



MORRIS THOMPSON CULTURAL AND VISITORS CENTER

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“The Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center will do much to cement Fairbanks as a must-see destination in Alaska. It will make sure we are a gateway to Interior and Northern Alaska.”

Steve Frank
Board of Directors, Fairbanks
Convention and Visitors Bureau

An Economic Opportunity

As Alaska strives to diversify its economy, tourism is an industry that is sustainable for the long term. This partnership brings together Native and non-native organizations, building bridges between cultures and encouraging all Alaskans to strengthen the tourism economy in the region. The Center will benefit:



The City of Fairbanks —As a gathering place for visitors and residents alike, the Center will encourage downtown business development. People who live here will come to learn about their "own backyard." Visitors will come to see what the Interior offers. After exploring the Center, visitors will stroll across the grounds to the new walkways along the Chena River, bringing more people into the shops and businesses downtown. The project complements the goals and vision of the Chena Riverfront Commission by continuing the beautification of the downtown riverfront.

The entire Borough—The Center will firmly establish Interior Alaska as a "must-see" stop for all Alaskan visitors. It will also motivate local residents to explore the Interior more fully, entice independent visitors to extend their stay, and encourage tour group visitors to make a return trip to Alaska to experience what they missed on the first trip. It will further establish Fairbanks as the "hub" for travel to rural Alaska and the North.

Rural Alaska—Visitors want to experience Alaska Native culture! Research tells us that tourists to Alaska, in particular the independent travelers, want to see and experience rural Alaska and Alaska Native culture. The Center will be the catalyst to



send visitors to rural Alaska villages, enhancing existing tourism operations and encouraging other communities to develop tourism enterprises that work for them, bringing jobs and cash into Interior and Northern Alaska's rural areas.

A study of visitor preferences was done for the Alaska Travel Industry Association by GMA Research Corporation. Based on responses by visitors who actually visited Alaska in the study years of 1996 and 2000, or those who said they were likely to visit in the next five years: 77% of actual visitors, and 80% of potential visitors said learning about different cultures was important to their trip; 80% of potential visitors said seeing Native villages and meeting Alaska Natives was important. Significantly, in 2000, Native cultural attractions were the single most popular vacation activity.

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