

# Kenaitze Indian Tribe

dalts'ina

Ch'anikna

2015 Annual Report





# About the Kenaitze Indian Tribe

It's been thousands of years since our people first inhabited the Kenai Peninsula, and today, we are proud to say *Naqantughedul* – the tide is coming in. We say the tide is coming in because it's an exciting time for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, for many reasons.

In 2014, we opened the 52,000-square-foot Dena'ina Wellness Center in Old Town Kenai, an original Dena'ina village site. This year, just steps from the Dena'ina Wellness Center, we opened a new tribal courthouse and

began construction on a 6,500-square-foot Elders facility. And just steps from there, we acquired a commercial building to house our social services team and other staff. These projects represent the growth, strength and resiliency of our people, the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina.

The Kenaitze are Dena'ina people, a branch of the people who are Athabascan Native Americans. Many centuries ago, Athabascan people traveled from west of the Alaska Range to the shores of Cook Inlet on the Kenai Peninsula. Recognizing the abundance of the area they called Yaghanen – “the good land” – they settled along the banks of the inlet and its rivers.

Kenaitze ancestors traveled throughout Yaghanen fishing for salmon, harvesting the fish with dipnets, weirs, dams and traps. Men, women, children and Elders worked together to harvest and preserve the most important food. After the fish harvest, they traveled inland to hunt bear, caribou, mountain goat, sheep and moose.

Women and children gathered berries and snared small mammals.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe was federally recognized as a sovereign, independent nation in 1971 under the Indian Reorganization Act as amended for

Council governs the tribe in accordance with our constitution, by-laws, ordinances and resolutions. It appoints a Chief Tribal Judge to oversee Tribal Court and uphold tribal laws, as well as an Executive Director to manage



Alaska. Today, we have approximately 1,600 tribal members who live across the Kenai Peninsula and beyond. We employ about 300 full-time and part-time employees.

The tribe delivers a variety of programs and services that promote the wellness of our people and the community. The Dena'ina Wellness Center is a fully integrated healthcare facility offering a wellness-based approach toward care, delivering a wide range of services beneath one roof. We also operate a tribal justice system, early childhood education center, Elders center, social services program, and more.

At our annual meeting every October, we elect members to the Executive Council to serve staggered, two-year terms. The seven-member



The Kenaitze Indian Tribe is preserving Dena'ina culture and promoting wellness for the future. **ON THE COVER,** Dena'ina words from the tribe's Traditional Values Wheel, along with lines representing the solar and lunar year, days, weeks, months, tides, seasons and phases of the moon all are included in Raven Plaza, an art installation by Jon Ross on the grounds of the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

the tribe's day-to-day operations and ensure our overall growth and success.

Funding for our programs comes from a variety of sources, including federal, state and private grants, as well as third-party revenue generated by our healthcare programs.

Our mission – to assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever – guides our decision-making and drives everything we do.

*Naqantughedul* – the tide is coming in.



# 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 Executive Director

Idahdi! Hello, friend!

This has been an important year for the tribe as we've worked to maintain and sustain the many opportunities that have come to us.

While maintaining and sustaining our opportunities, we have also had many accomplishments.

Some are detailed in the following pages; I'd like to highlight a few here.

We have been in the Dena'ina Wellness Center more than a year now. In that time, we have added staff and services, and our behavioral health and laboratory departments have achieved accreditation. We are committed to continued improvements to shorten wait times and to improve access to all of the services provided at the center.

Construction is underway on the new Tyotka's Elder Center. We expect to open the new facility in early 2016.

We are also preparing to move our Na'ini Social Services team into a



**Jaylene Peterson-Nyren**

building we purchased in May. The new building is located across the parking lot from the Dena'ina Wellness Center, Tyotka's and our new Tribal Court, making it more convenient for our customers to access services from one central location.

Our Tribal Court and the Court Appointed Special Advocates program received a finalist award in the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development's Honoring Nations Awards Program.

In this coming year we are working to develop new ways to approach the drug and alcohol addiction issues that affect our entire community. We want to learn from those who have been able to be resilient in their own struggle against addiction. We want to surround those who are still in need of help with care and support in the moment that they are ready.

We are working to improve how we collect and use data so that we can make informed decisions.

We are completing a facilities master plan that will guide our building needs well into the future.

We are continuing efforts to integrate our services to best support every aspect of wellness for all of our people.

We have commenced on a relationship-based employee training program that will better connect us to ourselves, to each other and to our Dena'ina values. If we are living our values, we are better able to provide the care necessary for our people to achieve our mission – to assure that Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.

I hope you will keep in touch as we move forward into a new year! Chiqinik. Aa' yaghali. It is good.



– Jaylene Peterson-Nyren  
Executive Director

# From the Chairperson

Hello,

A year ago, I told you that your Council was dedicated to developing ourselves as leaders, to supporting our committees, and to each of you.

We have accomplished a lot since I shared our plans with you.

One of our most important accomplishments was to adopt a Council Code of Conduct and an Oath of Office.

The Code of Conduct says Council members:

- shall honor their positions by acting with integrity and fairness;
- shall support and uphold the final decisions of the Council;
- will respect and honor the confidentiality of Executive Session;
- shall abstain from real or per-

ceived conflicts of interest; and

- shall preserve and protect the sovereignty of our Nation.

The Oath of Office says, "I solemnly swear and affirm I will support and defend the Constitution of the Sovereign Nation of the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina; that I will show respect for my fellow tribal citizens while fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of my position in alignment with the traditional values of the Kahtnuht'ana Nation; bearing allegiance to the vision of our Elders and ancestors to ensure that the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever."



**Rosalie A. Tepp**

We have also separated Council powers from Tribal Court powers, ensuring that the Council can be a fair and impartial appellate court for the Tribal Court when it is required to do so.

Your Council hosted quarterly meetings this year and has committed to a more efficient schedule for our committees.

I hope you will support us by attending these meetings and sharing your feedback about the governance of your tribe.

Thank you for letting us serve you.



– Rosalie A. Tepp  
Council Chairperson

# Tribal Government Affairs

The Executive Council and tribal staff stayed committed to providing transparency in tribal operations and fully engaging tribal membership.

Council and committee meetings were posted to a calendar on the tribe's website. Important tribal news and updates were made available through the Tribal Courier newsletter, which is now on a quarterly schedule, and the tribe's Facebook page.

The Executive Council held quarterly membership meetings in December, March and June.

The December meeting focused on the tribal fishery plan and informing tribal members on the history of the net.

The March meeting was to hear feedback on a yearlong effort to revise the tribe's constitution. Tribal members had an opportunity to comment on the proposals, and the feedback was reviewed by the Executive Council. The proposed revisions can be viewed on the tribe's website.

The June meeting featured information on our Gganiłchit Dena'ina Youth Council's participation in the Generation Indigenous Native Youth Challenge.

The youth council completed three community service projects as part

## Limited Waivers of Sovereign Immunity

**2015-22** – Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity to receive grant funds under the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services' Alaska Affordable Heating Assistance Program in fiscal year 2016 and such additional periods as may be indicated in the applicable Request for Proposals, but in no case longer than three years.



of the challenge. Eleven members of the group attended the first Tribal Youth Gathering at the White House and participated in the Annual UNITY conference afterward.

In January, tribal leaders gave an official public welcome to Gov. Bill Walker and Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott at the Governor's Inaugural Ball in Kenai.

We hosted a Dena'ina heyi winter celebration at the Kenai Visitors and Cultural Center and we have worked closely with Kenai Peninsula College to support two Dena'ina language classes.

A meeting was held in May to present information on DNA testing that will help the tribe better understand its past and work toward better health in the future.

We continue to work closely with Cook Inlet Region Inc., the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and other agencies on land use surrounding the area near the confluence of the Kenai and Russian rivers. We are also in consultation with parties working on the Alaska Liquefied Natural Gas project.



At top, Amber Gardner, right, speaks at a meeting regarding the Alaska LNG project. Above, Dr. Ripan Malhi examines remains involved in a DNA study.

Applications for tribal membership continue to increase. This year the enrollment committee reviewed more than 60 applications. Applications received during the year are presented for approval to tribal membership at the annual meeting.

# Meet the Executive Council

Seven council members, elected at the Annual General Council Meeting each October, govern the tribe in accordance with the tribe's constitution, bylaws, ordinances and resolutions.

Meeting dates and times are posted to the tribe's website on a regular basis.



**Rosalie A. Tepp**  
Chairperson



**Jennifer Showalter Yeoman**  
Vice Chairperson

## Committees and Commissions

### **Art and Interior Committee**

Purpose: To procure art and displays for the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Chair  
Mary Lou Bottorff  
Liisia Blizzard

### **Finance Committee**

Purpose: To provide advice and recommendations regarding financial matters of the tribe.

Audre Gifford, Chair  
James Segura  
Sharon Isaak  
Ben Baldwin  
Clinton Lageson  
Kenneth Oder

### **Court Code Committee**

Purpose: To review and consider revisions to the Tribal Court Code.

Liisia Blizzard  
Kimberley Sweet  
Analisa Selden  
Rusty Swan  
Evelyn Huf

### **Constitution Review Committee**

Purpose: To review and consider revisions to the constitution and make recommendations to the tribal membership for adoption.

Liisia Blizzard, Chair  
James Segura  
Rita Smagge  
Allan Baldwin  
Sasha Lindgren

### **Early Childhood Policy Committee**

Purpose: To work in partnership with 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 community.

Aurora Hawkins, Chair  
Jena Kruzick, Vice Chair  
Beatrice Sagoonick  
Tara Cazares  
April Stauss  
Jeanlynn Johnson  
Michell Hendrickson  
Evette Folgia  
Shannon Dodge  
Anna Haave  
Maghan Kruzick  
Tamsen Brewer  
Annie Massey

Denáya DeVolld

Debbie Shuey

Liisia Blizzard, Council Rep.

### **Education Committee**

Purpose: To provide oversight for the vision, objective and strategic plan for the education program.

Rita Smagge  
Sondra Shaginoff- Stuart  
Ben Baldwin  
Bernadine Atchison  
Raven Willoya-Williams  
Ashley Segura

### **Elders Committee**

Purpose: To provide oversight for the Tyotka's Elders Program.

Audre Gifford, Chair  
Phyllis Bookey  
James Showalter  
Rita Smagge  
Betty Porter  
Sharon Isaak  
Mary Lou Bottorff





**Liisia Blizzard**  
Secretary



**Audre Gifford**  
Treasurer



**James Segura**  
Council Member

### **Election Board**

Purpose: To regulate the conduct of all tribal elections, including those initiated by petition, and the resolution of election disputes.

Phyllis Bookey, Chair  
Kathy Rodgers  
Bernice Crandall  
Linda Ross  
Kynde Bishop, Alternate

### **Enrollment Committee**

Purpose: To provide oversight for the tribe's enrollment procedures as defined in the tribe's constitution and Enrollment Ordinance No. 98-01.

Liisia Blizzard, Chair  
Kathy Rodgers  
Rene' Edelman-Azzara  
Bernice Crandall  
Linda Ross  
Sasha Lindgren

### **Traditional Healing Committee**

Purpose: To provide oversight and planning for traditional healing in the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Audre Gifford, Chair  
Mary Lou Bottorff  
Bobbie Oskolkoff  
Linda Ross  
Jon Ross  
Clinton Lageson

### **Hunting, Fishing, and Gathering Commission**

Purpose: To provide oversight for the tribe's traditional hunting, fishing and gathering activities.

James Segura, Chair  
Clare Swan  
Liisia Blizzard  
James Showalter  
Karlo Wik

### **Health Committee**

Purpose: To review and make recommendations regarding primary care, behavioral health and dental programs. The Health Committee meets the statute requirements for the State of Alaska Community Mental Health Center grant.

Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Chair  
Clare Swan  
Rita Smagge  
Diana Zirul  
Audre Gifford

### **Land Committee**

Purpose: To research all lands presently owned by the tribe and recommend policies that will assist the tribe in meeting its vision, objectives and strategic plan.

James Segura, Chair  
Jennifer Showalter Yeoman  
Liisia Blizzard  
James Showalter  
Karlo Wik

### **Kenaitze/Salamatof Tribally Designated Housing Entity**

Purpose: To promote the development of affordable housing opportunities by providing new construction, rental assistance, home modernization and weatherization services, and various other affordable housing activities to eligible American Indian/Alaska Native beneficiaries.

Jim Segura, Chair  
Nick Sacaloff  
Rosalie A. Tepp  
Rita Smagge  
Clinton Lageson  
Karlo Wik

# Tribal Fishery



At top, Julianne Wilson and Tribal Fishery Coordinator George Showalter set one of the tribe's nets at the Waterfront fish camp. Above, a participant in one of Yaghanen Youth Program's two fish camps works to can smoked salmon strips.

For thousands of years, our people have relied on fish from Tikahtnu (Cook Inlet) and its tributaries to feed their families. Salmon remain central to our diet, culture and identity.

Today, we operate a fishery on tribal land at the mouth of the Kenai River at Waterfront, on the Cook Inlet beach.

The opening of the net is marked with a celebration on May 1, when tribal members gather along the shores of Tikahtnu to catch up with friends and share stories around the fire.

Tribal members schedule times to access the net and are assisted by tribal fishery workers. Fish are also distributed to Elders and some are donated to our food cache for people in need.

The tribe fishes at traditional sites along the Kahtnu (Kenai), Ggasilahtnu (Kasilof) and Yaghehtnu (Swan-





son) rivers. We typically set two, six-fathom nets.

This year the tribe honored the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's efforts intended to protect king salmon by using one net for much of the season.

The tribe caught the total number of fish allocated by the fishery permit. A request for additional fish was denied.

The tribal fishery is administered by

the Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commission, which recognizes that many families depend on the net to put food on their table.

The net provides us more than sustenance and food security. It preserves the culture and traditions established by early Dena'ina. It brings us together, with our children and Elders, creating a sense of unity. It represents the resiliency of our people.

## Comparing Tribal Fishery Numbers

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
<b>Kings</b>	20	2	19	14	47
<b>Reds</b>	8109	6109	4837	3445	6873
<b>Pinks</b>	4	352	24	553	5
<b>Silvers</b>	63	261	566	140	439
<b>Totals</b>	8196	6724	5446	4152	7364



Above, Joshua Grosvold, Jonny Wilson and Wilson's sister Julianne process red salmon, at top, during a youth camp.

# Tribal Court



Tribal leaders meet in Kenaitze's Tribal Court with representatives of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development's Honoring Nations Award team.

The Kenaitze Tribal Court ensures the efficient and fair administration of justice while honoring Dena'ina customs, history, traditions and experiences.

Established in 1986, the court administers justice over all lands and waters customarily and traditionally used by the Dena'ina people and over all tribal members enrolled or eligible for enrollment. It serves both tribal members and non-members through a petition and resolution process.

Hearings are conducted in a culturally appropriate manner. Court participants are treated with dignity and respect and communicate directly with the judge hearing their case. Participants are encouraged to speak from the heart, with honesty and respect, because their perspectives are valued.

We opened a new tribal courthouse in 2015, gaining more space and security.

The court hears a range of cases, including:

- 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
- Conservatorship and guardianship

The court also offers a collaborative Tribal Youth Circle program for children.

An alternative to out-of-school suspension, the Circle brings adolescents facing delinquency or legal consequences together with family and community members to seek restorative justice through a Talking Circle. Participants work together in a nurturing, respectful environment to create a plan to help the child get back on track.

## 2015 Highlights

- Kenaitze Tribal Court judges represented Alaska on the Board of Directors for the National American Indian Court Judges Association.
- The court received honorable mention and support from Alaska Chief Justice Craig Stowers at the 32nd Annual Alaska Tribal Court Development Conference.
- The court was selected as a finalist for a 2015 Honoring Nations award from the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, which recognizes outstanding tribal governance.
- The court promoted cooperation and collaboration between tribal courts and state courts through judiciary meetings and joint projects.
- Kenaitze Tribal Court judges acted on sovereignty by promoting restorative justice practices through collaboration with tribes and community partners.



**Chief Judge Kim Sweet**



**Judge Paul Lorenzo**



**Judge Evelyn Huf**



**Judge Rusty Swan**



# Court Appointed Special Advocates



Superhero runners take off from the 3rd annual Superhero 5k Run/Walk in Kenai in August. The race had more than 100 participants this year, many in costume. Plans are underway for next year's race.

The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program was established in 2005 under the Kenaitze Tribal Court.

The program matches trained adult volunteers with children going through the tribal or state court systems who need assistance and, often, have nowhere else to turn. The volunteer's role is to create consistency in the child's life and ensure the child is appropriately represented and heard in court proceedings.

The aim of CASA is to empower and educate our people to speak for vulnerable children, with

strength, understanding and respect for our culture and traditions. At its heart, the program is about putting – and keeping – children in safe and permanent homes.

In 2011, we signed an agreement with the Office of Public Advocacy establishing Kenai Peninsula CASA – the first CASA program to operate through a direct partnership between tribal and state government. As part of

the agreement, CASA volunteers are dually trained to participate in tribal and state court proceedings.

The program has since served more than seven children and continues to grow.

## 2015 Highlights

- The tribe renewed an agreement with the Office of Public Advocacy allowing CASA to serve children in both tribal and state court.

- Ten CASA volunteers served 29 children.

- The program hosted the third annual Superhero 5-kilometer Run/Walk, drawing 108 participants and raising more than \$4,300.

## How to Become a CASA Volunteer

The first step to becoming a CASA volunteer is to attend an informational meeting. The next step is to submit an application, and complete an interview and thorough background-check process. Volunteers accepted into the program then complete 40 hours of training and are sworn into service by a tribal and state court judge.

Learn more from Thia Peters at [tpeters@kenaitze.org](mailto:tpeters@kenaitze.org) or at 907-335-7219.



# Early Childhood Center

Passing down cultural knowledge and supporting formal education will assure our future as a tribe. At the Kuya Qyut'anen Early Childhood Center, where the youngest members of the community come to learn, we embrace this attitude every day.

Our experienced and caring staff emphasizes family support and involvement, healthy lifestyle habits and traditional Dena'ina culture.

The Kuya Qyut'anen, which means "Little Children of the Kenai River," offers Head-Start, after-school and summer programs to students who are 3 or 4 years old on Sept. 1 of a new school year.

The no-fee programs are open to Native and non-Native children, regardless of household income.

The center provides dental and health screenings, nutrition services, daily physical activity and a variety of programs for children with special needs.

Curriculum is aligned with the State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines.

## 2015 Highlights

- The center served 119 families.
- The center hosted an eight-week summer camp, drawing 47 children.
- Thirty-six children transitioned from preschool to kindergarten.
- The center hosted parenting classes, family events, and many trainings and activities.
- The center offered pediatric services thanks to a partnership with the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

At right, students at the Early Childhood Center receive bikes that they earned in the 100 Books for a Bike Challenge. The program is just one of the techniques staff uses to challenge and motivate their students to excel.





# Yaghanen Youth Programs



Yaghanen – "a safe place" – is where youth come to develop life skills, learn culture, make friends and stay on track academically. Yaghanen is a prevention and early intervention program open to pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade students, offering a wide range of fun and educational activities.

Students who attend Yaghanen have a chance to participate in the Jabila'ina Dance Group, Del Dumí Intertribal Drum Group and the Ggugyuyni Native Youth Olympic Team.

Yaghanen teaches healthy eating habits and helps keep youth away from drugs and alcohol. The program also offers study hall and tutoring during the school year, camps during summer and many winter activities.

## 2015 Highlights

- Yaghanen staff made cultural presentations to the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.
- The Ggugyuyni Senior Native Youth Olympics team competed in the state championships in Anchorage.
- The Jabila'ina Dancers and Del Dumí Drummers performed at the Opening of the Net celebration in May.
- The program presented information about traditional fishing practices to approximately 700 children at the annual Salmon Celebration at Johnson Lake.
- The program hosted six youth summer camps and a traditional moose hunt.

At left, Tatihana DeHoyos competes for a first-place finish in the junior girls Eskimo stick pull during the tribe's Native Youth Invitational at Kenai Middle School in January. More than 100 athletes from several communities participated in the three-day invitational.

# Tyotka's Elder Services



A construction worker walks past unfinished walls inside the new Tyotka's Elder Center building under construction in September 2014, next to the Dena'ina Wellness Center and the new Na'ini Social Services building.

Honor and respect is important to the Dena'ina culture. Honor and respect for Elders, who provide abundant wisdom and guidance, is especially important.

The tribe serves more than 145 Elders through the Elder services program, or Tyotka's, meaning "Auntie's Place."

At Tyotka's, we aim to enhance the quality of life for our wisest tribal members. The program fosters an environment of quality, dignity, and pride, encouraging healthy activities and choices.

To promote independent living, we provide information and resources to family members who care for parents, grandparents or older relatives.

Elders participating in the Tyotka's program receive access to many services, including daily lunch, caregiver support, transportation, home visits, abuse and neglect prevention, advocacy, exercise, field trips and crafts.

In June 2014, we broke ground on a new, 6,500-square-foot facility to house Elder services.

The building, located on Mission Avenue in Old Town Kenai, faces south toward Cook Inlet and the mouth of the Kenai River.

It will include a gathering space, lounge with a stone fireplace, kitchen, meeting rooms and more, and is expected to open during the early months of 2016.

## 2015 Highlights

- The program hosted nine fish days at the tribal net, giving Elders a chance to enjoy the beach, catch up with friends and share salmon.
- Throughout the year, Elders and their families came together by sharing traditional foods and picking berries.
- The program raised nearly \$2,000 at a steak dinner fundraiser.
- Thirteen Elders utilized the Saturday service offered at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.
- The program hosted activities throughout the year, including bingo, horseshoes, a beach day, yoga, arts and crafts, walking events, crochet and no-host dinners.





Community members participate in a candlelight vigil to honor victims of sexual assault outside Tyotka's Elder Center in April. Helping victims of sexual assault and domestic violence is one of the many services Na'ini Social Services provides.

Na'ini Social Services provides help for individuals who have immediate needs, along with individual planning to help people achieve longer-term goals for self-sufficiency.

The social services team offers many services, including energy and heating assistance, burial and funeral assistance, job training and placement, and childcare assistance.

Na'ini has a wild game harvest program and food bank. Services also are available for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and dating violence and stalking.

For students and job-seekers, we assist with career planning, job placement, vocational rehabilitation and

education services.

The family services area works closely with Tribal Court to provide prevention and family preservation case planning.

Tribal members serve as foster parents when a child needs aid and cannot live at home, even temporarily or on short notice. This year, Tribal Court reunified three families with the support of family services case managers.

#### **2015 Highlights:**

- Scholarships were awarded to 24 tribal students to attend college or accredited vocational training programs.

- Na'ini helped 168 people with job placement.
- Eight youth were hired under the Workforce Investment Act.
- The wild game harvest and food bank programs helped 884 families.
- The Child Care Assistance Program served 120 children.
- The Early Childhood Center was licensed in conjunction with the Child Care Assistance Program, continuing the summer and after school programs.
- Twenty-four vulnerable adults received advocacy, case management and conservatorship.
- The tribe monitored 19 Indian Child Welfare Act cases.

# Housing Assistance Program



The Housing Assistance Program provides a wide range of services, including transitional, emergency and student housing.

We manage rental properties that are open to eligible tribal and community members, with housing ranging from studio to three-bedroom units. The program also offers snowplowing, sanding and home renovations and repairs.

## 2015 Highlights

- The Safe Home Program, which renovates and repairs houses, served 10 families.



Tribal housing includes apartments in Old Town Kenai, seen through windows of the Na'ini building at top, and a 4-plex in Nikiski.

- The Emergency Housing Program served 28 families.
- The Sanding and Snow Plowing

Program assisted 16 families.

- Ninash Q'a, a transitional home helping those in crisis, housed six families.
- The tribe acquired the 32-unit Toyon Villa Apartment Complex in Kenai, subsidizing five units.
- The Student Housing Program provided housing vouchers to 10 students.

- In July 2015, the tribe created the Elders Emergency Program, offering up to \$3,000 in home repairs and renovations over five years to people ages 55 and up.



# Environmental Program

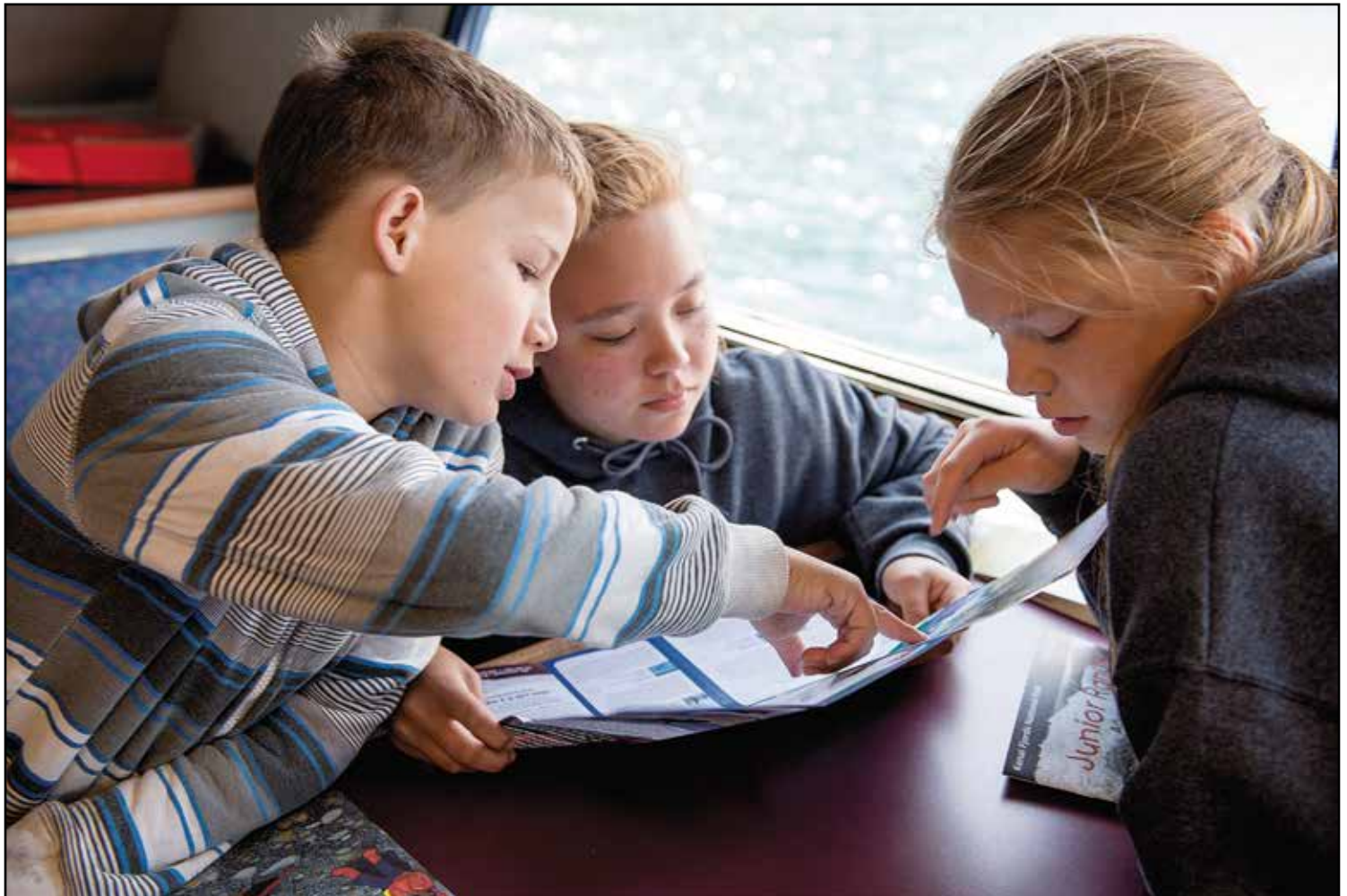
The Environmental Program embodies the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina value of stewardship – the respectful use of land, resources and all creations.

In partnership with local, state and federal organizations, the program works to improve the health of tribal members, decrease the abundance of hazardous waste across the community, and increase the understanding of traditional ecological knowledge, especially among children.

Each year, the program hosts youth camps and participates in a range of community projects.

## 2015 Highlights

- The program received funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for environmental education, helping in the tribe's efforts to increase the number of Alaska Native and American Indian youth studying science, technology, engineering and math.
- Twenty-two students attended Janteh Science Camp, participating in hands-on activities and learning traditional Dena'ina values and history.
- The program partnered with the University of Alaska to provide lessons on sediment core sampling, creating interactive maps of Dena'ina places and geocaching.
- Children visited the ASRC Energy Services Rig Tenders Terminal in Nikiski to learn how natural gas is condensed into liquid. Participants also learned about jobs in geology, hydrology, anthropology, drilling, engineering, and project management.
- Several youth attended the Kenai Watershed Forum Adopt-A-Stream camp and Lego Robotics Technology Camp hosted by the Soldotna High School robotics team.
- The program represented the tribe at a number of community events, including a holiday recycling event, the Kenai River Festival and several activities at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer.
- The program also is involved in the Kenai Bluff Erosion Project, Alaska Regional Response Team for coastal management and safety, and the Kenai River Ranch Project.



Robert Hayes, and Hanna and Savanna Wilson study a map of Resurrection Bay to learn about some of the animals they might see during a Resurrection Bay field trip that was the highlight of the Environmental Program's Janteh Science Camp.

# Dena'ina Wellness Center



Northern lights dance in the sky above the Dena'ina Wellness Center in January 2015.

The 52,000-square-foot Dena'ina Wellness Center offers a fully integrated, wellness-based approach to care.

Our Dene' model of healthcare includes not just physical health, but also emotional, social and spiritual health.

We call our customers our un'ina – those who come to us. Our un'ina receive access to all our services beneath one roof, including medical, dental, behavioral health, chemical dependency, wellness, physical therapy, laboratory services, pharmacy support and traditional healing. The Dena'ina Wellness Center also includes an activities and fitness area, classroom space, teaching kitchen and traditional healing room.

Alaska Native and American Indian people have access to all the center's programs, while programs that receive state funding – primarily behavioral health – are open to the general public.

The center opened in 2014 and is located in Old Town Kenai at an early Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina village site. The tribe built the center after it received a highly competitive Indian Health Service Joint Venture Award in 2011 covering the building's operational and maintenance costs for the next 20 years.

The architecture is designed to support our integrated approach to care while also reflecting the area and the tribe's traditional Dena'ina culture and values.

The exterior features design elements borrowed from traditional salmon drying racks. Artwork from tribal artists Joel Isaak and Jon Ross enhance the grounds outside the center.

Inside, blue colors drawn from Cook Inlet are depicted in the floor of the main gathering space near the main entrance.

Agates inset in the flooring were collected by tribal members. Tilework on some interior walls were patterned after early Dena'ina beadwork designs. Dena'ina names are used throughout the building alongside their English translations. The center has achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification for its energy conserving features.





### 2015 Highlights

- The Behavioral Health Program earned a three-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).
- The Laboratory earned a two-year

At top, Dental Hygienist Karen Pulley, right, positions Mylon Weems for a panoramic X-ray in the Dena'ina Wellness Center's dental department. At left, the gathering space serves as both a lobby and a meeting space.

accreditation from the Commission on Office Laboratory Accreditation (COLA).

- The tribe hired a physical therapist, traditional healer, nurse practitioner and dentist.
- The Dental Program introduced orthodontic services.
- Electronic health information for the Behavioral Health and Medical programs was successfully integrated, allowing the areas to more efficiently coordinate patient care.
- Guidelines and training protocols were developed for the treatment and management of chronic pain.
- Laboratory Services began offering home-based blood tests for Elders on blood thinning medication. Prescriptions can now be adjusted for these medications on the spot.
- Radiology services received a passing certificate for an envi-

# Chiqinik! Thank you!

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe gives special thanks to our major sponsors and our many community supporters of our new Dena'ina Wellness Center.



# Dena'ina Wellness Center



The Dena'ina Wellness Center is located on tribal land in Old Town Kenai, next to Kenaitze Tribal Court, Tyotka's Elder Center, and apartments owned by the tribe. Soon, Na'ini Social Services will operate from a building across the parking lot.

## **CONTINUED** from p.19

- Environmental survey conducted by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.
- Dena'ina Wellness Center leadership supported Medicaid expansion and participated in statewide discussions regarding Medicaid reform.
- Staff and Council represented the tribe at state and national health events. Topics included patient care, self-governance, compliance, training and recruitment, tele-medicine services, facility needs, behavioral health needs and more. A Customer Service Workgroup was established to continually

improve the customer experience.

A second workgroup was created to examine ways to improve customer flow.

- The center officially became a smoke-free campus.
- The Wellness Program participated in the Harvest Moon Local Food Festival.
- The tribe hosted meetings with The Alaska Mental Health Trust, the Alaska Native Health Board, the Veterans Administration, Cook Inlet Tribal Council's Board of Directors, and others.





# K'Beq' Interpretive Site



K'Beq' Interpretive Site features a short boardwalk trail to the Kenai River and historical displays, below.



Kenaitze ancestors, recognizing the abundance of fish and natural resources across Yaghanen, "the good land," settled along the banks of its rivers. One of these areas of abundance was

Sqilantnu in present-day Cooper Landing on the upper stretches of the Kenai River.

Today, in the same area, the tribe partners with the Chugach National Forest to operate the K'Beq' Interpretive Site.

K'Beq', meaning "footprints," is perched above the river under a canopy of trees at mile 52.6 of the Sterling Highway, across from the Russian River

Campground entrance.

The site offers interpretations of traditional Dena'ina customs and practices. Guided walking tours and

signs displayed across boardwalks give visitors a glimpse into Dena'ina culture, past and present.

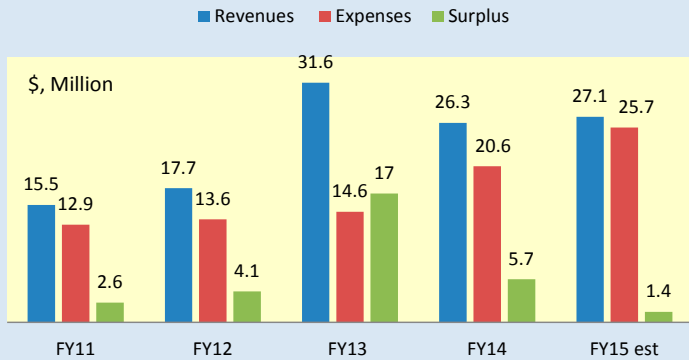
K'Beq' is fully staffed and open four days a week from June through August. Admission is free.

## 2015 Highlights

- K'Beq' was open four days a week, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., from June 4 to Aug. 30.
- K'Beq' was open for a total of 48 days and saw a total of 1,749 visitors.
- Shovaughanna Wilson, Julianne Wilson, Robert Bearheart, Stefanie Schindler and Destyne Svenson (all former Yaghanen youth) worked at the site, guiding tours and answering visitor questions.

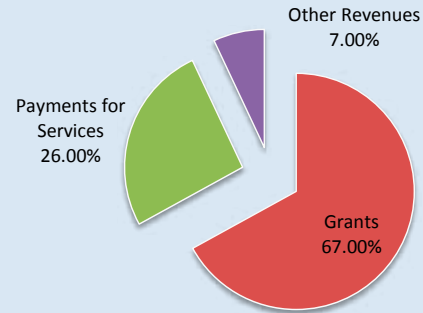
# Tribal Finances

## Financial Performance History



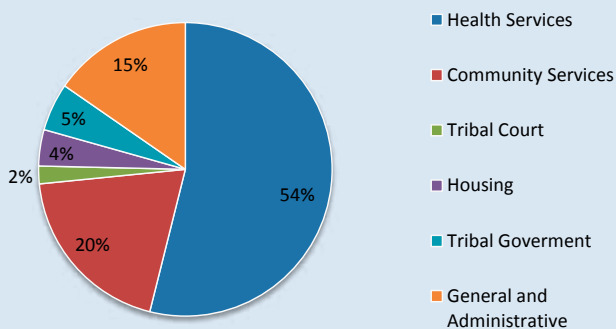
In FY 15, the tribe earned \$27.1M in revenues, spent \$25.7M to provide programs and services, including long-term debt and capital outlays, and saved \$1.4M that will be invested in future capital projects and tribal development activities.

## FY 15 Sources of Revenues



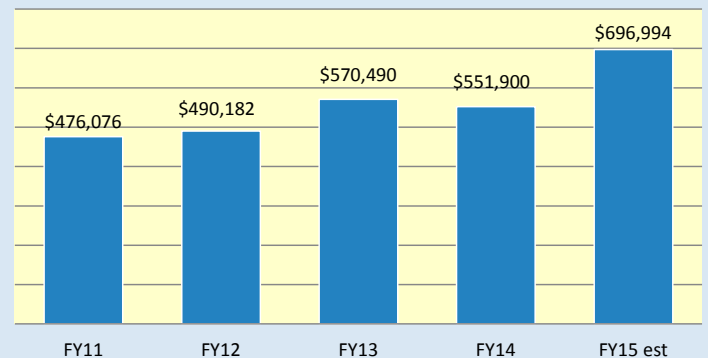
In FY 15, about \$18.2M of total operating revenues were from federal, state and private grants. Reimbursements for health services paid by Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance generated about \$7.1M. The balance (\$1.8M) came from program user fees, donations, interest income, and contract support cost settlement funds.

## FY 15 Operating Expenses by Program



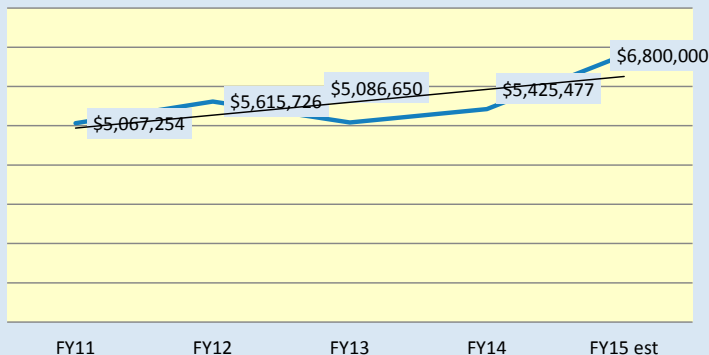
In FY 15, about \$16.3M (80%) of total operating expenses was spent on direct programs and services. The balance was expended on tribal government activities (\$1.1M) and administrative support of programs (\$3.1M).

## Financial Assistance Payments



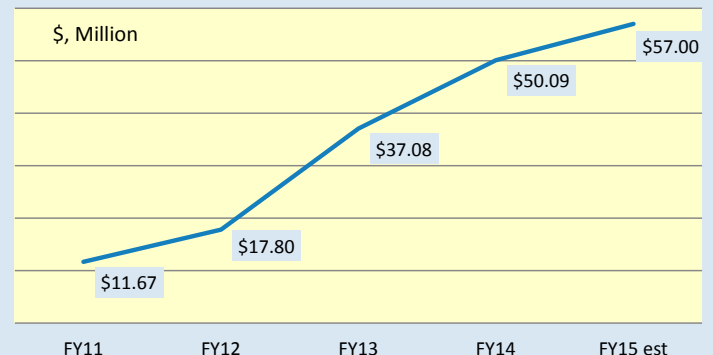
In FY 15, the tribe spent about \$697k on direct payments to customers or their designees to assist with housing, education, training, transportation and emergency needs.

## Unrestricted Net Assets



As of the end of FY 15, the tribe has accumulated \$6.8M in unrestricted net assets (savings), which provides a reserve for working capital, equipment replacements, facility improvements and future investments.

## Total Assets

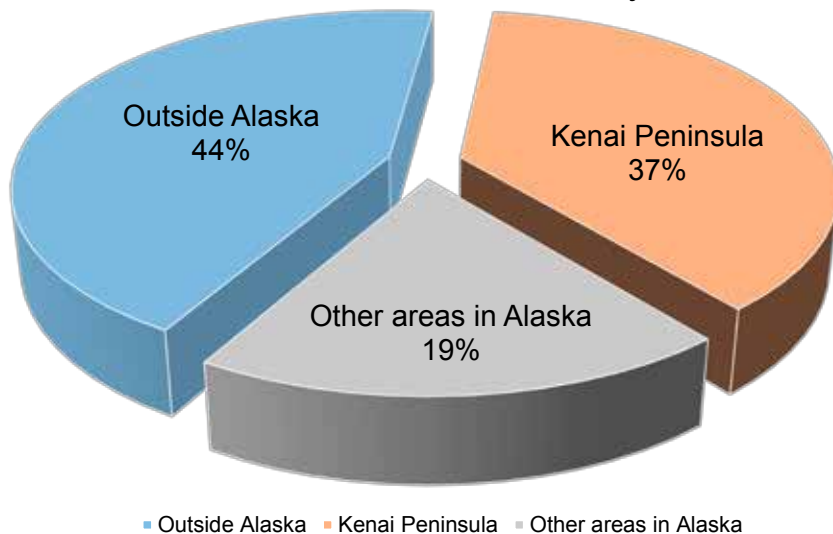


Over the past five years, the tribe's assets (cash, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses and capital assets) have increased substantially. Investments in capital assets (the new Dena'ina Wellness Center, Toyon Villa Apartments, Na'ini Social Services building, and Tiyoka's Elder Center building project) are largely responsible for the overall asset growth.



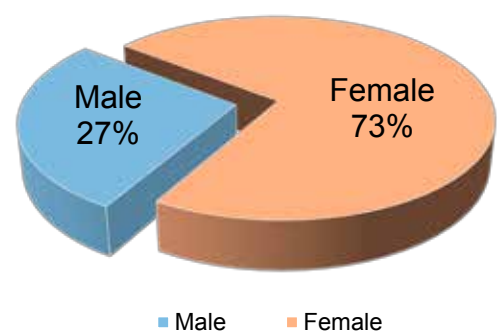
# Tribal Demographics

## Tribal Member Residency

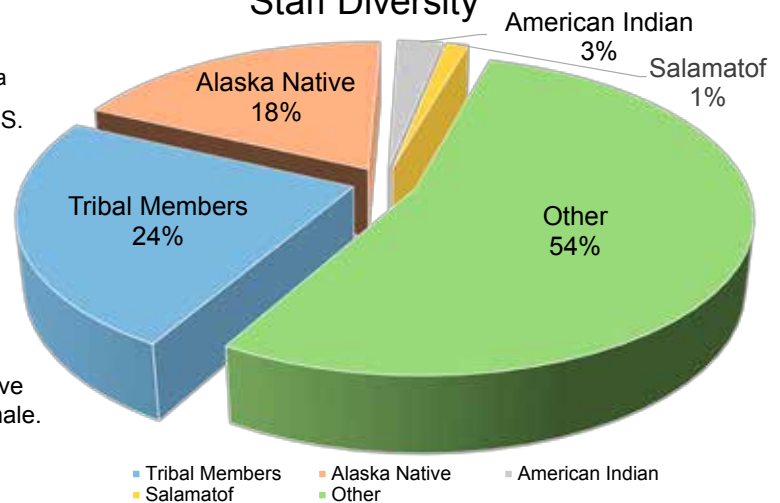


The tribe's 1,592 enrolled members are distributed across the U.S.

## Staff Gender



## Staff Diversity



The tribe had an average of 308 employees during FY2015. Nearly half were Alaska Native or American Indian. Three quarters were female.

## Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp.

The Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp. is a federally chartered tribal business corporation established by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe in 2013. It is a separate legal entity from the tribe and governed by a five-member Board of Directors appointed by the tribe's Executive Council.

The corporation separates the tribe's economic development activities from its governmental and political processes, and develops profitable enterprises to support the tribe's self-sufficiency. It also creates subsidiaries, limited liability companies and other entities to help support its operations.

In September 2014, the Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp. Board of Directors hired Stan Mishin as President and Chief Executive Officer.

Mishin oversees the corporation's strategic plan, including its mission, vision and goals:

### Mission

- Conduct tribal business enterprise for the prosperity of Kahtnuht'ana (Kenai River people) and the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, and to promote our heritage and way of living with the wisdom and values of our ancestors.

### Vision

- Sovereignty for Kahtnuht'ana (Kenai River people) and the Kenaitze Indian Tribe by attaining self-sufficiency through tribal business enterprise development.
- The corporation envisions building a prosperous tribal economy that sustains the tribe financially, enables

each tribal household to maintain a desired standard of living, and supports the community's well-being.

### Short-term goal

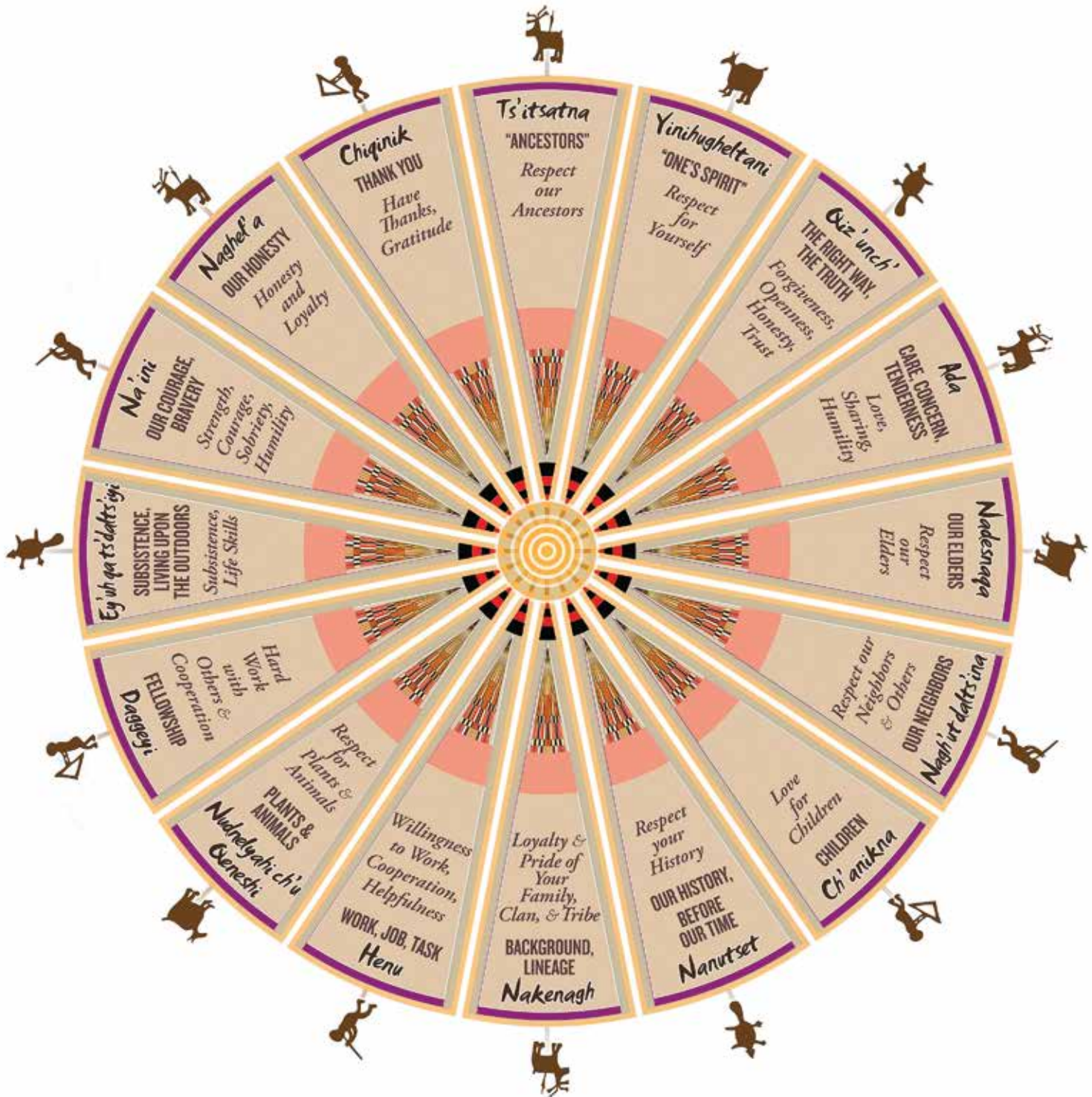
- Establish core businesses and become financially profitable on a consolidated basis.

### Long-term goal

- Become a preeminent business conglomerate on the Kenai Peninsula to optimize employment opportunities for tribal members and other Alaska Native and American Indian people across the community; enhance the stability of corporate earnings through asset diversification; and maximize the scale of operations to be able to make a meaningful financial contribution to the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.



# Kenaitze Indian Tribe Traditional Values



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