

# First Alaskans Institute

AFN/First Alaskans Elders & Youth Conference  
October 22 and 23, 2007  
Carlson Center  
Fairbanks, Alaska

First Alaskans Institute hosted the 2007 AFN/First Alaskans Elders & Youth Conference in Fairbanks, Alaska at the Carlson Center on October 22-23, 2007. This final conference report includes planning activities, the participation of the conference planning committee as well as the Elders and Youth Council, an overview of the conference agenda and highlights, the regional caucus reports, registration information, conference evaluation and additional follow-up items.

## Conference Logo and Theme

### Living Cultures in the North: Respecting Alaska Native People

#### *Land & Community*

Our land and communities are the foundation for who we are as Native peoples. We need healthy and thriving communities to move forward into the future. Our connection to land and its resources are central to our success and future.

#### *Traditions & Culture*

To ensure, regain, and restore healthy communities, we need to know our languages and histories; and we need to know the importance of being Alaska Native. When we know these things we know we are okay and that we belong.

#### *Health & Education*

We know it is time to choose to live a healthy life. Physically and mentally we must be engaged in activities that support healthier people. Education is the critical to our success.

## Conference Planning Project Team

First Alaskans Institute recognizes the Conference planning team: **Perry Ahsogeak, Judith Evans, Terri Smoke, Robin Frank, Robert Charlie, Matt Stevens, Doreen Deaton, Jill Holmgren, Grete Hubbard, Jennifer Maguire, Jennifer Jolis (FCVB) and Sheila Vent.**

The planning committee was responsible for development of the conference theme, the overall structure of the two day event, and the agenda. The team identified speakers, presenters, dance groups, and helped develop the Conference theme.

## Elders and Youth Council

The 2007 Elder and Youth Council members were elected during the 2006 Elders & Youth Conference. Council members identified meaningful ways in which Elders and youth would interact and how each participant would benefit from his or her activities. Many served as conference “emcees” during the Conference. The following were very active in conference planning and communications:

- **Rev. Anna Frank**, Minto – Doyon Region Elder Representative
- **Willie Goodwin, Jr.**, Kotzebue – NANA Region Elder Representative
- **Daniel Karmun Sr.**, Nome – Bering Straits Region Elder Representative
- **Iver Malutin**, Kodiak – Koniag Elder
- **Matt Stevens**, Fairbanks, Doyon
- **Sheena Solomon**, Fairbanks, Doyon
- **Lexi Staheli**, Kiana – NANA Region Youth Representative
- **Roy Tansey, Sr.**, Copper Center – Ahtna Region Elder Representative

## Call for Presentations and Agenda Development

In July a call for presentations was issued to the public, soliciting conference presenters, panels, and workshop topics. Preference was given to Alaska Native presenters. Proposals were reviewed by the planning committee for:

- Facilitated interaction between Elders and Youth
- Relevance to the conference theme
- Connections to the conference purpose and outcomes
- Potential to engage participants during the presentation
- Appeal to the Elders and youth audience
- Usefulness to participants
- Clarity of proposal

In addition to the call for presentations; the Conference planning committee included presentations suggested by the Elders & Youth Council. The Committee sought to create a balanced agenda which included a number of issues that remain important to Alaska Native Elders and youth. These issues include language revitalization, education issues, drug and alcohol prevention, and cultural traditions. The final agenda can be downloaded from the First Alaskans Institute website at [www.firstalaskans.org](http://www.firstalaskans.org).

## Plenary Speakers

**Sen. Georgianna Lincoln** (Athabascan) gave a fabulous opening keynote address on the importance of culture and choices and welcomed participants to the Doyon region. Senator Lincoln shared her experiences and heart for improving our communities and state through making healthy choices and following through with what you start.

**Kia HoChee** (Athabascan), a 10 year old girl from Minto, spoke very passionately about the importance of keeping the “Circle of Knowledge” going. She was one of the favorite presenters for the conference and was a great example to all of the participants of the potential for our future.

**Valerie Davidson** (Yupik), the first youth council president, re-joined the conference to talk about the good choices and the road to success. Valerie’s engaging presentation drove home the theme of ‘Respecting Alaska Native People” by first respecting yourself through good choices and following the good advice of our Elders.

**Matt Stevens** (Athabascan) gave a presentation on the second day of the conference. Matt talked about the importance of good role models in his life. He talked about the importance of taking initiative and getting out there and DOING IT! Matt also contributed to the conference by heading up the youth dance and participating on the local planning team.

## Workshops

The call for presentations identified relevant workshops in which conference participants could meet and share creative ideas, opinions, solutions, and stories. Workshops were built around the conference theme and were facilitated by a number of community organizations from throughout Alaska.

### **Our Care, Our Decisions: Native Values and Health Care Decisions**

*Colleen Anagick, Alaska Native Medical Center*

### **Mentoring: Respecting Our Past, Working For Our Future**

*Cyndi Nation, Big Brothers, Big Sisters*

*Taber Rehbaum, Director, Big Brothers, Big Sisters*

### **Regional Elder Update – Representatives from Regions Update on Elder Activities in Their Region**

*Willie Goodwin, Kotzebue,*

### **Independent Living Goals for Elders and People with Disabilities**

*Mike O’Neill, Access Alaska*

### **Telling Our Stories: Media as a Tool for Environmental Change**

*Polly Carr, Alaska Youth on Environmental Action*

### **Establishing Financial Success in College for Rural Students**

*Sue McHenry, UAF, Rural Student Services*

*Colleen Angaiak, UAF, Rural Student Services*

### **Learning Inupiaq Language**

*Susie Akootchook, Kaktovik*

*Mary Schaeffer, Kotzebue*

### **Prepare For Your Future: Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program**

*Kay Larson-Blair, USFWS*

### **Growing Our Own: Getting a College Degree without Leaving Home**

*Jessica Black, UAF*  
*Beth Kersey, UAF*  
*Darlene Christensen, UAF*  
*Elizabeth Fleagle, UAF*

### **Jumpstarting Your Future: Summer Camps for College Credits**

*Kristine Hilderbrand & Pearl Brower, Ilisagvik College*

### **Youth Perspective on Our Native Identity: What does it look like when we are successful in teaching Native Identity?**

*Sarah Scanlan, First Alaskans Institute*  
*Becky Judd, Alaska Division of Behavior Health*

### **Yes, College is for you: Choosing a College, Paying For College**

*Andrea Kavlaq Van Ravenswaay, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education*

### **Constellation of Support for the Youth**

*Josie Weaver, Chugachmuit*

### **Developing Emerging Leaders**

*Tyonek Youth Presentation*

### **Perspective on Tradition, Community and Health**

*Alaska Native Elders Health Advisory Committee*  
*Andrew Jimmie, Minto, Rose Ambrose, Huslia*  
*Iver Malutin, Kodiak, Mary Schaeffer, Kotzebue*

### **Strengthening Minds and Spirits: Careers for Healthy Communities**

*Alaska Mental Health Trust*  
*Daniel Bill, Behavioral Health Clinician – YKHC*  
*Jessica Black, UAF*  
*Ramy Brooks, Sled Dog Musher,*

## **Dance Groups**

The dance presentations were a highlight of the two-day conference. Thanks go to members of the Hawaiian Delegation, the FNA JOM Potlatch Dancers, Donielle Carroll, Mabel Hopson, Alice Burge, Kim Burge, Benda Burge-Calhoun, Robert Charlie, the Chevak Tanq'ik Dancers, PAVVA Dancers, and Nunamuit Dancers from Anaktuvuk Pass.

## **Regional Breakout Sessions**

During Regional breakout sessions participants discussed and voted on the resolutions that had been submitted prior to the conference and that had been recommended from the resolutions workshop on Monday of the conference. This is the first time First Alaskans Institute has done resolution in the four years we have hosted the conference and it was met with great enthusiasm. It is anticipated that

this process will only improve as we continue to refine the process to allow for a longer lead time to submit them and allowing for time on the floor to discuss the resolutions. The five resolutions that were passed onto the regional breakouts are attached to this report. They are:

**Resolution 07-01:** SUPPORT STATEWIDE FOR TEEN CENTERS

**Resolution07-02:** NATIVE YOUTH ATTENDANCE AT ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES CONVENTION

**Resolution 07-03:** SUPPORT PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION FOR EXPANSION OF ANMC PATIENT QUARTERS AND A HOSPICE CARE FACILITY STATEWIDE.

**Resolution 07-04:** SUPPORT PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION FOR ALASKA NATIVE ASSISTED LIVING HOME/LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES WHERE ADDITIONAL SERVICES ARE NEEDED

**Resolution 07-05:** SING, DANCE, PARTICIPATE: PROMOTING AND EXPANDING CARE FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

Many of the regions had comments about the resolutions and those have been included in this report under the region. Some regional breakout notes were lost in transit and First Alaskans will work to recover those notes through the statewide Elder and youth council representatives during the January 2008 teleconference meeting. In the regional breakout sessions, the participants elected the 2008 Elder and youth statewide council representatives.

#### Ahtna Region

Elder Representative: Roy Tansy, Sr., Cantwell  
Youth Representative: Douglas Rock, Copper Center  
Regional Discussion:

#### Aleut Region

Elder Representative: Vince Tutiakoff, Unalaska  
Youth Representative: Delores Gregory, Unalaska  
Regional Discussion:

**Resolution 07-01** Teen Youth Center - Passed

**Resolution 07-02** Youth at AFN – Passed

**Resolution 07-03** Expand ANMC and Hospice (Anchorage vs. statewide) – Passed

**Resolution 07-04** Expand long term care and assisted living - Passed

**Resolution 07-05** Expand care for those with disabilities - need to assess whether communities are trained to take care of Elders in their last stage of life – Passed

#### Arctic Slope Region

Elder Representative: Rex Okakok, Sr., Barrow  
Youth Representative: Selma Khan, Barrow

#### Bering Straits Region

Elder Representative: Daniel Karmun Sr., Nome

Youth Representative: Vanessa Tahbone, Nome

### Bristol Bay Region

Elder Representative: Anecia Kritz, Togiak

Youth Representative: Sheryl Wassillie, Igiugig

Regional Discussion:

#### **Resolution 07-01 – Passed with majority vote**

Concerns: few teens in some villages

Students need a place for healthy activities

- 1) Movement to cross out 15 = vote approved
- 2) Not “teen” – “recreation center”
- 3) Vandalism added – approved
- 4) Community center

#### **Resolution 07-02 – Passed**

Amendments

each village vs. each region

→ many villages (village and tribal council support) – passed

One male, one female youth

One male, one female Elder – passed

#### **Resolution 07-03 – Passed**

Amendments

Strategic locations instead of “statewide” – passed

#### **Resolution 07-04 – Passed**

No Amendments

#### **Resolution 07-05 – Passed**

- For Elders and those with disabilities

### Calista Region

Elder Representative: Bob Aloysius, Kalskag

Youth Representative: Dustin Evon, Kwigillingok

Regional Discussion:

### Chugach Region

Elder Representative: Donald Kompkoff, Sr. Valdez

Youth Representative: Kelly Barker, Anchorage

Regional Discussion:

#### **Resolution 07-01**

Amendment Discussion

- Add request for funding
- Teen orientated – pool tables, darts, recreation center, etc.
  - Pinball, video games, practice/teach musical instruments
- State/Federal Funding
- Movie nights – popcorn
- Incorporate Elders and Children
- Native Dancing
- Culture and Arts

- Outside Teachers – drums, skin sewing
  - Unanimous with Amendments
    - Motion Carries

**Resolution 07-02** Motion Carries  
**Resolution 07-03** Motion Carries  
**Resolution 07-04** Motion Carries  
**Resolution 07-05** Motion Carries

### Cook Inlet Region

Elder Representative: Dorothy Cook, Chugiak  
 Youth Representative: Steven Holley, Anchorage

### Doyon Region

Elder Representative: Dee Olin, Ruby  
 Youth Representative: Clara Perdue, Fairbanks  
 Regional Discussion:

#### **Resolution 07-01**

- teen center vandalized
- need money for youth
- your knowledge is the Elders
- Minto teen center was unsuccessful
- Not enough teen centers in village
- put youth in charge
- built sweat houses with high schoolers (received school credit and cash)
- built a cabin
- builds self-esteem and builds leaders

#### Teen Center

- Let the teens build it!
- Multi-use
- Teens built it – will take better care of it.
- Empty building to renovate/raise money for a teen center
- Parents must get involved!
- Youth Tribal Court – weekly meetings

#### **Resolution 07-02**

- not all villages can meet the gender requirement
- two youths instead of gender specific

#### **Resolution 07-03**

Amendment – Add Patient with escort.

#### **Resolution 07-04**

- Amendment – 1) All Alaska to be included not region specific  
 2) Task force to look into a needs assessment  
 3) Have youth volunteer with the facility

Elders don't want to move to assisted living in the cities, they want to stay at home

Amendment – To include: disability

## Koniag Region

Elder Representative: Nick Alokli, Kodiak

Youth Representative: Desiree Heglin, Sitka

Regional Discussion:

**Resolution 07-01** Teen Youth Center - Passed

**Resolution 07-02** Youth at AFN – Passed

**Resolution 07-03** Expand ANMC and Hospice – Passed

**Resolution 07-04** Expand long term care and assisted living - Passed

**Resolution 07-05** Expand care for those with disabilities – Passed

## NANA Region

Elder Representative: Willie Goodwin, Jr., Kotzebue

Youth Representative: Lexi Staheli, Kiana

## Southeast Region

Elder Representative: Florence Sheakley, Juneau

Youth Representative: Krista Lamp, Anchorage

## Conference Staffing

The entire First Alaskans Institute staff contributed to the success and work of the conference.

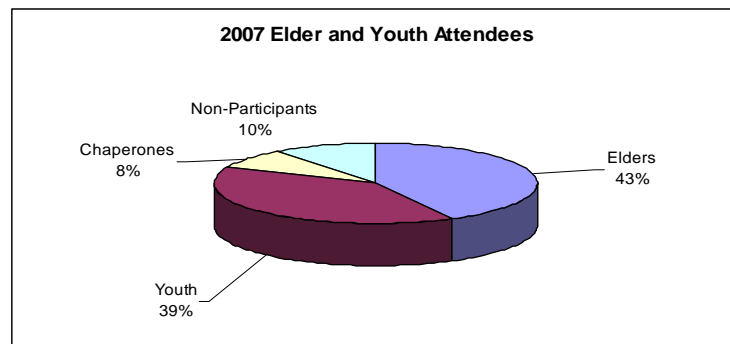
Memry Dahl (Aleut) and Sheila Vent (Athabascan) were responsible for the day-to-day coordination and planning of conference activities. Sheila was hired in early July and continued until after the conference as the Fairbanks local representative for community planning around the entire week of activities.

## Registration

In 2007 there were 307 youth registrants, 331 Elder registrants, 65 chaperones, and 82 observers registered. The total number of registrants was 785 participants; this was an increase from 709 registrants in 2005 and a 10% increase over 2005.

First Alaskans also reorganized registration processes, and registered **Conference Observers** and **Chaperones**. The observer's category allowed staff a more accurate understanding of the number of overall attendees. The Observers category included college students, organizational representatives, media, and other members of the general public.

Three registrants were from the 13<sup>th</sup> Region, 15 were from the Ahtna Region, 21





were from the Aleut Region, 142 were from Arctic Slope, 96 were from Bristol Bay, 64 from Bering Straits, 73 from Calista, 37 from Chugach, 30 from Cook Inlet, 151 from Doyon, 23 from Koniag, 87 from NANA, and there were 34 registrants from Southeast Alaska.

## Communications

Prior to the conference, weekly updates were emailed to interested people and public service announcements were delivered to print and electronic media. Schools, Tribes and non-profits received mail-outs that included "Save-the-Date" cards, letters, registration forms, and village-life contest information. First Alaskans updated its website with conference developments: agenda, travel and hotel information and community events.

From Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup> through Tuesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> the Elders & Youth Conference received local media coverage from Fairbanks stations.

Blueberry Productions also provided conference web casting. Through web casting viewers were able to log onto the internet, watch conference proceedings, and leave comments. Over the course of the two day conference there were over 1,600 web cast viewers.

## Development Efforts

First Alaskans recognizes the sponsors that support Alaska Native Elders, youth and healthy communities. The following Leader sponsors contributed \$10,000 dollars: Wells Fargo Alaska and Princess Tours (who's in-kind contribution included participant transportation in Fairbanks).

The following Mentor sponsors contributed \$5,000 dollars: BP, ASRC, Alyeska Pipeline, ConocoPhillips, NANA, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Rasmuson Foundation, Warbelow's Air Venture (who's in-kind contribution allowed for participants from the interior to travel on reduce airfare), Fraternal Order of the Alaska State Troopers (who's in-kind contribution sponsored the youth dance), and Shell Exploration and Production.

Teacher sponsors contributed \$2,500 dollars and include: Northrim Bank, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and Premera Blue Cross.

Student sponsors contributed \$1,000 and include: CIRI, ACS, Aleut Corporation, AIDEA, RIM First People, APICDA, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Alaska Permanent Capital Management, Alaska USA, and Van Ness Feldman.

Additional sponsors include: CIHA, Usibelli Foundation, and Wallace Insurance Inc.

## Exhibitors

This was the second year that First Alaskans coordinated conference exhibitors. Exhibitors were selected for the relevance of their material to our conference participants. Conference vendors included:

- AARP Alaska State Office,
- Alaska VA Healthcare System,
- Social Security Administration,
- National Indian Commission on Aging,
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium,
- UAF, Interior Aleutian Campus
- Alaska Federal Health Partnership
- UAS – Southeast Campus,
- Princess Tours,
- Sealaska Corporation,
- UAF – Northwest Campus
- Life Alaska Donor Services
- Association of Village Council Presidents,
- Regulatory Commission of Alaska,
- Illisagvik College,
- Alaska Youth for Environmental Action,
- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA),
- Alaska Children’s Trust,
- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education,
- Access Alaska
- Future Teachers of Alaska
- 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline
- Alaska Job Corps,
- Young Warriors,
- Alaska Pacific University,
- Alaska State Fire Marshal’s Office,
- Alaska Village Initiatives,
- Alaska Weather Service,
- Boys and Girls Club,
- NOAA Fisheries Enforcement,
- D.A.R.E., University of Alaska,
- Alaska Native Elder Health Advisory Committee,
- Galena Interior Learning Academy,
- Alaska Territorial Guard Program,
- Alaska Department of Public Safety/Troopers,
- Fred Meyer,
- Arctic National Wildlife Refuge,
- Reinventing Schools Coalition,
- Dartmouth College,
- Alaska Digital Archives,
- Alaska Christian College,
- And US Fish and Wildlife Services.

## Volunteers

More than 50 volunteers committed to involving themselves during the Elders & Youth Conference. About half of the volunteers were referred from the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau. Volunteers included registrars, greeters, runners, facilitators and recorders for regional breakout sessions. Volunteers moved boxes, stuffed conference bags, passed out door prizes and helped with the Media. Each volunteer was provided with a volunteer conference t-shirt as a way for participants to identify them during the conference and as a token of our gratitude.

First Alaskans recognized two outstanding volunteers who have consistently contributed to the conference: Judith Evans (Athabascan) and Pearl Griest (Inupiaq).

## Conference Evaluation

Through participant evaluations and staff debriefing sessions, First Alaskans identified those things that worked well, and those needing improvement. Here is a brief overview:

Popular presentations included both keynote addresses by Kia HoChee and Valerie Davidson and a favorite workshop was Learning Inupiaq Language.

The dance groups were a big hit with all generations of attendees, especially the performances by the Hawaiian delegation and Chevak Tanq'ik Dancers.

A couple of areas for suggested improvement are: getting more signage at the airport and for conference breakout locations, more activities with Elders and youth working together, publicizing the web-streaming earlier, more interactive presentations, and regional breakout space at the Carlson center is an area to focus improvement for future conferences in Fairbanks.

## Support of Community Events

Special thanks go to the Fraternal Order of the Alaska State Troopers for hosting the annual youth dance, the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Museum of the North for hosting the Wisdom Bearers recognition activities and the Fairbanks Rotary for hosting the Elders Lunch.

Also, thanks go to the Borough and City Mayor's offices, the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, and community of Fairbanks for their efforts in supporting the Elders & Youth Conference.

## Conference Follow-up

Conference representatives from the NANA region, Elder Willie Goodwin Jr. and Elder and Youth Liaison, Sheila Vent, presented to the AFN General Convention. During this presentation they talked about the highlights of the conference, those that were elected to the statewide council and the resolutions that were passed by the conference participants to be passed on to AFN for inclusion in the 2008 priorities.

In addition to the reports delivered to the AFN Convention and this written report, conference follow-up activities include a thank you ad in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner, thank you letters to presenters, sponsors, and other participants, and website updates. The input of the 400+ participants who submitted evaluation forms will also be used for improvements to next year's conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Memry Dahl,  
Leadership Development Director  
First Alaskans Institute