

THOMPSON CENTER TRACKS



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

Capital Budget Provides \$2 Million for Center

The Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center now has \$3.1 million in funding from the State of Alaska, thanks to an FY07 capital budget appropriation of \$2 million.

Governor Murkowski had included the Center's full \$2.9 million request in his proposed capital budget, but in the first round from the Senate Finance Committee, that amount was reduced to zero. Senate Finance co-chair Senator Gary Wilken worked to restore the project's funding, and with the support of the Interior Delegation, that funding remained in the final budget passed in May at the end of the Legislature's regular session.

The Center is deeply grateful to the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Association, Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor and Assembly, the City of Fairbanks, Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tanana Chiefs Conference and hundreds of supporters who came forward to say, 'This project is good for Alaska.'

As the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* noted in its April 12, 2006 editorial, "[This project] will certainly enhance Interior tourism and benefit Fairbanks. But in doing so, it will enhance Alaska's tourism industry and Alaska itself."

All of us working on this project thank the Governor and the legislature. We look forward to your continued support as we work for the final funding from the state next session.

Beatus to Develop Exhibits, Programs

Tanana Chiefs Conference President Jerry Isaac recently selected Tanya Beatus to oversee the development of the Center's exhibits and cultural programs. Beatus grew up in the village of Hughes and received a degree in Economics from Stanford University in 2004.

"I have always been passionate about working to attain self-reliance and economic independence for the Native community through education," said Beatus. "I believe the Center can help us achieve just that. What better way to honor one of our greatest Alaska Native leaders."

A primary goal of the programming will be to build bridges between cultures by creating a community gathering place, where diverse cultures come together to learn, to understand, to appreciate and respect one another. Beatus will work with local, regional and statewide Alaska Native organizations, individuals and other groups to plan the Center's cultural programming. She will also work with the project partners and exhibit design team to develop curatorial content for the Center's 9,000 square feet exhibit hall.

Exhibit Design Team Immersed in Alaska's Land, Culture, Attractions

Bianca Message, president of the exhibit design team of André & Associates, approaches each project with a desire to tell stories in a unique and memorable way. In July, she traveled with members of her design team to Interior Alaska to get inspiration for the Center's exhibits.

A diorama artist, a botanist, a videographer and project planners joined Message for a week of filming, interviewing and collecting in Fairbanks and surrounding villages. "We enjoyed the authentic Alaska experiences – watching the community come together to butcher a bear in Fort Yukon, taking a 75-mile river trip on the Yukon from Rampart to Tanana in Clyde and Kathy's riverboat, and witnessing the cutting-edge technology being developed at Chena Hot Springs Resort. All these will help shape the Center's exhibits."

Kathy Mayo and her husband Clyde arranged the river trip for the exhibit designers. Mayo is the Center's former project director and remains an active member of the project's Leadership Team.

Message and her design team will work with the Center's exhibit researcher Tanya Beatus and project partner Don Pendergrast in developing the exhibit storyline and structure to ensure that the stories come from Alaskans.

GHEMM Company Awarded Contract

After a lengthy competitive bid process, Fairbanks contractor GHEMM Company was awarded the preconstruction contract to build the new 38,000 square foot facility.

"We had the pleasure of working for Morris Thompson and Doyon on multiple construction projects in the past and look forward to continuing his legacy," said GHEMM Company president Bert Bell. "Community projects bring about unique challenges and we intend to deliver it in the same first class method Morris would have expected."

The project is using the "Construction Manager at Risk" design and construction method, which pairs the architect and contractor early enough in the design process to resolve challenges and reduce costs. GHEMM is working closely with Charles Bettisworth and Company architects to finish design this fall. Then, GHEMM and project planners will negotiate a guaranteed maximum price for construction.

Building will begin in spring 2007, but work on the site has already begun. Drive by the project site near the Wendell Street bridge and you'll see Central Environmental, Inc. clearing the existing structures and preparing the ground for construction.



Above: Members of the Center's exhibit design team visit Alaska Native elder Lester Erhart's fish camp on the Yukon River during a tour of Interior Alaska's villages. Below: Cheryl and Charlie Wright cut smoked salmon strips at Grandma Wrights smokehouse in Rampart as project director Cindy Schumaker, center, looks on.



Photos by Kathy Mayo.

Did you know...

... Members of the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center's Leadership Team have secured more than \$21.6 million for the future center on the banks of the Chena River, including:

- \$16.5 million in federal funding
- \$3.1 million from the State of Alaska
- \$2 million+ in private donations.

Are you a friend of the Morris Thompson Center?
Make your gift online at www.morrithompsoncenter.org.

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. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information, contact Cindy Schumaker at 907.459.3880 or thompson.center@tanachiefs.org.

Visitor Industry Support Honors Frank Rose

Because of his dedication to the Alaska visitor industry, friends and colleagues of Frank Rose rallied together and exceeded their \$50,000 goal to name the Center's conference room in his honor. Rose, who was a respected visitor industry leader, died in winter 2005.



Each and every member of the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors (pictured below) and staff has contributed to this effort, not only in words but also in action.



Images courtesy of the Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau.



**M O R R I S T H O M P S O N
C U L T U R A L A N D V I S I T O R S C E N T E R**

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

**Address Service
Requested**

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Fairbanks,
Alaska
Permit No. 131

Private Donations Top \$2 Million Mark

More than 400 individual donors have contributed, including these recent supporters:

- o Fountainhead Development (Sophie Station Hotel, Bridgewater Hotel and Wedgewood Resort), with a gift of \$15,000. Pictured, lower left, are Leadership Team member Cathy Schultz and Fountainhead's Diane Shoemaker.
- o The Odom Company/Coca Cola of Alaska, with a \$10,000 donation. Pictured at right are Odom's Tom Bartels, Leadership Team Vice Chair Rhonda Boyles, Project Director Cindy Schumaker and Odom's Don Presler.
- o John and Judy Binkley, with a gift of \$5,000.
- o Alaska Salmon Bake, with a gift of \$2,000. Pictured, lower right, are Schumaker and the Salmon Bake's Jeremy Richards.
- o Jim Laiti/Local 375, Mary Ann Nickles, Bill Stroecker and Dale Yoder, with gifts of \$1,000 each.
- o More than 140 individual donors who made their gifts at a luncheon held during TCC's annual convention in March.

