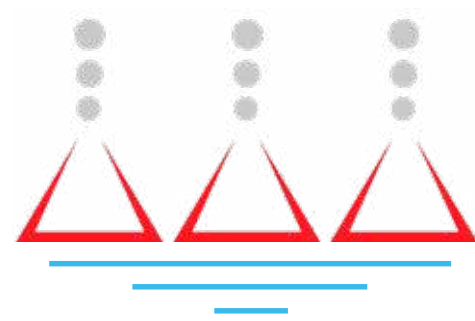




The Counting Cord

Nitnuqeyishi



July–August 2019

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE NEWSLETTER

Council institutes ‘living wage’

The Tribal Council in May passed a resolution raising the wage for all of the Tribe’s entry-level positions to \$16.01 an hour.

Speaking through the resolution, the Council says it is staying true to the Tribe’s mission, “To assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.”

“It’s not a ‘minimum wage.’ We wanted to call it a ‘living wage,’” said Clinton Lageson, Tribal Council Treasurer. “With the Tribe being one of the biggest employers on the Kenai Peninsula, we want to lead the way in taking care of our entry-level employees.”

Wayne D. Wilson Jr., Tribal Council Chair, said one of the goals is to generate more interest in the Tribe’s entry-level jobs, and generate a larger pool of highly qualified candidates for all positions.

“We want to be able to support all employees, but also have a way to have Tribal Members come back to the Tribe and have a good wage.”

Lageson said the idea for a living wage originated with the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance Commission before making its way to the Council.

Another goal of the wage increase, Lageson said, is to provide opportunities for employees to pursue additional education and professional development – something that may be difficult to do for a person working multiple jobs to make ends meet.

“How do we expect them to be able to further their education if they’re worried about where their next meal is coming from and taking care of their family?” Lageson said.

The resolution declares the wage of \$16.01 “a sustainable wage that builds security for an income that supports their personal needs at an entry level of employment with the Tribe.”



Tribal Council members and staff cut a ceremonial ribbon to celebrate the opening of the Tribe’s new harvest shop during the Opening of the Net in June. Pictured are Sasha Jackson; Council Treasurer Clinton Lageson; Council Chair Wayne D. Wilson Jr.; Council Vice Chair Bernadine Atchison; Council Secretary Diana Zirul; Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commission Chair James Segura, Council Member Liisia Blizzard and Logan Wik.

Reclaiming culture

Tribe celebrates 30th year of educational fishery

As the breeze coming off Cook Inlet carried smoke from the campfire across the beach, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe celebrated the educational fishery’s 30th season.

Paul Karaffa, who describes himself as “one of the originals” at the fishery, remembers when the campfire was the only amenity on the beach just south of the Kenai River mouth.

“The fishery was absolutely nothing, there was nothing here. There was the net and a little campfire, and that was it,” Karaffa said. “It sure has changed, but this is good.”

In fact, the Tribe was cutting the ribbon on the new Harvest Shop, the latest addition to the facilities at the beach site. The 30-by-50-foot building will give the Tribe the ability to expand its harvest program. In addition to plenty of space to process fish and game when the weather turns cold, it



Jake Kooly shows Rylynd Lageson how to fillet salmon during the gathering.

will eventually have walk-in coolers and freezers, providing space to store what is harvested.

Jake Kooly, Tribal Harvest Program Supervisor, said he is

most impressed with the number of organizations that supported the project, from other Alaska Native organizations to non-profit foundations.

The June 17 celebration opened with a performance from the Jabila’ina Dancers. Tribal Council Member Liisia Blizzard recounted the fishery’s history, followed by the Harvest Shop ribbon cutting. Traditional drumming on the Heartbeat of Mother Earth drum accompanied the meal.

“Today is a good day to have a bite of fresh salmon and be around people,” said Valery Heney.

Heney said it was her first time coming to the Opening of the Net in several years, but was there for “friends and fish.”

Karaffa, wearing the jacket he was given when he first started working at the net, said the operation was an all-volunteer effort

See **OPENING**, p.5

Do you know these people? Help us update their address

Tribal Member Services is seeking addresses for the following Tribal Members. To update your contact information, please call Jessica Crump at 907-335-7204 or email jcrump@kenaitze.org.

Christopher Anderson
Dianne Arendt
Lori Ashton
Sonya Astad
Allan Baldwin
Daniel Baldwin
Jonathon Baldwin
Raymond Batt III
Maximillian Baty
Jackson Bergmann
Madison Bergmann
Joel Blatchford
Amanda Bliss
Claude Bocatch
Hilma Bocatch
Joseph Bogard
Autumn Boling
Camryn Boulette
Christopher Brandt
Jonathan Brandt
Erica Branson
Hunter Brown
James Brown
Jordan Brown
Kendal Brown
Kesley Brown
Danielle Browning
Richard Brunni
Walter Burt
Manual Busane
Mariano Busane
Margaret Byron
Christopher Callender
Kayleen Cameron-Levine

Jennifer Campbell
Michael Carlough
William Carlough
Leila Carroll
Kenneth Chaffin
Marie Chaffin
Tina Chaffin
Nathanyl Connell
Hazel Costanios
Denise Cox
Justin Cox
Stacy Cronin
James Cross
Samantha Cross
James Cross Jr
Megan Cunningham
Jason Curtis
Edward Darien
Robert Darien
Lisa Darien-Hileman
Rebecca Davis
Rosa Davis
Robert Davis, Jr.
Angela Davis-Coilton
Clifford Dean
Lisa Dean
Tracy Deitz
Emelie Demidoff
Michele Denesha
Elsie Dexter
Clifford Dolchok
Mack Dolchok
Christopher Edelman
Drasanna Edelman
Jay Edelman
Edwin Edelman Jr
Courtney Edwards
Jamie Edwards
Jarrod Edwards
David Engelstad
Patricia England
Daniel Faucett
Randon Flood
Richard Flood
Robert Flood
Jolene Force

Louis Forstner V
Ashley Frost
Gabrielle Frost
Michael Frost
Brian Frostad
Christopher Frostad
Katheryn Frostad
Vivian Gaines
Amber Gardner
Tanner Geiser
Elijah Gesh
Amea Gibson-Rehder
Andrew Goecke
Hannah Goecke
Heather Goecke
William Green
Mathew Gregoire
Cameron Grothe
Garrett Grothe
Linda Guenther
Jessica Hanna
Joseph Hansen
Nelson Harker
Danielle Hartnett
Nathaniel Hartnett
Samuel Hatfield
Emily Hawley
Preston Hawley
Priscilla Hawley
Sentilla Hawley
Virginia Hoak
David Holzwarth
Jessica Huf
Natasha Huf
Taylor Huf
Neil Hunter
Raymond Ivanoff
Naomi Jackinsky
Jay Jennings
Tamara Johansen
Austin Johnson
Kristin Johnson
Micah Johnson
Ranee Johnson
Ryan Johnson
Alison Jones

Hali Jones
Josephine Jones
Neal Jones
Michael Juliussen
Samuel Juliussen
Winter Juliussen
Zane Juliussen
Anthony Kellum
Victoria Kelly
Mary Kent
Elizabeth Ketah
Marshall Kidder
Travis Kidder
Jonathan Knight
Corbin Kooly
Pamela Kooly
Zachary Kooly
Douglas Lecceardone
Henry Lecceardone
Cindy Lesamiz
Julie Levesque
Ryan Lewis
Cherie Lindstrom
Lynda Longoria
Amber Lorenzo
Anthony Lorenzo
Gregory Lorenzo
Samuel Lorenzo
Victorio Lorenzo
Michael Lott
Roman Lott
Calvin Mack
Gerald Mahle Jr.
Gerald Mahle Sr
Darla Mamaloff
Sandra Marcus
Nadine Maupin
Lane McCurdy
Shawn McCurdy
Freddie Mcneal
Marika Mcneal
Tijah Mcneal
Anthony Mesa
Bernadette Mesa
Violet Mesa
John Miller

Mikayla Miller
Natasha Miller
Brittney Mills
Grace Mills
Casey Mitchell
Debra Moore
Richard Mueller
Karina Munson
Brandi Murphy
Nicole Murray
Christine Navarro
Jack Navarro
Richard Nevitt
Michael Norbett
Nathan Ollestad
Alexis Oskolkoff
Kayla Osness
Debra Page
Jared Page
Jayna Page
Kerissa Perata
Delores Petterson
Lucy Pitto
Snowydel Poage
Jenna Pomeroy
Roger Randall
Arthur Raymond
Enoch Reams
Autumn Richardson-Card
Christina Rifredi
Grier Roberts
Darick Robison
Steven Rodrigues
Lily Ross
James Rouse III
Jon Sacaloff
Nick Sacaloff
James Sanders
Alvaro Sandoval
Veronica Sandoval
James Scaggs
Susan Schaller
Samuel Schimmel
Sarah Scott
Carol Seibert
Michael Seibert

Kendra Shepherd
Maryah Showalter
Lori Sloan
James Smagge
Erica Smith
Winston Smyth
Connor Sniff
Staci Stangarone
Randi Stevens
Jolene Sutherland
Michelle Sutherland
Jonathan Swan
Emma Tanner
Jeffrey Taylor
John Taylor
Crystal Tilley
Kelli Toledo - Frostad
Barbara Tonnema
Sarah Tressler
Logan Trigg
Taha Trigg
Courtney Tweedy
Tristin Vitalis
Megan Webb
Ragan Webber
Heather Wenzel
Valeria Wessel
Norma Wheeler
Jordan Wik
Shyanne Williams
Raven Willoya-Williams
Brandon Wilson
Brandon Wilson
Frances Wilson
Sarah Wilson
Stephan Wilson
Joshua Wolf
Norman Wood Jr
Heidi Wright
Jesse Wright
Neshonie Wright
Alyssa Wright-Nelson
Devin Zajac

Health Board looks at ways to help Tribal Members thrive

In May, Mary Ann Mills, Vice Chair, Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Health Board, Dawn Nelson, Executive Director of Tribal Administration, and I attended South-central Foundation's Cook Inlet Tribal Health Leadership meeting.

Discussions included the significance of the impact of self-determination on Tribal health throughout the region and each Tribe's ability to develop health and wellness programs that reflect the needs of their membership. Topics included climate change, affordable housing, spiritual wellness and the impact of each of these on the ability for Tribal Members to "thrive not just survive." This year's closure of the Tribal fisheries was also discussed as well as its impact on food sovereignty.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Robert Mitchell and his wife, Kelsie, who arrived from Texas in early July. Dr. Mitchell began seeing patients on July 8 as planned, and will also serve as the Dena'ina Wellness Center's Medical

Director.

The Health Board is also pleased to announce that Marion Ruth, FNP, has also been hired and will begin serving as DWC's third nurse practitioner in early August, bringing the total permanent primary care providers to five. The Board and Council are committed to developing contracts with the primary care providers in order to ensure continuity in care and to strengthen the relationships between the providers and their patients.

Jim Lamb has accepted the position as the Executive Director of Health Systems, effective July 8. Jim is a familiar face at the Tribe as for the past four months he has served as the Revenue Cycle Consultant, assisting Ed Keough, Finance Director, in identifying process issues with revenue cycle infrastructure. Jim has served in various leadership roles in the tribal health system during his past employment with Choctaw Nation, the Alaska Native Tribal

Health Consortium and South-central Foundation as well as the legislative process in Indian Health Services.

In June, Mary Ann Mills assisted in coordinating the Substance-related Addictive Disorder Conference, which was sponsored by the Tribe and held at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage. The speaker, Carl Dawson, is a licensed professional counselor in the state of Missouri, and is nationally known for his lectures in the field of substance use disorders, treatment and recovery. The Tribal Council has committed resources to further develop programs related to substance use disorders and treatment and feel that programs of this nature will assist our providers and staff in successfully working with our un'ina as needed.

Respectfully,

Diana L. Zirul
Chair, Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Health Board

From the editor's desk

The Counting Cord is a publication for members of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and the people served by the Tribe.

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 CHAIR

Hello,

This summer has had some amazing weather so far. Alaska has seen many records fall this year because of extreme high temperatures. Along with the great weather, we've seen a strong early run of reds return as well. It's always good to see the first fish jumping in the river.

I want to thank all of the people who attended the Opening of the Net celebration at the beach in June and the Quarterly Meeting barbecue that was held at our new Beluga Lookout bluff property. It's always good to see Tribal Members, family and friends at these special events that we have throughout the year. One of my goals has always been to bring our people together more often so that we enjoy each other's company with great food and a nice environment.

We had a couple big things happen in June. First, we officially became debt-free by paying off the Toyon Apartments. I'd like to give a special thanks to staff, the Finance Committee and Tribal Council for all the hard work that has allowed us to accomplish this.

The second big accomplishment was



Wayne D. Wilson Jr.

creating a minimum living wage for the Tribe. \$16.01 is the new starting wage for entry level positions at the Tribe.

We have exciting news to share with you. Dr. Robert Mitchell has arrived and started seeing patients on July 8. A permanent physician has been something the Council has wanted since the very beginning. We are in search of another

doctor as well.

The Council has hired a new Executive Director of Health of Systems. Jim Lamb started on July 8. We have filled many more key positions as of late. The Council's goal is to make changes that will continually improve and provide the best services possible through hard work and determination. Our mission, "To assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever," is of the utmost importance.

I hope the summer continues to have great weather so we can all enjoy a little bit of sun.

Sincerely,

Wayne D. Wilson Jr.
Tribal Council Chair



Julie Wheeler, Vice President of First National Bank Alaska's Kenai branch, calls to verify the outstanding balance of the Tribe's Toyon Apartment building loan as Tribal Council Secretary Diana Zirul and Council Chair Wayne D. Wilson Jr. wait to pay off the last of the Tribe's debt in June. The Tribe is now debt-free.

Take a close look at state's budget

I would like to ask each of you to take the time to look at Governor Dunleavy's FY 2020 budget and if you see any inconsistencies to contact your representative of the State of Alaska. I know we all have many other things we would like to be doing this summer, but this budget issue could cause major economic effects across all of our traditional lands. I have listed the link to the FY 2020 budget below and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

State of Alaska FY 2020 Budget:

<https://omb.alaska.gov/>

When we are a cohesive group of people we can achieve our mission, to assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever. I thank you and hope everyone is having a wonderful summer.

Kind regards,

Clinton Ray Lageson
Treasurer, Kenaitze Tribal Council
Cell: 907-342-9150
Email: crldageson@gmail.com

TRIBAL COUNCIL

Wayne D. Wilson Jr.
Chair
wwilsonjr3@gmail.com



Bernadine Atchison
Vice-Chair
batchison@kenaitze.org



Clinton Lageson
Treasurer
crlageson@gmail.com



Diana L. Zirul
Secretary
alaskadi@pentic.com



Liisia Blizzard
Council Member
lblizzard@kenaitze.org



Mary Ann Mills
Council Member
mmills42346@gmail.com





Carl Dawson uses a photo of a cross section of a human brain to discuss how drugs and alcohol affect users.

Tribe co-sponsors addiction conference

Kenaitze Indian Tribe, in partnership with Alaska Pacific University, brought Carl Dawson to Anchorage to present a three-day Substance Related-Addictive Disorders Conference in June. Dawson has consulted and lectured on the topic for more than 40 years.

“A lot of people have gone through trauma and a lot of people have gone through substance abuse,” Council Member Mary Ann Mills said. “This is a good way of understanding it.”

Dawson holds a Master of Science degree in Community Mental Health Clinical Psychology from Pittsburg State University. He is licensed as a Professional Counselor in the state of Missouri and is certified as a Counselor and a Master Addiction Counselor. His presentations focus on the psychology of the brain and how drugs work in the body. He believes it is necessary to understand the biology of addiction before treating the psychology of addiction.

Dawson responded to a number of questions during the conference and had a chance to learn from those in attendance, as well. He expressed an appreciation for Alaska Native traditional knowledge, especially with respect to the relationship between addictions and trauma.

“I am learning how much your culture is focused on trauma and appreciate how traditional knowledge already addresses the topic,” Dawson told the audience. “I am learning from you too.”

He said healing from trauma is like connecting dots to create a photo.

“Native American traditions are all about connecting the dots. One of the reasons you hang on to your traditions is they keep you connected.”

Members of the Tribal Council and staff from Behavioral Health and Na’ini Family and Social Services attended the conference, alongside others from the health care community.

Mills first heard Dawson speak at a training for federal, state and tribal judges. She wanted to bring him to Alaska because many people here have experienced substance abuse and many more have experienced trauma.

She agreed with Dawson’s approach – that to understand the two, it is necessary to understand how the brain works and how substances and trauma affect the brain.

“I consider Carl a healer before any (of his) degrees,” Mills said. “He’s doing exactly what we’re trying to do (at Kenaitze).”



Tribal Council Vice Chair Bernadine Atchison, Council Member Liisia Blizzard, Council Secretary and Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina Health Board Chair Diana Zirul, Council Member Mary Ann Mills, Carl Dawson, Natalya Oskoloff and Mari Guerra of Na’ini Family and Social Services were among those representing Kenaitze at the conference.

The conference was structured to appeal to behavioral health clinicians, as well as those from social services and governance in attendance.

APU supplied 2.4 continuing education units to health and social service professionals.

Dawson encouraged those who are affected by substance-related addictions to seek help. “Be courageous and reach out.”

Dawson will be back in Alaska in September for a training offered by Kenaitze Tribal Court in partnership with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services. Find details on the opportunity by searching for “Combating the Impact of Substance Use and Abuse in Alaska” at <https://www.eventbrite.com>.

OPENING, FROM P. 1

back then. The fish that came to the net went to Elders first.

“The Elders would get theirs, and then we would open it to everybody else,” Karaffa said.

While Karaffa may be one of the originals, one of the newest members of the fishery staff said he is looking forward to the season. Jarett Wilson recently started as a Tribal Fishery Education Assistant.

“I’ve fished out toward Kasilof with my grandfather. After high school, Jake hooked me up with a job down here,” Wilson said. “It feels good to fish down here, and be a part of it.”

In her remarks, Blizzard recounted the historical challenges faced by the Kenaitze people – the

impacts of Russian and European contact, outbreaks of diseases, and the loss of land, language and culture.

“We have survived the loss of our traditional way of life, of hunting, fishing and gathering food to feed our families, but we are still here,” Blizzard said.

Blizzard said the Tribe’s fishery provides much more than salmon – it is a way to reclaim Kenaitze culture.

“We have regained our culture, our identity, and pride in our heritage. We are teaching our young the language, songs and traditions of our Elders,” Blizzard said.

Blizzard said she is grateful for the Elders who had the vision to pursue the fishery, but emphasized the need to protect it in the future.



Kenaitze’s Heartbeat of Mother Earth drum group performs during the opening.

“We need to be very vigilant in caring for this fishery and for our environment. Our future genera-

tions are depending on us to leave them clean water, clean air and an abundance of salmon.”



Tip-top spruce pickings

At top, Rose Anowlic, right, and others pick spruce tips near Beaver Loop in Kenai during a field trip from the Dena’ina Wellness Center. “One thing I really like about Alaska is being able to go out and harvest,” Anowlic said.

Above, spruce tips are ready to pick early in the summer.

At right, tender spruce tips can be used in baked goods, to season salt and more.



Learning from the pros

Archaeologists share knowledge, skills at Susten camp

Participants in the Yaghanen Youth Program's Susten Archaeology Camp spent a week documenting a site along the shore of Kenai Lake at Trail River Campground, near Moose Pass.

Erosion there has exposed items of interest to archaeologists, including some small animal bones.

"This site is really cool," said Kya Ahlers, a camp participant. "It's a lot bigger than ones we've been to before. There's a lot of fire-cracked rock, bones, a big pit and another cache pit."

Camp participants were spread out along about a hundred yards of shoreline, profiling spots where erosion had exposed layers of soil and a potential midden. The young archaeologists also began to document the remains of a cabin from the early 1900s.

The site was just one of the unique aspects of this particular Susten camp; with a half-dozen professional archaeologists on site, there was essentially a 2:1 instructor-to-camp participant ratio for parts of the week.

There were multiple benefits – campers got to learn from professionals with different skill sets and specialties, but also got to see how the professionals interact and learn from each other.

"It's nice having a lot of archaeologists. There's a lot of people, and they're all learning from each other. It's a really cool experience," Ahlers said.

Susten camp participants weren't just learning, though – they are conducting important research. Sherry Kime, a U.S. Forest Service archaeologist, said working with the camp provides an opportunity to do some work that otherwise might not get done with limited resources.

"It's helpful having all the extra bodies, and the kids are so experienced – they know what they're looking at," Kime said. "We're learning from each other. They do make a huge contribution."

Along the Kenai Lake shoreline, campers were profiling eroding areas, documenting the protruding bones and the different layers of exposed soil.

Other camp participants were mapping the site using high-end GPS units, and using probes to determine whether the soil had ever been disturbed.

"I like probing the soil," said Corbin Stuve, a camp participant. "You can figure out if people have been there and see if the ground has been disturbed. We're trying to figure out maybe who could've been here in the past."

Shovel tests – a small sample excavation – revealed charcoal, fire-cracked rock, and what appears to be a layer of volcanic ash. A shovel test in the large pit turned up pieces of flattened tin.

The small animal bones, likely porcupine, eroding along the shoreline were one of the most intriguing finds.

"Dena'ina usually burned remains, or if it's a



fish, give it back to the water. So finding bones here is really different from what we normally see," Ahlers said.

Monty Rogers, an archaeologist with Cultural Alaska, said the site is in what was a border area between Dena'ina and Chugach cultures.

"This site could be Kenaite, or it could be Chugach, or it could be both, which would be interesting," Rogers said. "It has a lot of potential to shed some light on the early use of this area."

Rogers said that while archaeology shows what artifacts were used in the past, it is a culture's oral histories that explain how those things were used.

Above, Carrie Cecil, a U.S. Forest Service archaeologist, helps Savanna Wilson and Hanna Wilson profile an eroding area of a site along the shore of Kenai Lake while Tiana Begay, an intern with the Heritage Assistance Program, watches. The work was being conducted as part of the Yaghanen Youth Program's Susten Archaeology Camp.

Left, camp participant Cody Uribe-Koivisto and Youth Advocate Susan Crane measure the location of small animal bones protruding from a section of eroding shoreline.

Below, the measurements are used to create an accurate profile of the archaeological site.

"Oral histories shared over hundreds of generations teach you how to live in the world," Rogers said. "Oral history fills in the details that archaeology can't get at."

For example, as part of a camp activity, participants made toggle fish hooks from pieces of bone. While research shows the existence of this type of tool, it doesn't explain how it was used. Were the hooks baited? If so, how?

Marcelo Weese, a U.S. Forest Service archaeologist based in Cordova, said he was impressed with the camp.

"These kids are awesome. They listen very well, and they're really excited about their culture and how everything fits in. They're very intuitive, and they know a lot," Weese said.

That knowledge will pay dividends for camp participants. The Susten camps join the list of Yaghanen camps accredited by the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. Camp participants who complete the requirements can earn .5 high school elective credit. Fish Camp and Moose Camp curricu-

lums also are accredited by the school district.

Yaghanen Youth Program Manager Michael Bernard explained that the Susten curriculum was developed through a collaboration between the Tribe, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Ahlers said she appreciated the contribution she and her fellow camp participants have made to the area's archaeological knowledge.

"Now we can say, 'We worked on this site with a bunch of archaeologists.' Not many people can say that," Ahlers said.



Jaelene Nickoli-Evan, a Teacher Aide at the Early Childhood Center, demonstrates how she prepares a sockeye salmon for drying and smoking during a summer camp session.

ECC follows Dena'ina lifeways

Summer on the Kenai Peninsula means salmon, and children at the Early Childhood Center's summer camp are getting a hands-on experience.

"What we're doing during summer camp is thinking of the natural lifeways of the Dena'ina people," said Carol Sinenko, a teacher at the Early Childhood Center.

During the school year, there are different cultural activities to focus on.

"In the summer, we're thinking about fish, and how to prepare that fish so it will last throughout the year," Sinenko said.

Recently, students had the opportunity to watch as a salmon was prepared for drying and smoking. The fish had come to the net at the Tribe's Educational Fishery, and Jaelene Nickoli-Evan, a Teacher Aide at the Early Childhood Center, showed students how she prepares a fish for hanging on a drying rack using an ulu.

First, she cut off the head. When asked what she would do with it, she smiled and said, "Save it for later!"

Then, she gutted the salmon, eliciting a few "ewws" from her audience. Finally, she sliced along the backbone and ribs on each side – leaving the two fillets attached at the tail so they could be hung on a rack.

Nickoli-Evan made several cuts across the fillets to help with dry-

ing and smoking, and as she held them up for students to see, the "ewws" were replaced with "yum!"

Camp participants started off the summer reading books and looking at photographs about fish and the different methods by which they are gathered.

After the filleting demonstration with the real fish, campers built a drying rack on which to

hang their own "fillets" – theirs are made of felt.

"We provide the opportunity for children to mimic skills with age-appropriate materials," Sinenko said.

Camp participants will have special visitors come and talk about different aspects of processing fish throughout July. Students will get to see what the dried fillets look like, and talk about smoking and canning.

Students also will learn some of the basics of fish biology and anatomy. For example, Sinenko, talked about the characteristics of male and female salmon – using the fish head as a model – while Nickoli-Evan did her filleting.

Dena'ina words also are included in some of the lessons. As the summer progresses, lessons might include traditional uses of plants, and some of the Dena'ina history.

"The ultimate goal is that we're setting the groundwork for cultural education as they get older," Sinenko said.

Early Childhood Center programs include Early Head Start, for pregnant mothers and children from birth to age 3; Head Start for children from 3 to 5; and an After-School program for children in kindergarten through third grade. To learn more, call 907-335-7260 or visit <https://www.kenaitze.org/programs/early-childhood-center/>.



Nickoli-Evan leaves the two fillets attached at the tail to make it easier to hang them on a drying rack.



Zena Esmailka, right, and Aidan Culver vacuum pack a customer's fish at Kenaitze-owned Custom Seafood Processors in Soldotna.

Custom Seafoods more than just fish

As the salmon hit the Kenai River, Custom Seafoods in Soldotna is gearing up for a busy season. But did you know the business is open year-round?

Custom Seafood Processors Inc. is owned by Kahtnuht'ana Development Corporation, a federally chartered business corporation wholly owned by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. The corporation was established with the goal of providing support for underfunded programs and increasing the Tribe's overall economic self-sufficiency.

Custom Seafoods was acquired in May 2016 after the corporation

examined several business opportunities. It was launched as a family business in 1994 to process, package and freeze sport-caught fish. The company incorporated and moved into leased space in 1996. After 10 years of growth and the addition of smoking and game processing services, the business moved into its current location, a custom designed, state-of-the-art facility on the Kenai Spur Highway.

Summer Lazenby, Facility Manager, said the layout of the 12,000-square-foot building is ideal for the workflow from processing to packing to smoking

Custom name for Custom Seafoods!

Tribal Members:
Suggest a new name for Custom Seafood Processors and be entered to win a \$100 gift card.
Email suggestions by Sept. 1 to Susan at swilcox@kenaitze.org.

and freezing, and was designed to allow for growth without requiring an addition.

Since Custom Seafoods was acquired by Kahtnuht'ana Development Corporation, there has been a focus on growing retail operations and offering seafood processing services for the commercial sector.

Lazenby said the retail part of the business includes a gift shop focused on Kenai Peninsula-produced items, supplemented with Alaska-made products. With tourist season in full swing, those locally made products have been popular. Examples include wares from the Alaska Salt Company in Homer, and a special seasoning blend created in-house. The gift shop also features clothing items, cookbooks, as well as seafood and sausage products.

Custom Seafoods has brought the

gift shop to the masses this summer with a booth at the Wednesday Market at Soldotna Creek Park.

While July means fishing, come autumn, Custom Seafoods will begin to shift its focus to processing game. Lazenby said the staff at Custom Seafoods are able to process any game animal that comes their way, from moose and caribou to traditional cuts and ground meat. Custom Seafoods offers a wide range of sausage options.

Custom Seafoods guarantees that customers will get their own fish or game back. The business also offers a 15-percent discount for Tribal Members.

Custom Seafoods is located at 35722 Kenai Spur Highway in Soldotna. Find more information at <https://customseafoods.com>, or call 907-262-9691.



The onsite gift shop sells a variety of items, from locally made salt and other food items, to clothing.

Tribal Members updated on Dena'ina Wellness Center changes

During the July Quarterly Membership Meeting, the Tribal Council announced that Jim Lamb was taking a permanent position with the Tribe as the Executive Director of Health Systems.

Lamb has been working with the Tribe since February as a consultant for medical revenue cycle billing. He has extensive experience working with Alaska Native organizations. His previous positions include Director of Revenue Cycle at Southcentral Foundation, and Director of Patient Financial Services at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

In his new position, Lamb will oversee the Tribe's health care systems. He will report to the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Health Board, which in turn reports to the Tribal Council.

The announcement of Lamb's hiring was part of a comprehensive discussion of changes on the Dena'ina Wellness Center campus.

Tribal Council Secretary Diana Zirul, Health Board Chair, said that Na'ini Family and Social Services staff would begin moving into renovated space at Toyon Villa after July 15. Behavioral Health staff will move into the current Na'ini space later this year.

The Behavioral Health move will provide an opportunity to expand services at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, Zirul said.

"By the Annual Meeting (in October), we should have a good idea of what we'll be doing there," Zirul said.

Responding to questions from Tribal Members, Council Members explained that some of the changes at the Dena'ina Wellness Center were spurred by concerns about access. Zirul said the Council and Health Board are focused on

ensuring access for Tribal Members, particularly in Behavioral Health.

Council Members said closer examination of issues showed that certain procedures needed to be changed to make workflows more effective.

Dawn Nelson, Executive Director of Tribal Administration, said that as new department directors are brought in, they are aware of the concerns and expectations.

"They want to move their departments forward, provide

better services, and grow services," Nelson said.

Wayne D. Wilson Jr., Tribal Council Chair, said the top priority is that un'ina are being seen by their providers.

"When that happens, we know we're doing the right thing," Wilson said.

Wilson also said that he misspoke at a previous quarterly meeting when he said the Tribe was debt-free. At the time, the Tribe still had a loan on Toyon Villa, which has since been paid off.

"So now we are officially debt-free," Wilson said.

On the topic of education, Tribal Council Member Bernadine Atchison, the Education Committee Chair, said a survey will go out to Tribal Members to identify priorities. She encouraged people to take advantage of the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas.

The Tribe's Facilities staff is scheduled to meet with the Tribal Council to discuss the Request for Proposals for an architect and the construction timeline for the new Education Campus.



Participants in the July Quarterly Membership meeting gather afterward for a barbecue on the bluff at the Tribe's new Beluga Lookout property.



15% discount for Tribal Members

Custom Seafoods

SOLDOTNA, ALASKA

Fish processing

Game processing

Gift shop







35722 Kenai Spur Hwy
Soldotna, AK 99669

www.customseafoods.com
sales@customseafoods.com
(907) 262-9691





Joanne Shepherd, Front Desk Supervisor at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, poses for a photo with Scott and Joann Earsley. The couple credits Shepherd for telling them about the Tribally Sponsored Health Insurance Program, saving them hundreds of thousands of dollars.

TSHIP benefit: Peace of mind

Scott Earsley said that when he and his wife Joann first received an application for the Tribally Sponsored Health Insurance Program, they weren't really sure what it was.

For them, it has turned out to be a life-saver.

The Tribally Sponsored Health Insurance Program, or TSHIP, provides health care coverage for Tribal Members, Alaska Native and American Indian people who aren't eligible for other coverage.

"A lot of folks have too much income to qualify for Alaska Medicaid, yet they fall into this category where they don't have insurance. It's a big gap," said Jim Lamb, Executive Director of Health Systems at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. "A lot of these folks work, but they don't have insurance available through work, or they don't work enough hours to qualify, or they're self-employed."

There are a number of benefits to enrolling in TSHIP. For the Tribe, it preserves limited Indian Health Service and Purchased and Referred Care funds. For the individuals who enroll, TSHIP pays for health care that might not be covered by IHS.

"The primary benefit is the peace of mind to give somebody who is in that segment" without health insurance, Lamb said.

After learning more about the program, the Earsleys enrolled in mid-2015.

On Dec. 17, 2015, they found themselves in the emergency room at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage after Joann said she felt like she had been "hit

"It relieved me of worrying about finances when I needed to be taking care of my wife."

— Scott Earsley

on the side of the head."

Joann was medevaced to Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, where she was treated for hemorrhaging in her brain. The couple spent almost two weeks in Seattle for Joann's care, coming home on New Year's Eve.

Then, on Jan. 3, 2016, Joann had to be medevaced to Seattle again, this time for a week-long stay.

Scott Earsley said he's not sure what would've happened had they not had health insurance through

TSHIP. Bills for Joann's care were in the neighborhood of \$1 million.

"All I know is that everything that was done was pretty much covered," Scott Earsley said.

For eligible Tribal Members, Alaska Native and American Indian people, there is no cost to enroll. Monthly premiums are covered, as well as co-payments and deductibles.

As of May 1, 71 people are

enrolled in TSHIP through the Dena'ina Wellness Center. However, Lamb said the pool of people who are eligible is much larger.

Joanne Shepard, the Front Desk Supervisor at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, helps un'ina to determine if they're eligible for TSHIP. Once they're enrolled, she's also there to make sure claims are processed and the bills are paid. Shepard says she develops a relationship with un'ina. It can be a challenge to understand

health insurance coverage, and she's there to help them through the process.

"The idea of having an advocate navigating the maze when it seems like you're getting bills from everywhere – if you're on TSHIP, part of the process is a navigator that can help unravel some of these things," Lamb said.

Scott Earsley said the Purchased and Referred Care staff at the Alaska Native Medical Center were "incredible," and that he is grateful for the support that Shepard provides.

"I thank her repeatedly," Scott Earsley said. "There were times when we were getting bills, not just from the hospital, but from the specialists, and I didn't know what I was supposed to do. ... It relieved me of worrying about finances when I needed to be taking care of my wife."

To learn more about TSHIP, call the Dena'ina Wellness Center's Family Health Resource Technicians at 907-335-7562 or 907-335-7563.

Cooking with Kenaitze: Salmon

For thousands of years, Dena'ina people have hunted and gathered food across Yaghanen, the good land. From moose to salmon to wild berries, food harvested from the land is important to Dena'ina life. Cooking with Kenaitze highlights ingredients and recipes relevant to Dena'ina culture. This time we focus on salmon.

ALASKA SALMON HEAD PHO

This pho is based on an indigenous Alaskan fish head soup. Traditionally the heads were cooked down long enough to leach calcium, supplementing an otherwise dairy free culture. If you don't have a fish head handy, try using frames or even fillet scraps.

SALMON PHO BROTH:

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small Alaska Grown yellow onion, peeled and halved
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 5 quarter-sized slices fresh ginger
- 1 wild Alaska Salmon head, gills removed, and rinsed in cold water
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 star anise
- 6 to 8 quarts water or vegetable stock
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground star anise
- 3 Tablespoons hoisin sauce
- 1 Tablespoon sriracha (optional)

PHO:

Directions

Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic and ginger; cook, stirring con-

stantly, 2 to 3 minutes. Chop salmon head in half and add to pot along with cinnamon stick, star anise and water. Let simmer 2 hours, adding more water, as needed (so head is submerged while cooking). Strain broth through a fine-mesh sieve, reserving head and discarding the rest.

Stir in ground cinnamon and ground star anise, hoisin and sriracha, if desired. Return to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes.

Set aside.

NOODLES AND VEGETABLES:

Ingredients:

- 1 package (8 ounces) rice vermicelli
- 1/2 Alaska Grown onion, julienned (about 1 cup)
- 1 Alaska Grown carrot, julienned (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 Alaska Grown zucchini, julienned (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 Alaska Grown "snow apple" (turnip) or daikon radish, julienned
- 1 cup Alaska Grown leafy greens, such as kale or chard cut into 1/4-inch ribbons
- Fresh bean sprouts, basil leaves, torn cilantro, for garnish, as desired

NOODLES/VEGETABLES:

Directions

Place rice noodles in a large bowl. Boil enough

water to cover noodles; pour over noodles. Cover with plastic until noodles are soft and tender.

PAN-SEARED SALMON FILLETS (optional):

Ingredients:

- 4 Alaska salmon portions (3 oz. each), skinless and pin bones removed

Ground cinnamon, ground star anise and salt, to taste

SALMON:

Directions

If topping pho with additional salmon pieces, dry salmon with paper towel to remove excess moisture. Season with cinnamon, ground star anise and salt. In a sauté pan over medium-high heat, add 1 tablespoon oil and place fish in pan. Cook approximately 2 minutes, flip and cook another 1 or 2 minutes until desired temperature; set aside. To serve, drain noodles and divide evenly among 4 large bowls. Top with vegetable strips, herbs and pieces of cooked salmon – either the individual portions or meat from the head or smoked salmon. Pour broth over all; garnish with sprouts, basil leaves and cilantro.

— *Recipe by Chef Rob Kinneen, Fork Catering, Anchorage, courtesy Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute*



Salmon Pho is a healthy meal, rich in flavor.

SUBMIT YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE

Chiqinik to those who submitted these recipes. Have a recipe to share? Email it to M. Scott Moon at smoon@kenaitze.org

SALMON PATTIES

Ingredients

- 1 pound salmon, diced
- 1 cup panko
- 1/4 cup celery, minced
- 1/4 cup red pepper, minced
- 1/2 cup basil, chopped
- 1/4 cups green onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Tony Chachere's Cajun Seasoning
- 1 whole egg
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice

Directions

Mix all ingredients. Shape into cakes using a 1/3 measuring cup, 1 inch thick, and place onto cookie sheet. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Heat oil in oven-proof pan over medium high heat. Add cakes and fry for 2 minutes per side. Stick in oven to finish cooking for 3 minutes.

Serve with a squeeze of lemon juice.

— *Recipe courtesy Dr. Heather Callum*



The Big Picture



The Jabila'ina Dancers perform at the Opening of the Net celebration in June. See story on page 1.

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
855-335-8865 fax
- Early Childhood Center**
130 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7260
- Tyotkas Elder Center**
1000 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7280
- Yaghanen Youth Program, Education and Career Development**
35105 K-B Dr., Soldotna, AK 99669
907-335-7290
- Environmental Program**
1106 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611
907-398-7933
- Dena'ina Wellness Center**
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7500
- Na'ini Family and Social Services**
510 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7600
- Tribal Court**
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7219

On the Web: kenaitze.org
On Facebook: facebook.com/kenaitze

