

Focusing on education

Executive Council reports on recent New Zealand trip

A group of tribal members – including six members of the Executive Council – recently returned from New Zealand after participating in a two-week indigenous education exchange.

Jon Ross, a tribal member and Tsiltan Management Group consultant who attended and helped coordinate the trip, reported on the experience during a quarterly membership meeting at the De-na’ina Wellness Center in July. The trip occurred in partnership with the Maori people, an indigenous

group that operates its own education system.

“The Council went to New Zealand to see successful Maori education programs firsthand in order to better determine what they would like to see happen in Kenai with an education system for our community that teaches traditional knowledge and develops life-long learners,” Ross said.

In his report, Ross said there were four goals of the visit: To accelerate the planning and develop-

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Jon Ross gestures while speaking about New Zealand’s Maori people and their education system during the quarterly membership meeting on July 9.



Fiocla Wilson holds Diana Zirul’s hand as Zirul talks about spending time with her auntie as a child.

Marking a milestone birthday

Connie Wilson remembers the moose-hunting trips and salmon-filleting sessions. Diana Zirul remembers playing piano in the entryway of her home. And Dan Hakkinen remembers the tasty soups cooking on her cast iron stove.

Longtime friends and five generations of family members filled the Heritage Place in Soldotna on June

30 to celebrate the 100th birthday of Fiocla Wilson, the tribe’s eldest member. She has six children, 18 grandchildren, 38 great grandchildren and nine great-great grandchildren, many of whom attended the celebration.

“Overwhelming,” daughter and tribal Elder Phyllis Bookey said of the occasion. “A special moment.”

As Wilson sat in the front of the

room, family members took turns hugging and kissing her and sharing their favorite memories.

Daughter-in-law Connie Wilson said Fiocla Wilson helped her learn to prepare fish for smoking and also made the best gravy she’s ever tasted.

She thanked her mother-in-law for supporting her for the past 50

See **100**, p. 9

Kenaitze corporation lands local fish biz

Kahtnuht’ana Development Corp., a federally chartered business corporation wholly owned by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, has acquired a local seafood and wild game processing business.

The purchase of Soldotna-based Custom Seafood Processors Inc. was made official in May, said Stan Mishin, President of Kahtnuht’ana Development Corp. The business, based out of a 12,000-square-foot building on the Kenai Spur Highway, includes a large processing area as well as retail space.

Mishin said Kahtnuht’ana Development Corp. examined six business opportunities before ultimately acquiring Custom Seafood, which opened in the mid-1990s and moved to its current location in 2006.

That the business is local, well-established and connected to the fishing industry made it an attractive option, Mishin added.

“We said, ‘Why don’t we look at a seafood business? There’s a connection to tribal culture and tribal

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NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yaghalí du?

How is it with you?

I hope that you have been able to enjoy this beautiful summer. Just as in the past, summer is a time to enjoy the sun and the outdoors. It is also a time to work and to make improvements.

I'd like to take a moment to share with you some of our recent work and the improvements we are making to better serve you.

First, it was wonderful to celebrate the Grand Opening of our new Tyotkas Elder Center in June. It was good to see so many of you join us as we observed this special day with our Elders.

The construction was a success for the tribe's own Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp. It was nice to publicly acknowledge President Stan Mishin and KDC's role as the project manager.

More congratulations to Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp. for its purchase of Custom Seafood Processors, on the Kenai Spur Highway in Soldotna. We look forward to seeing the business grow and thrive. Please take a moment to stop in. (See story on Page 1.)

At the Dena'ina Wellness Center, we have been working to improve access to Primary Care services. Additional staff have been hired to accommodate the growth we've seen. We're also refining procedures in a way that will make it easier for you to get an appointment.

We have been working on a construction project in our administration building to expand the Executive Council chamber. It includes space for tribal members to attend meetings, and an office for Council members to work when they are in the building.

We also continue to improve our efforts to keep you informed about the tribe's activities and opportunities. Our website, redesigned and expanded earlier this summer, has more information about our services and how to access them, as well as stories about the tribe. New content is added weekly.

This Counting Cord newsletter is now published bimonthly instead of quarterly and distributed to customers, as well as tribal members. Some issues contain 12 and even 16 pages, up from the previous eight.

The beautiful summer will eventually come to a close. The work and improvements we are making will continue.

If you access one of the many services of the tribe, please take a moment to fill out a survey, submit a comment card or tell an employee how we're doing.

It's important to us that we meet your needs as you do your own good work and improvements!

— Jaylene Peterson-Nyren
Executive Director, Kenaitze Indian Tribe



This year's race will be the fourth Superhero 5k Run/Walk for CASA.

A super race, a super cause

Get ready to channel your inner superhero.

The 4th Annual CASA Superhero 5K Run/Walk is set for 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 20. The race begins and ends at the Tribal Courthouse in Old Town Kenai.

"It's a great time to have families get together and enjoy our beautiful state of Alaska," said Thia Peters, the tribe's CASA program coordinator. "Rain or shine, everyone gets out there and has fun."

And it's for a good cause.

The race, a family friendly affair in which

The 2016 version will include a post-race barbeque. There also will be a costume contest with prizes awarded in three categories – best children's costume, best family costume and best couple's costume. And for those wishing to capture the moment, a photo booth will be onsite.

Costumes are not required, but Peters encouraged participants to be creative and have fun.

She said previous wardrobes have ranged from the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to

The Incredibles to Dr. Seuss.

"There have been a lot of interesting ones," Peters said.

One change to this year's race is the route participants will travel.

In previous years, the race started and ended at the Kenai Park Strip along Main Street Loop in Kenai. This year, however, it will start and end at the Tribal Courthouse

in Old Town. Racers will move through Old Town and travel along Beach Access Road before ultimately returning to the courthouse.

Peters encouraged past participants and first-timers alike to attend.

"The more, the merrier," she said. "If you know someone who might be interested, please pass the word along and come on out."

Those interested in becoming a CASA volunteer or learning more about the program are encouraged to contact Peters at 907-335-7219.

CASA Superhero 5K Run/Walk

When: 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 20; onsite registration opens at 10 a.m.

Where: Tribal Courthouse, 508 Upland St. in Kenai (next to the Dena'ina Wellness Center)

Cost: Adult, \$25 pre-registration, \$30 day-of; children (17 and under), \$15 pre-registration, \$20 day-of.

To pre-register, visit www.active.com and search "superhero" and "Kenai, AK."

Contact: Thia Peters, 907-335-7219, or Jessica Crump, 907-335-7218.

Moving soon? Please keep in touch

Please keep your contact information current so you don't miss important mailings from the tribe.

Send updates to:

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From the editor's desk

The Counting Cord is a publication for members of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and the tribe's customers.

Find more information on the tribe's website at kenaitze.org and like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/kenaitze](https://www.facebook.com/kenaitze).

For story suggestions or questions about content, contact editor M. Scott Moon at 907-335-7237 or by email at smoon@kenaitze.org.



NOTE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Hello,

Your Tribal Council hosted Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott and his wife Toni for several hours of meaningful conversation on July 5.

This is more *naqantughedul*. The tide is coming back in.

In the last newsletter, I wrote about how the federal and state governments were engaging in self-governance consultations with tribes. Lt. Gov. Mallott's visit is another example of this.

Your Council showed up prepared for the meeting.

We first had lunch together in the beautiful new Tyotkas building. The grilled cheese sandwiches and homemade soup were a good way to start the walking tour we took in the rain afterward.

We spent time at Na'ini Family and Social Services, where the Lt. Gov. and Mrs. Mallott learned about the many services we offer our people.

From there, we sat in the Tribal Courtroom,



where we had a round-table talk led by Tribal Court Chief Judge Kim Sweet about the challenges our court has had with the state of Alaska. We talked about how tribes are ready to do what the state has not yet done to bring justice and healing to our community.

We also talked about education.

We and other tribes in Alaska are ready to take responsibility for our people's education in the same way we have successfully taken responsibility for our healthcare.

Lt. Gov. Mallott said he and Gov. Bill Walker were committed to working with these and other issues affecting tribes.

I am going to make sure the conversation continues until our mission, that we may thrive forever, has been achieved.

— Rosalie A. Tepp
Executive Council Chairperson



Former owner and current business manager Lisa Hanson talks with Kenaitze Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren and Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp. President Stan Mishin during a tour last month. The business, above, is in Soldotna.

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members," Mishin said. "It seemed like a good long-term opportunity to have a business that is connected to tribal values."

During summer, the business employs between 40 and 50 seasonal and temporary workers. Work includes everything from fileting to boxing to vacuum-packing to customer service. The company processes about 15,000 pounds of fish and serves a couple hundred customers per day during peak season.

Mishin said Custom Seafood caters to sport fishermen, not the commercial business, and there is no canning involved. It also offers

taxidermy services during hunting season.

In the future, Mishin said the plan is to expand the business into the food service industry and become a year-round operation.

Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp. is governed by a five-member Board of Directors appointed by the tribe's Executive Council. The corporation's purpose, according to its charter, is threefold: To separate the tribe's economic development activities from its governmental and political processes; to develop profitable enterprises; and to create and charter entities necessary to managing the activities of the corporation.

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The Kenaitze delegation tours the grounds at Nga Taiatea Wharekura, at far left.

At left, Linda Ross, Chairperson Rosalie A. Tepp and Jon Ross plant a tree during the New Zealand trip.



Members of the Kenaitze delegation talk with students and staff at Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Ruamata.

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ment of a tribal education system; to gather ideas, insights and information from the Maori that could be used to create a tribal education system and elevate the wellness of the tribe's people; to learn from the Maori so the tribe can resurrect, develop and maintain Dena'ina language and values; and to study how the Maori decolonized themselves through education and advocacy.

The exchange, Ross added, aligned with the tribe's 2025 vision of enhancing and strengthening the prosperity, health and culture of its people. Of the eight goals included in the 2025 vision, one is to develop and implement a tribal education system.

Ross first met Maori people in the late-1990s when a group visited Alaska. He has since traveled to New Zealand multiple times to study their culture and education system, which dates back 40 years. "They are arguably leading the world in indigenous education," Ross said.

The Kenaitze delegation for the trip included 12 people – six Council members, three family members, a tribal Elder, a culture bearer and Ross, the consultant. Council member Liisia Blizzard, who did not make the trip, said she wished she

could have attend but had responsibilities to attend to at home.

The group travelled to three areas of New Zealand – Auckland, Hamilton and the Rotorua areas of the North Island of Aotearoa. They visited 10 schools in 10 days, including a preschool, university and eight immersion primary high schools.

During each visit, they met Maori students and teachers. They listened to them sing, watched them dance and observed learning in the classroom.

Executive Council Chairperson Rosalie A. Tepp said it was humbling to hear the Maori people speak. She said they articulated

their language with pride, honor and wholesomeness.

"I want to see our Kenaitze people prosper in that way. I don't want us to lose our culture. I don't want us to lose our essence. I don't want us to lose our being," Tepp said. "I think it's a wonderful, beautiful thing when kids, teenagers and adults know their language. It makes you whole, it makes you a better-understanding person, and it makes you deal with the world in a proper way."

Council member Audre Gifford said Maori leaders shared a lesson that resonated with her – that if the tribe is serious about creating its

own education system, it should not wait.

They told her it's better to take action and make mistakes along the way than to wait for money, policy changes, approvals and other factors to fall into place.

"What if our tribal school prevents one suicide? What if it prevents one alcoholic? What if it prevents one drug addict? What if it prevents one case of domestic violence? What is the monetary worth of that?" Gifford said. "You can't put a price on it because that's not how we think. That's not our indigenous values."

Council members emphasized that the tribe is in the exploratory phase of creating its own education system and that no decisions have been made. But in sharing their experiences from the trip, the group unanimously agreed it was a useful, powerful experience.

"I was totally, totally amazed and blown away by all that we saw," said Linda Ross, the tribal Elder who attended.

During the meeting, tribal members had a chance to ask questions and offer comments about the trip. Questions ranged from the costs of the trip, to the feasibility of creating a Kenaitze education system, to funding in the future, and more.



Children from Te Wananga o Aotearoa perform for the Kenaitze delegation during the group's tour of their school.

Celebration for the ages



The Del Dummi Drum Group performs during the Grand Opening of the Tyotkas Elder Center in Old Town Kenai.

Tribe introduces and blesses new Tyotkas Elder Center

It's a new era for the tribe's Tyotkas Elder Program.

The tribe officially introduced and blessed its new Tyotkas Elder Center during a gathering in June, celebrating with food, music and good conversation. More than 100 people attended.

"This is absolutely beautiful," said Betty Porter, a tribal Elder. "I am so happy that this building was built for the Elders."

Construction started about a year ago, and the building has been open since March. Prior to doors opening, Elder services had been offered in the nearby Fort Kenai building.

The 6,500-square-foot facility, which is located on Mission Avenue in Old Town Kenai, faces south toward Tikahtnu, Cook Inlet, and the mouth of Kahtnu, the Kenai River.

Executive Council Chairperson Rosalie A. Tepp said the building is an investment in the tribe's Elders, and she thanked them for their encouragement throughout the project.

"Without you there to kick us in the butt to go forward, we would not be here today," Tepp said. "I truly and honestly thank you, and the Council thanks you."

The building is the fourth new facility the tribe has opened in Old Town in the past two years. In

2014, the tribe opened the 52,000-square-foot Dena'ina Wellness Center. In 2015, it opened a new Tribal Court-house next to the Dena'ina Wellness Center. And earlier this year, it opened a new social services and education building next to the center. Additionally, the tribe recently acquired another Old Town building to house safety and security staff as well as the Environmental Protection Program.

Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren said the center's location makes it convenient for Elders to access those services. She also credited Elders for inspiring the tribe to create an Old Town campus.

"Thank you for that vision," Peterson-Nyren said. "Here we are."

The building's interior features a fireplace, library, commercial-grade kitchen, and office space. But the focal point is a gathering space framed by large windows facing the water and mountains. The exterior combines light and dark browns, including a covered entrance supported by large wood pillars.



Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren carries a candle as she leads Father Thomas Andrew through the building during a Russian Orthodox blessing.

Shayna Franke, Elders Program Director, said it felt great to be in the new building and that the feedback has been positive.

She credited the Elders Committee and other Elders for their involvement in the building's planning. "This building really, truly came from the Elders themselves," Franke said. "The Elders gave a lot of feedback and did fantastic selections."

Porter, 86, who was born in Ninilchik, said the new facility is

impressive and she is amazed by the tribe's growth in recent years. She remembers when skiffs and sled dogs were primary forms of transportation to Kenai.

"I'm so proud of all they've done," Porter said of the tribe. "It's wonderful."

Father Thomas Andrew of Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church offered a building blessing. The afternoon also included performances by the Jabala'ina Dance Group and Del Dummi Drum Group. Attendees received a commemorative wood coin engraved with the phrase, "Naqantughedul – the tide is coming in."

Tribal Elder Phyllis Bookey recounted the growth and history of the Tyotkas program, which started about 30 years ago.

Between 2005 and 2006, Bookey said, the Elder program served 266 meals. In 2015, on the other hand, it served 9,168 meals.

The program was based at different locations amid that growth, from Ames Road to Old Town.

"Now we're home permanently," Bookey said.



Emilie Price reacts to putting her hand into a glove full of Crisco shortening during a science camp lesson called “blubber gloves.” Kids at the Early Childhood Center learned how fat keeps animals warm in cold water during the lesson.

Learning with ‘blubber gloves’ Tribal programs partner in the name of science and fun

The children stepped forward, one by one, pushing their hands into latex gloves full of Crisco shortening.

Then they knelt down, gloves on, plunging their palms and fingers into icy buckets of water.

“It feels so weird!”

“It’s kind of cold ...”

“How do they stay so warm?”

A partnership between the Early Childhood Center and Environmental Protection Program gave children between the ages of 8 and 10 an opportunity to participate in science-related activities in July. The partnership occurred during the center’s annual Summer Camp.

On this day, students learned about animal adaptations – including how marine mammals stay warm, and survive, in cold water. In a game called “Blubber Gloves,” children dipped their bare hands into buckets of ice water and tried to grab pennies off the bottom before their extremities grew numb. Then they repeated the process wearing Crisco-lined gloves, mimicking the insulating quality of blubber.

The children, all members of the

Otter Classroom as part of the center’s annual Summer Camp, had mixed reactions.

Some weren’t bothered by the frosty liquid, gloves or no gloves.

“It was cold water, but I like cold water,” said Mylee Barnette, 8.

Others were thankful to sport the blubber mitts.

“I felt really cold without one,” said Emilie Price, also 8.

And others focused on the mammals’ perspective.

“If they didn’t have any blubber, they would freeze,” said Shalia Mendhall, 9.

Brenda Trefon, who manages the tribe’s Environmental Protection Program, said the blubber-glove game and other program activities combine fun and education. During her time with the Otter Classroom students, she taught them the basics of science through a variety of activities.

“We want them to go back to school and think that science is fun and understand that they are really good at it,” Trefon said. “I want these guys to grow up and have a job like mine.”

Under a canopy of trees in the Alaska woods, Kya Ahlers sat with her knees tucked to her chin.

Steps away, one of her fellow campers pushed a yardstick toward the bottom of a hole and called out a sequence of numbers. Inside the hole, another camper shoveled clumps of dirt into a plastic bag, sealing it shut.

“It’s fun, it’s a cool experience,” Ahlers said, watching her peers as she took a break from digging. “I like seeing the different layers of the dirt, to see the history.”

In June, Ahlers attended Susten Archeology Camp hosted by the tribe’s Yaghanen Youth Program in partnership with Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. It was one of two Susten Camps Yaghanen hosted in June. The second, based in Cooper Landing with projects at the Crescent Creek Campground, occurred in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and Applied Archeology International.

The multiday camp, open to school-age children involved in the Yaghanen program, is designed to give students real-world experience in the archeology field while preserving Dena’ina culture and traditions.

“We are teaching the youth how to be stewards of the land and cultural sites,” said Michael Bernard, Yaghanen Program Director. “We also put an emphasis on living a substance free lifestyle.”

At the camp Ahlers attended, students slept in cabins at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Outdoor Education Center down Swanson River Road near Sterling. For two afternoons, the 18 participants split into groups and dug up soil at locations believed to be previously used by Dena’ina people.

The sites, tucked in the trees a few hundred feet off the road, featured small clusters of cache pits. Campers dug down in 10-centimeter intervals, recording distances at each level.

Ahlers’ team discovered what they believed to be pieces of charcoal near a large rock, possibly indicating an old fire pit, as well as a variety of vegetation.

Debbie Corbett, a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service archeologist, helped lead the activity. Although there was plenty to look for underground, Corbett said it’s not uncommon for digs to turn up few, if any, tangible objects.



Participants in one of the tribe’s Susten archaeology camps work in June on journal entries after laboring on a dig in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge near Swan Lake Road.

“With Dena’ina archeology you just don’t find much. They had a very perishable technology,” Corbett said. “Skin, wood, bark – they just don’t last. And there’s not much in the way of stone tools because they would have taken them and reused them until they were trash.”

Back at the education center after the dig was complete, campers processed soil samples. They placed the dirt in water and waited for the contents to float or sink.

Light objects – such as seeds, leaves and bits of charcoal – floated to the surface. Heavy objects – such as stones or fragments of tools – sunk to the bottom.

“We’re looking for things that might give us an idea of what’s happening in these pits,” Corbett said of the process.

Corbett, who has participated in Susten Camp since the mid-1990s, said it has moved locations over the years. Previous camps were held near the Russian River and in Kalifornsky Beach Village. The focus is always on Dena’ina history.

Corbett said it’s been a joy to participate for the past 20-plus years due in large part to the campers.

“They are cheerful, hardworking and sometimes challenging, but always a pleasure to be around,” she said. “I hope the kids get half as much out of it as I do every year.”

Construction Academy builds skills

Students worked last month at a Construction Academy conducted in partnership with the Kenaizte Indian Tribe’s Yaghanen Youth Programs and the Kenai Peninsula School District. During the academy, youth interns and older Yaghanen participants built a cabin that has been moved to Spirit Lake. The school district paid for the materials, labor and program supplies. Students who participated received school credit.

Fab Lab broadens horizons

The tribe recently sent students on two trips to Cook Inlet Tribal Council’s “Fab Lab” to explore careers and educational opportunities. These visits generated discussion about CITC’s Health Professions Opportunity Grant and designing a Healthcare Services track for the department’s Youth Internship program.

For Ahlers, 14, Susten Camp is one of many Yaghanen activities in which she has participated.

She previously attended Fish Camp and also competes on the Native Youth Olympics team. She enjoys all the activities but especially likes the Native Youth Olympics.

“It’s my favorite because it’s lots of fun and there’s all these different events you can do,” Ahlers said. “It’s not like other sports where you don’t talk to the other team and everyone is competitive. You help other teams and help them get better.”

Ole Watson, 11, attended camp for the first time. The Anchorage resident said learning about archeology was the best part and that, thanks to camp, he now understands the difference between archeology and paleontology.

He also enjoyed playing Frisbee and “King of the Hill” at the education center.

And the Dena’ina history component was not lost on him, either.

“They made fires and pits so they could store their fish for winter,” Watson said. “They would put grass and bark around it. First they would put in fish, then grass, so the fish wouldn’t freeze into a big block. Once one layer would freeze, they put another layer on.”

Fellow camper Alex Octuk said camp was a highlight of his summer. He learned that Dena’ina people laid flat rocks inside fires, heated them up, and used the surface for cooking.

Octuk also compared camp to a mining trip he took with his father to Alaska’s Canyon Creek, where they searched for gold.

“The digging is really similar,” Octuk said. “I was using a small shovel and we are using small tools with this.”

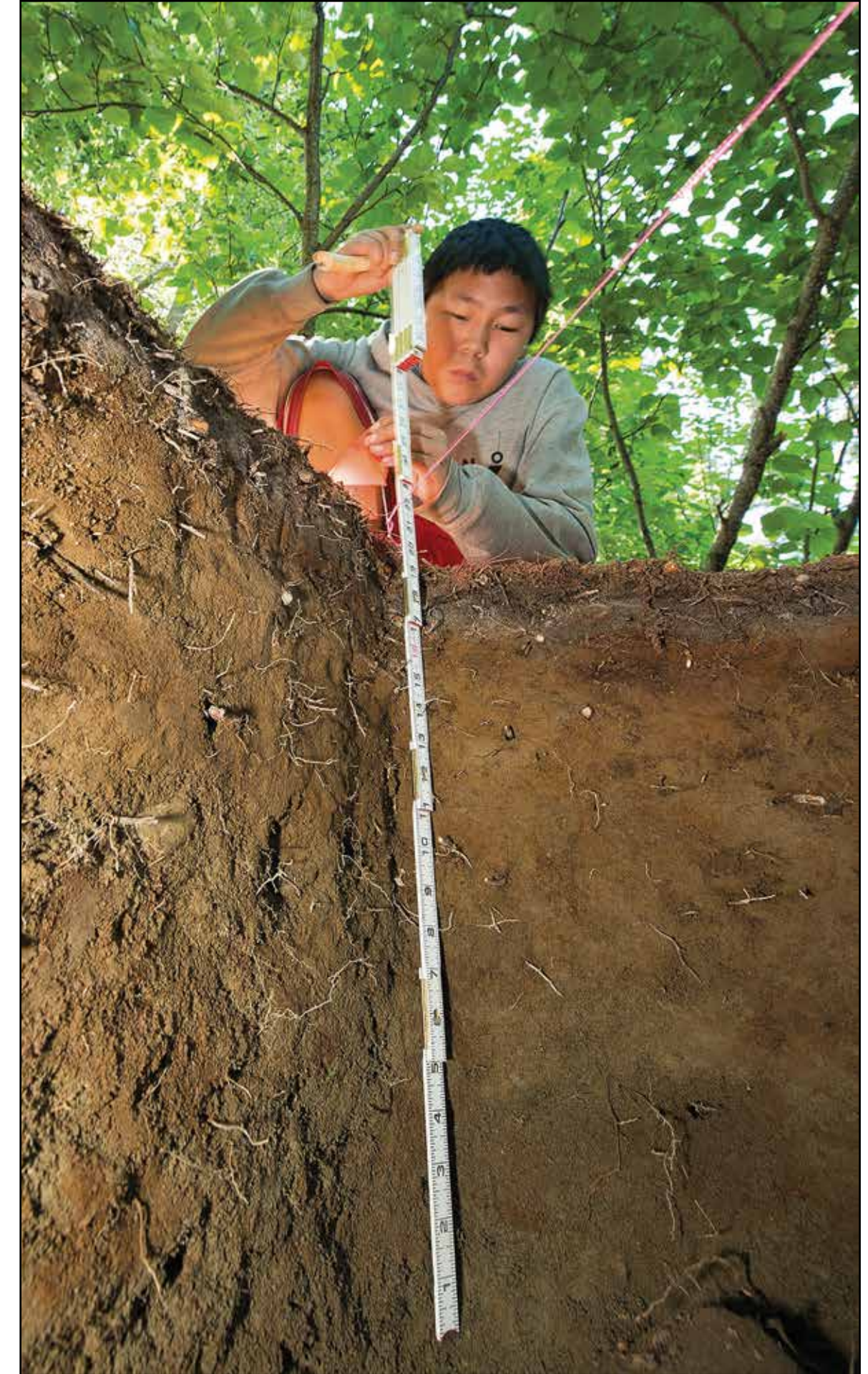
On the final day of the first camp, participants made PowerPoint presentations at the Kenai Wildlife Refuge Headquarters in Soldotna.

They overviewed their findings from the dig and explained what they learned at camp. Some focused on plant and insect identification. Others articulated their new-found knowledge of Dena’ina culture.

Afterward, campers posed for photos and began to say their goodbyes.

Watson, the 11-year-old from Anchorage, said he expects to return to camp next year.

“I would recommend it to anyone,” he said.

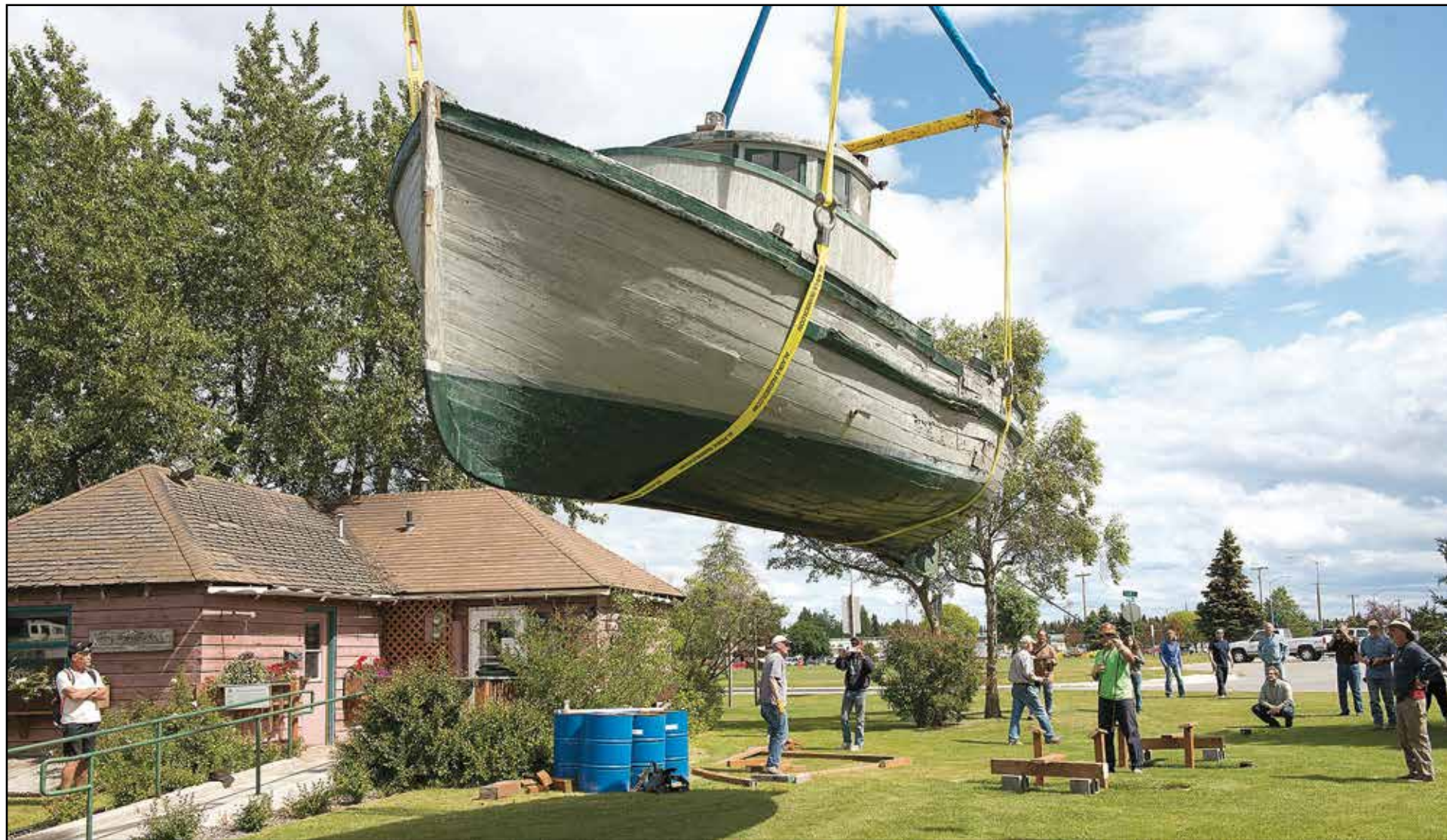


Above, Nerius Wilson-Phillips takes a measurement in one of the holes campers dug during the archaeology camp.



At left, campers pose at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge headquarters building in Soldotna.

A new home for the old Georgia J



Volunteers from Peak Oilfield Services and other companies help move the F/V Georgia J from a trailer to her new berth next to Moose Meat John's cabin in Old Town Kenai earlier this summer. At top, Brian Johansen watches as his dad's boat is eased into place.

Tribal member helps preserve history with restoration of commercial fishing boat

Six decades have passed, but Brian Johansen still remembers the day he learned an important lesson aboard the Georgia J.

He was young, 9 or 10 years old, commercial salmon fishing in Cook Inlet with his father Alexander "Ike" Johansen. The weather had come up, a cold wind, and their net was wrapped in the propeller.

Soon the 28-foot Georgia J, built in 1929 and powered by a Chris-Craft gasoline engine, was adrift in the choppy saltwater.

"We couldn't get the net out of the propeller," said the younger Johansen, a tribal member.

As the story goes, Ike built a fire in the boat's oil stove, got it roaring hot, and stripped naked. He lathered himself from head to toe with a 3-pound can of Crisco grease, laid out clothes and towels on the bed, and tied a safety line to himself and a cleat fastened to the stern of the boat.

Then, with a butcher knife between his teeth and the wind slapping waves against the hull, he moved toward the railing.

"He went over the side of the stern of that boat and went under in that weather, and cut that net out of that propeller," son said of father.

"In all my years of commercial fishing, I never got web in the wheel because that was a lesson to me. And he told me then and there, 'Don't ever let it happen to you.'"

In June, the Georgia J arrived at its final resting place when a crane hoisted the boat off a trailer and placed it on wood struts outside the Kenai Historical Society office in Old Town Kenai. The boat's most recent owners, Dave and Linda Hutchings, donated the vessel after storing it for years at Sports Lake in Soldotna.

The Georgia J's green and grey paint is peeling now, its hull is splintered in spots, and the engine hasn't run for years. But the Bristol



Brian Johansen holds a photo of his dad, Alex "Ike" Johansen, standing in front of the F/V Georgia J that was made in 1963.

Bay Double-Ender that plied Alaska's waters during the heyday of commercial fishing will be restored and preserved.

June Harris, President of the Kenai Historical Society, said plans

are in the works to create a plaque recognizing the Hutchings as well as an informational sign offering a history of the boat. Both will be placed near the vessel.

"We're excited to have this piece of history donated to the society," Harris said.

According to the Center for Wooden Boats, the Bristol Bay Double-Ender was originally designed for rowing and sailing. The boats were popular in the Bristol Bay fishery during the first half of

the 20th century because motors were not allowed until 1951.

Ike Johansen purchased the Georgia J in 1955. The boat still had a mast hasp, wood tiller and set of long oars, but within a year, Ike had it motorized and ready to fish in Cook Inlet.

Back then, business was strong at the Libby, McNeill and Libby Cannery on the south bank of the Kenai River. The cannery, which changed names multiple times over the years, employed many Dena'ina people and was a hub for Cook Inlet fisherman such as the Johansens.

Brian Johansen said that his father fished on the Georgia J for about 10 years.

For a time the boat was identifiable only by a number, but Ike decided to name it after his wife, who died last winter. Ike died at the age of 74 in the 1990s.

As a crane lowered the Georgia J into place at the historical society, Brian Johansen thanked those who contributed to the project, saying it had been a long time coming and that it felt good to finally see the plan come together.

"I know dad would be proud and so would my mother," he said.



Longtime family friend Jack Porter reminisces with Fiolcla Wilson during her 100th birthday party at Heritage Place in Soldotna.

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years, for inspiring her to learn to bake homemade pies and breads, and for helping her put frosting on Christmas cookies, and more.

"A truly amazing mom, grandmother and wife," Connie Wilson said.

Hakkinen, a longtime family friend who grew up near the Wilson home and often visited to play with Wilson's children, said she has always been "Mrs. Wilson" to him.

He said he always enjoyed going to her home, not just to play with the kids, but because the meat soup and fish soup was always cooking.

"And it was delicious," he said.

Another longtime family friend, Jack Porter, said his mother and Wilson were close friends despite living in different areas of Alaska. Porter said his mother lived in Anchorage but would travel to Kenai, even before there were roads, to visit Wilson.

And Wilson would do the same,

visiting Anchorage.

"I feel that I've been privileged to grow up with our family and your family and we've been lifelong friends, and I think we'll always be," Porter said, speaking to Wilson.

Zirul, Wilson's niece, also remembered visiting Wilson's home as a child. She played Wilson's piano and made trips with her to Anchorage.

And Zirul said that Wilson didn't hesitate to talk sense into her when she needed it.

"Auntie Fiolcla always took special care of me," Zirul said.

Bookey, Wilson's daughter, said her mother moved into the Heritage place a little more than a year ago.

Heritage Placer activity coordinator Aud Walaszek said Wilson is the fourth current resident to reach the 100-year mark and has been a pleasure to have in the building.

"She's just the dearest lady and such a sweetheart," Walaszek said.

Transportation available through Tyotkas

The Tyotkas Elder Center offers transportation across the tribe's service area every weekday for specific purposes.

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, limited transportation is available to and from the center for lunch service. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, limited transportation is available for basic errands such as appointments and shopping. Those wishing to utilize the Tuesday and Thursday service should call at least 24 hours ahead of time so arrangements can be made; those who do will receive preference.

To enroll in transportation services, please call Tyotkas at 907-335-7280 or stop by the building to complete the necessary paperwork. The center serves Alaska Native and American Indian people 55 years and up.

Early Childhood Center enjoying a busy summer

The regular school year might be over, but students and staff at the Early Childhood Center are keeping busy. Here are a few recent highlights:

Two community events, two booths

In June, the center hosted booths at a pair of popular community events. First there was the Kenai River Festival, where staff members provided information about the center's programs and services and handed out applications. Activities during the event included stamping fish pictures with celery, beading and an obstacle course. Then came "Fun in the Midnight Sun" as part of Nikiski Days, where the center offered beading activities as well as program information and applications.



Students visit the animal shelter.

Summer camp offers fun, healthy activities

Children participating in ECC's Summer Camp kept busy in June and into July. Preschool-age participants visited the Kenai animal shelter, learning about animal safety. Other activities included a game called "Bucket Ball," science-related fun, walks, and more. Older students have been wearing pedometers to track the distance they walk, the goal being to walk 50 miles before camp ends.

Applications being accepted for next year

The center is currently accepting applications for the 2016-2017 school year. The program is proud to serve families from many different backgrounds, Native and non-Native, low income and not, as well as children with disabilities. Children must be 3 or 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2016, to be eligible. The no-fee program operates Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information or to schedule a school tour, please call the school's main line at 907-335-7260 or Sasha Fallon, Community Partnership Coordinator, at 907-335-7259.

Yaghali Nusdlan

He or she got well



Wild food harvested in the spring includes horse tail, fiddlehead ferns and fireweed shoots.

A healthy harvest

Woodlands workshop, and other activities, promote wellness through wild foods



Traditional Healer Estelle Thomson and Wellness Assistant Bessie Phillip discuss wild foods including fiddleheads and fireweed shoots during a workshop at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

The Wellness Department recently hosted a two-day "Woodlands" activity, offering a field trip and workshop on the nutritional qualities and cultural significance of wild food.

During the fieldtrip, participants spent a morning outside learning to identify different plants and flowers. With a focus on harvesting etiquette, they picked fireweed, fiddlehead ferns and horsetail shoots.

Wellness staff then pickled the harvest overnight and shared samples with the group the following day.

As they sampled the fare, participants received nutritional information and consumption guidelines

while learning the health benefits of each plant. They also discussed how Dena'ina people have traditionally used the plants.

Throughout summer, the department also has been offering free transportation to the Farmers Fresh Market Soldotna Food Bank.

Additionally, Wellness Director Deb Nyquist said wild foods will be the theme of the Harvest Moon Local Food Festival in August. The annual event will include workshops and activities hosted at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

To get involved in wellness activities, contact the center at 907-335-7500.

Travel reimbursement available to some un'ina

Customers – un'ina – who are referred from the Dena'ina Wellness Center to the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage may be reimbursed for travel incurred in a personal vehicle.

To receive a reimbursement, un'ina must complete an authorization form and have it signed by providers at both facilities. The form then must be submitted to the Dena'ina Wellness Center within 30 days of the appointment. Un'ina can only receive one reimburse-

ment per round trip, regardless of the number of appointments attended during the trip.

Medicaid recipients are not eligible for travel reimbursement. Travel to dental, optical, physical therapy and behavioral health appointments cannot be reimbursed, either.

Reimbursement requests are processed quarterly and may take up to six months to be paid.

For additional information, please contact the center at 907-335-7500.



Emergency room compensation explained

It's a Saturday night, you don't feel well and you decide to go to the emergency room. But you don't have health insurance.

Will the Dena'ina Wellness Center pay for your ER visit?

The short answer is, "maybe."

The Dena'ina Wellness Center can pay for ER visits for uninsured customers – un'ina – only under specific circumstances. It does not automatically cover every visit.

For the center to pay, an ER visit must be deemed a medical emergency and necessary to prevent death or serious impairment such as the loss of a limb, said Dr. John Molina, Director of Health Systems. The center may not be able to pay for the visit if it doesn't meet that criteria. That determination is ultimately made after a Dena'ina Wellness Center provider reviews the records

from the ER.

Un'ina have the option of filing an appeal if a payment is denied, and all appeals are reviewed by a committee. There is a limited amount of federal funding to pay for ER visits, Molina added, and any payments issued must adhere to federal guidelines.

"We do take those appeals letters very seriously," Molina said. "We look at the whole situation and make sure that we are very thorough in the appeals process."

Molina said Central Peninsula Hospital offers a financial assistance program and that the center is happy to work with un'ina to look for alternate resources.

For additional information or if you have questions, please contact the Dena'ina Wellness Center's benefits coordinator office at 907-335-7562 or 907-335-7563.

Wellness Center appointments: helpful tips and information

Medical professionals at the Dena'ina Wellness Center recommend calling ahead to schedule an appointment.

That's the best approach to take if you are a Dena'ina Wellness Center customer – un'ina – wishing to see a doctor for routine, non-urgent issues.

"We always want un'ina, ideally, to see their primary care provider," said Jen Jarvis, interim primary care health services administrator. "They need to call in to make that appointment. That helps our teams better prepare for them."

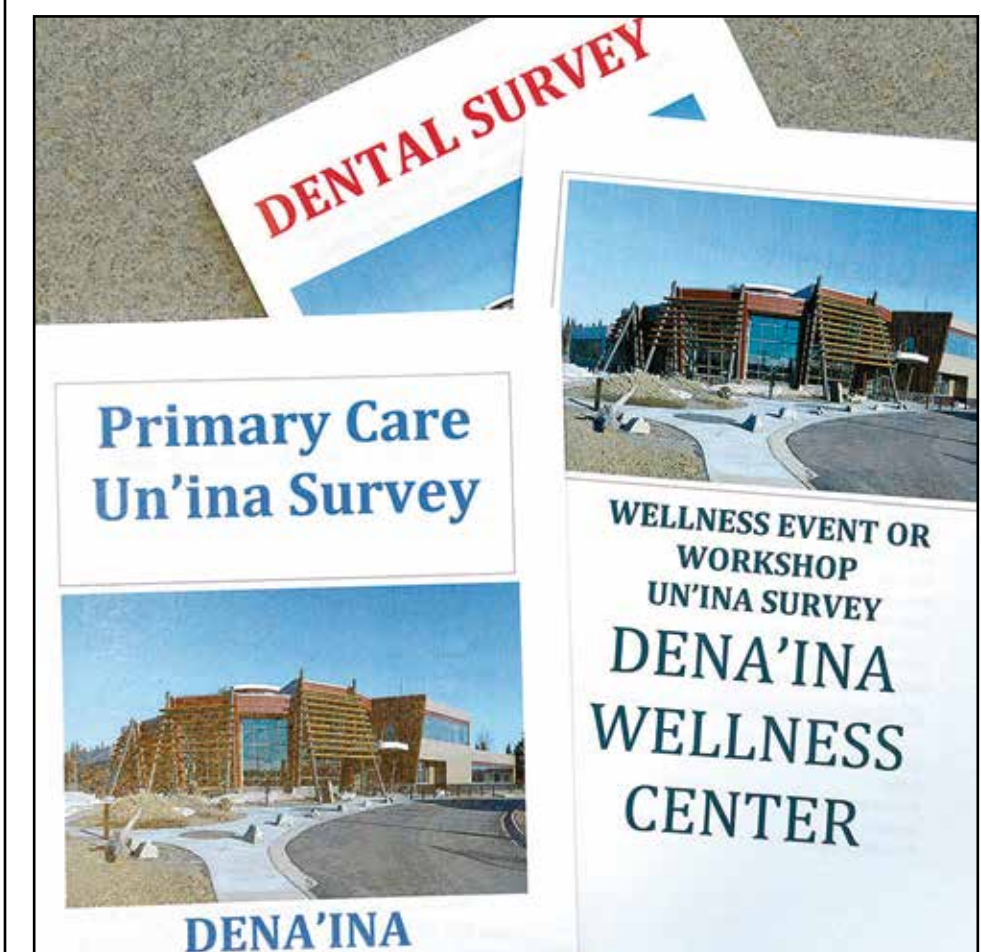
If the un'ina's primary care provider is not available that day, a same-day appointment with the walk-in provider may be available. Call in starting at 7:30

a.m. to secure an appointment to cover issues such as burns, infections, sprains and strains, and other more pressing, out-of-the-ordinary issues. Though a person can always walk in for an appointment, staff recommends calling first. Un'ina who receive a walk-in slot must remain present until their appointment time.

Jarvis emphasized it's best to call ahead and get on the schedule.

"Your primary care provider is going to be able to take the best care of you," Jarvis said. "They know you, they know your conditions."

Jarvis said to proceed directly to the emergency room, not the wellness center, during medical emergencies. (See related article on this page.)



New un'ina feedback surveys now available

There's a new option available for customers – un'ina – who wish to submit feedback about their visits to the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Paper-format surveys are now available at the registration desk in the main gathering area and at the check-in desk upstairs near the Dental Department.

The surveys, which are anonymous, range from five to eight questions depending on the nature of an un'ina's appointment. The surveys comple-

ment an iPad based survey already available to un'ina. The surveys are reviewed by management and used to help improve customer service.

Dr. John Molina, Director of Health Systems, said the more input un'ina give, the better.

"We encourage our un'ina to fill one out at every visit," Molina said.

For additional information, contact Michael Cruz, Director of Quality, Compliance and Privacy, at 907-335-7571.

The Big Picture



From left, Jon Ross explains his Raven Plaza installation at the Dena’ina Wellness Center to Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott, Kenaitze Executive Council Secretary Liisia Blizzard, Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren, Toni Mallott, Council Member Clinton Lageson, Council Member Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Council Chairperson Rosalie A. Tepp, Council Member Bernadine Atchison and Council Member Wayne Wilson during a tour of Kenaitze facilities in Kenai. Read more on Page 3.

Our Mission

To assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

Our Values

These are the beliefs and principles that define our people and will assure our future as a tribe:

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

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.

Addresses and phone numbers

Administration Building
150 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7200
907-335-7239 fax

Early Childhood Center
130 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7260

Tyotkas Elders Center
1000 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7280

Yaghanen Youth Programs
35105 K-B Dr., Soldotna, AK 99669
907-335-7290

Environmental Program
509 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7287

Dena’ina Wellness Center
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7500

Na’ini Family and Social Services, Education and Career Development
510 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7600

Tribal Court
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7217

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