



## *Progress Report from the Project Director*

### MORRIS THOMPSON CULTURAL AND VISITORS CENTER

May 28, 2004

In this 2<sup>nd</sup> monthly update to members of the Leadership Team and special friends of the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center project, I'm happy to report that good things continue to happen.

- On Wednesday this week we received news from John Hargesheimer/Nortech that the Federal Highway Administration signed the Environmental Assessment on our proposed site. The process isn't over yet, but the signature triggers the 30-day public comment period which is the last step of the EA process. This news is certainly a step in the right direction. Fairbanksans will notice a series of newspaper ads announcing the public comment period as well as a public open house that will be held on Tuesday, June 29, 4-7 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers. **Please take the opportunity to let your opinions be heard regarding our plans for the Center.**
- Mark your calendars! On **Wednesday, June 23rd, noon – 1:30 in the Chief's Court and courtyard of Doyon, Limited**, we will be hosting a special luncheon fund-raising event for the Center. All attendees will have the opportunity to **become members of the *Friends of the Morris Thompson Center***. Many special friends of Morris will be participating in the Morris Thompson Memorial Golf Classic (June 24 & 25), so we hope they will arrive a day early to join us.
- Yesterday morning Steve Frank joined me and project partners in presenting our vision to the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Editorial Board. There were good questions as would be expected from seasoned newsmen, but I also heard positive feedback about what this project can do for Fairbanks' economy, and a desire to see the community get behind this project.
- Sam Kito and I met in Anchorage last week for a series of meetings. Leadership Team members Al Adams and Carl Marrs joined us for a great discussion. We also shared project plans with Helvi Sandvick/Nana Corporation, Joe D'Amico/Public Safety Employees Association, and Dan Cuddy/1<sup>st</sup> National Bank of Alaska. Sam, Byron Mallott, and I are headed to Seattle just after the Memorial Day weekend for additional meetings. The enthusiastic response from so many makes me all the more focused on making our campaign goal a reality, especially with the active participation of the Leadership Team.
- Speaking of enthusiastic, Sam has welcomed two spirited new members to the Leadership Team. Jo Heckman, President and CEO of Denali State Bank and Cathy Schultz, General Manager of Sophie Station Hotel and 2005 Chair of the FCVB Board of Directors have joined this distinguished group of volunteers who have accepted the challenge – and the responsibility – of helping the Thompson Center come to life. Cathy has seen this project grow from early discussions in the 80's between FCVB and APLIC. Jo recently made a trip to Ft. Yukon with the Fairbanks Chamber's Urban/Rural Committee and has seen firsthand how tourism development can positively impact rural villages. Welcome Jo and Cathy!
- Finally, our website development is underway and we hope to have it accessible in the coming month, making it easy for everyone to check us out and learn about our vision.

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