented a new Accounting/Human Resource Information System.
- Developed a new internal website for employees to access employment-related documents.
- Increased outreach to tribal members and Kenai Peninsula residents through participation in two events, Career Day at Kenai Peninsula College and the Peninsula Job Fair.
- Another outreach has also been initiated through a recent newsletter to the tribal membership with the goal of furthering the tribe’s support to its members through employment, contract work, or by providing an opportunity for members to share their hobbies and interests.

“We believe … our human resource is our greatest resource.”
– Jaylene Peterson-Nyren, Executive Director

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department had a busy year preparing and planning for the Dena’ina Wellness Center, while also managing the tribe’s existing computer and telecommunications equipment.

IT has the tribe closer to its goal of locally owning and managing all of its information systems rather than relying on hosting from Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium for servers and software. Local systems improve security, give faster access to data, and preventative maintenance can be locally scheduled and controlled.

Given that the Dena’ina Wellness Center will integrate all of the tribe’s health systems, IT is implementing network changes now to ease the move in spring 2014.

The tribe’s network systems have been expanded and redesigned to support increased capacity and staffing. In addition, the Cultural and Housing programs are permanently connected to the tribe’s wide area network. This means information services can be securely accessed from nearly all tribal buildings or programs.
“We believe ... in strengthening Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s financial position by operating on a balanced budget and building up our savings each year. We have met this objective in FY13 and have maintained a healthy fund balance reserve to enable future investments in the tribe’s growth and development.” – Stan Mishin, Director of Financial Services

In FY13, the tribe earned $14.2M in revenues, spent $13.9M to provide programs and services, and saved $300k that will be invested in future capital projects and tribal development activities.

In FY13, about $8.8M of total operating revenues were from federal, state, and private grants. Reimbursements for health services paid by Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance generated about $5M. The balance came from program user fees, donations and interest income.

In FY13, about $10.7M (77%) of total operating expenses was spent on direct programs and services. The balance was expended on Tribal Government activities ($970K) and General and Administrative support of programs ($2.2M).

In FY13, the tribe spent about $589k on direct payments to customers or their designees to assist with housing, education, training, transportation and emergency needs.

As of the end of FY13, the tribe has accumulated $4.7M in unrestricted net assets (savings), which provide a reserve for working capital, equipment replacements, facility improvements and future investments.

Over the past 5 years, the tribe’s assets (cash, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses, and capital assets) increased by $22.7M. Investments in capital assets (the new Dena’ina Wellness Center in particular) are largely responsible for the overall assets growth.