



Progress Report from the Project Director

MORRIS THOMPSON CULTURAL AND VISITORS CENTER

July 30, 2004

- **Governor Murkowski has signed the FY05 capital budget bill that includes \$550,000 for the Morris Thompson Center.** We are very heartened that, despite a tough budget year, the state was able to stand behind this project. Many thanks to the Governor for including the project in his original capital budget proposal to the Legislature, and to the Interior Delegation (especially Senators Wilken and Therriault and Representative Stepovich) for increasing the amount and holding firm. It is that kind of teamwork that will make this project happen. As the Leadership Team continues to secure private funding, we hope the State will continue to demonstrate its solid support over the next two years.
- If the strength of a campaign can be measured by individual supporters, we are certainly off to a great start. **Supporters of the Thompson Center pledged more than \$19,000 at last month's luncheon reception** held in the Doyon, Limited Chief's Court. As Vice Chair Rhonda Boyles said, "It will take big corporate gifts and federal grants to reach our goal, but it is people like you and me that will build the foundation that will make this project possible."
- I'd like to share one very special gift we've received. Jeff Manns, a state trooper from North Pole, brought in **a pledge of \$15,000 from the Public Safety Employees Association in honor of fallen law enforcement officers.** As a trooper, Jeff said he supports the project for the positive impact it will have in downtown Fairbanks. Jeff said he never knew Morris Thompson, but remembers his father coming home from work and talking about this dynamic man who cared so much about making things better for his people. Morris touched a great many lives.
- **For those of you who have been following the environmental assessment process, I'm pleased to report that we are nearly there!** State DOT has signed our FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact). It now awaits final signature by the Federal Highway Administration which we expect shortly. The signed FONSI will clear the way to begin purchasing land on our preferred site.
- Speaking of Land Acquisition, HDR Alaska's proposal for land acquisition services was ranked #1 by the City of Fairbanks. Project Manager Patrick Smith indicates a contract agreement is promising. **With City Council approval, we expect HDR Alaska to hit the ground running as soon as the FONSI is signed.** It will be a relief to many to see progress in this area.
- A big thanks to Dan Winfree's law office that has filed the 501 (c) (3) paperwork for the newly created Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center non-profit corporation. We await final approval from the IRS. In the meantime, Tanana Chief's Conference is generously housing the project office and holding project funds on our behalf. **Hats off to TCC for the significant in-kind commitment they've made to get this project off the ground.**
- Legacy for Progress Campaign Chair Sam Kito continues to give very generously of his time. We met in Anchorage this week for another series of meetings. It was good to spend time with Leadership Team members Oliver Leavitt, Willie Hensley and Kevin Meyers. We also had great discussions with Vicki Otte from CIRI and Tim Wallis of Doyon, Properties. **The entire Leadership Team is engaged and working in their own way to bring this project to fruition. I thank each of you for your commitment.**

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