

THOMPSON CENTER TRACKS



Tracking the Progress of the **Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center**

Washington, DC Event Generates Support

On May 18, Alaska's Congressional Delegation hosted a luncheon in Washington, DC for the Morris Thompson Center, raising \$50,000 for the future facility on the banks of the Chena River in Fairbanks.

The event drew almost 100 guests from Alaska, the Pacific Northwest and Washington, DC, where Thompson served as the youngest commissioner for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Morris' daughter Nicole, her husband Terry and baby Shania were special guests for the luncheon.

More than five years after his death, his former colleagues enjoyed reminiscing about Thompson and his dedication to improving the lives of all Alaskans.

"As much as we take great pleasure in talking about Morris, Morris took great pleasure in talking about Alaska, particularly Interior Alaska" said luncheon speaker Nathan Bergerbest, who worked with Thompson for eight years at Doyon, Limited. "It was the center of his universe."

With 10,000 square feet of exhibits about the land, the rivers, the people and the seasons in Interior Alaska, the Morris Thompson Center will tell Alaska's story through the experience of Alaskans. Exhibits and programs will celebrate what is unique and special about Interior Alaska, including the rich culture of the region's Alaska Native people. The Center will also serve as a community gathering place, bringing together Elders, youth, locals and visitors.

"This project is a very worthy memorial to a man we loved and admired, a man whose wit and wisdom continue to guide those who work for the betterment of the Alaska," Bergerbest told guests. "I think he would be pleased that his friends would preserve his legacy through this project."

Governor Signs Capital Budget: State Commitment Now \$1.1 Million

A \$550,000 appropriation to the Morris Thompson Center, included in the FY06 State Capital Budget this spring, brings the State of Alaska's commitment to the project to \$1.1 million. Along with project director Cindy Schumaker, leadership team members Sam Kito, Rhonda Boyles and Steve Frank all spent time in Juneau this session, meeting with legislators and Governor Murkowski to discuss this project and its importance to Fairbanks and the Interior.

Project organizers hope to see a total of \$4 million in state funding and will continue discussions with the Interior delegation and the Governor to secure additional state funding next year to help finish the project.

Bettisworth Begins Architectural Design

Charles Bettisworth and Company has started the architectural design process for the Morris Thompson Center. CB Bettisworth will facilitate a design kick-off workshop on August 5th to get partner and community input on the image and character of the new facility. The workshop will build on previous discussions and help the architectural team translate the Center's vision and needs into physical spaces.

"We already have an idea of what the inside exhibit area will look like. Now we'll get an idea of what the outside of the facility will look like and how the interior spaces will flow together," says City of Fairbanks project manager Pat Smith, who will oversee the construction project.

If you are interested in being a part of this workshop with project partners, the Center's Board of Directors and other community members, email cindy.schumaker@tananachiefs.org or call 907.459.3880. Space is limited.



Members of Alaska's Congressional Delegation are ardent supporters of the future center. In addition to hosting the DC luncheon in May, Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Lisa Murkowski and Representative Don Young have secured more than \$15 million in federal funds for the project. Above: Senator Stevens speaks at the luncheon. Below: Representative Young, far right, and his wife Lu, far left, visit with the Association of American Railroads' Ed Hamberger.



Tozitna to Match Donations from Tanana

Tozitna Limited, the village corporation in Morris Thompson's hometown of Tanana, wants the community at the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers to lend its support to the Morris Thompson Center. As an incentive, Tozitna recently announced that it will match the first \$5,000 in donations from Tanana residents, with the potential to bring in a total of \$10,000.

"Morris, or 'Big' as we called him, had great influence and power in the corporate world, but he never forgot where he was from," said Tozitna board member Dorothy Jordan. "We

took a close look at this project, and believe that the Center honors his memory and provides real benefits to the villages and Alaska Native people. We want to show our support."

In addition to the exhibits on Interior Alaska's people and lifestyles, the Center will serve as an information gateway for visitors interested in rural Alaska.

"We will highlight cultural attractions such as Richard Carroll's tour of Ft. Yukon and the Simon Paneak Museum in Anaktuvuk Pass," said Tanana Chiefs Conference President Buddy Brown. "Tourists are interested in learning about Alaska Native cultures, so it makes sense that our communities benefit from the tourism dollar. This is just one way we're working to encourage private sector development in our villages."

Tozitna has also challenged other villages to make their own gifts to the Center to honor Thompson's work to further the cultural, social and economic stability of all Alaska Native people.

So, if you've ever called Tanana home, contact Dorothy Jordan at 907.366.7207 to find out how to get involved in the Tanana matching gift program.

Did you know...

...that the Leadership Team for the Morris Thompson Center has secured more than \$17 million of their \$26 million goal! This includes \$15 million in federal funds, \$1.1 million from the State of Alaska, and nearly \$1 million in private funds – and the team is going strong!

To add your name to the Friends of the Morris Thompson Center, contact:

Cindy Schumaker, Project Director
Morris Thompson Center
122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Tel 907.459.3880
Fax 907.459.3884
thompson.center@tananachiefs.org
www.morristhompsoncenter.org

Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center Donors as of June 30, 2005

Bridge Builders (\$500,000 and up)

Federal Highway Administration · Doyon, Limited · National Park Service · State of Alaska

Distinguished Benefactors (\$250,000 to \$499,999) · Denali Commission

Benefactors Circle (\$100,000 to \$249,999)

Sealaska Corporation · Tanana Chiefs Conference · Totem Ocean Trailer Express

Spirit Partners (\$10,000 to \$49,999)

Public Safety Employees Association · Rasmuson Foundation · Sam Kito, Jr.

Community Partners (\$5,000 to \$9,999) · Bell South · BP · ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc. ·

Brian Rogers & Sherry Modrow/Information Insights · MCI · Mortgage Insurance Companies of America · Steve Frank & Linda Anderson/River's Edge Resort

Gatherers Circle (\$1,000 to \$4,999) · Alyeska Pipeline Service Company · American Gas

Association · American Pilots' Association · Association of American Railroads · A Taste of Alaska Lodge · Charles Bettisworth and Company · Boeing Corporation · Downtown Association of Fairbanks · Native American Bank · Plumbers & Pipefitters, Local 375 · Princess Tours · Van Ness Feldman · Jesse Arrington III and Mae Marsh · Mark and Patricia Hamilton · Deb Hickok and Izzy Hickok · Jerry Hood · Betty Huntington · Willi and Karen Lundquist · Steve and Charlene Marth · Clyde and Kathy Mayo · Susan and Jess Motter · Mary Ann Nickles · Roger and Charlene Ostbloom · Norm and Nancy Phillips · The Reiland Family · John and Cindy Schumaker · John and Alexandra Shively · Kathleen Simmons · Andy and Judy Warwick

Thompson Center Tracks is a publication to update friends and supporters on the progress of the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.



MORRIS THOMPSON CULTURAL AND VISITORS CENTER

Tanana Chiefs Conference
122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, AK 99701

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Thanks to TOTE and Sealaska, Private Giving Nears \$1 Million

Totem Ocean Trailer Express (TOTE) and Sealaska Corporation announced their gifts to the project at a May 18 luncheon in Washington, DC.

TOTE President and Leadership Team member Bill Deaver flew in from Tacoma to present TOTE's \$150,000 pledge. Thompson served on the board of directors of TOTE's parent company, Saltchuk. "Morris was a smart and savvy businessman and provided Saltchuk with insightful leadership skills for TOTE's reinvestment in their Alaska business," Deaver said. "He would have wanted Fairbanks and the Interior to make sure they reap their proper share of Alaska's ever expanding tourism industry. TOTE is proud to be among the pacesetting donors to ensure the success of this campaign."

Juneau-based Sealaska Corporation also pledged \$100,000 to the project. Board Chair Albert Kookesh said, "Facilities that honor our indigenous cultures and encourage all Alaskans to work together are vital for our state and should be embraced and supported widely."

Center leadership, staff and supporters visit at the DC luncheon. Above right: Sealaska President & CEO Chris McNeil, Sealaska Board Member Byron Mallott and Sam Kito, Jr. Right: TOTE President Bill Deaver, Project Manager Cindy Schumaker and American Shipping Group's Alan Butchman.



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