

First Alaskans Institute

Progress for the Next 10,000 Years



President/CEO Janie Leask and Board of Trustee Vice Chair, Sam Kito, Jr., discuss 2008 work plan and budget.

Looking Ahead to 2008

The 11-member Board of Trustees of First Alaskans Institute met on Dec. 6, 2007 and approved the 2008 work plan and budget for the Institute.

Highlights include:

A second year of funding for the Community Engagement Awards was approved at a level of \$300,000. This initiative was introduced in 2007 and funded at \$500,000, providing awards to 18 community projects across the state that promote healthy and thriving communities with a focus on specific areas. The distribution of funding for the 2007 projects will end late September 2008, so this smaller amount for the fiscal year 2008 will allow a number of new projects while still administering the existing awards.

2008 initiatives for the Alaska Native Policy Center will include:

- publishing a quarterly policy bulletin
- continuing the Discussion Series
- providing research project and publication internships and fellowship opportunities
- developing and disseminating demographic products
- providing Census Information Center training

The Trustees continued their support for the Leadership

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Community Engagement Awards Highlight – Denakkanaaga, Inc.

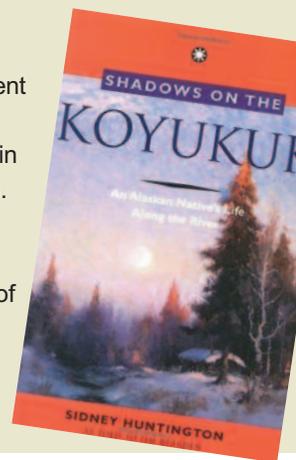
First Alaskans Institute introduced Community Engagement Awards in summer 2007 to award \$500,000 to community organizations for projects that demonstrate collaborative efforts among community organizations to plan and implement innovative, lasting programs that contribute to healthy and thriving communities. Funding is awarded to results-based activities that include family and community partnerships in the following areas:

- early childhood education activities that better prepare children for success in school
- increasing high school graduation rates
- connecting Elders and youth in cultural learning
- promoting youth leadership development opportunities

One of the 18 projects funded in 2007 is a stage production based on "Shadows of the Koyukuk," a book by a well-known and highly regarded Athabascan Elder, Sidney Huntington. Matt Stevens is heading up the project and works for Denakkanaaga Inc., the Elders organization serving the Tanana Chiefs region based in Fairbanks.

Denakkanaaga, in partnership with Digii Naii, received \$23,000 from the Institute to promote Alaska Native history, culture, arts/theatre/drama, and to increase parent involvement and organizational collaboration within the community and in an educational and fun project for youth. The project will be called Broadway for Alaska Natives. The students and volunteers will be trained in all aspects of stage production, set creation, and performance through this production.

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Your Gift Shapes our Future...

Your generous donation can have a part in ensuring that our efforts on behalf of the Native community will continue as we work to develop the next generation of Native leaders, engage communities towards becoming healthy and thriving, and gather information so that leaders can make positive decisions regarding Alaska Native issues.

Your gift will make a difference in the lives of Alaska Native people as we work together to achieve First Alaskans Institute's vision; "Progress for the next ten thousand years. True to Heritage and Values, Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future."

Please consider sending your tax-deductible donation to:
**First Alaskans Institute • 606 E Street, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99501**

Checks may be made to First Alaskans Institute. The Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (Federal Tax ID: 92-0174857). We also accept credit card donations by phone at (907) 677-1700. Please do not mail cash. Your support is sincerely appreciated.

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Janie Leask, President/CEO

Message from the President

Holiday Greetings from us all!

As you'll notice in this issue we're welcoming two new staff members, Joan Kane and Gary Chythlook, and saying farewell and a huge thank you to Sarah Scanlan for her work here at First Alaskans Institute.

2007 has definitely been a year of transition for the Institute, both at the staff and Board levels. We now have a full Board of Trustees of eleven, all actively engaged in the initiatives of the Institute. I'd like to congratulate two of our Trustees, Oliver Leavitt and Willie Hensley, on their recent retirements and thank them for their many years of dedication, contributions, and tireless advocacy on behalf of Alaska Natives. I know we can count on them to remain actively engaged in the work we do.

The Institute is still a relatively young organization but one with big plans as we head into the New Year. Our three major areas of focus continue to be the expansion of our leadership development programs; focusing the work of the Alaska Native Policy Center and expanding our collaboration with other organizations to ensure we're addressing current issues of concern to the Native Community; and, continuing our Community Engagement Awards for those activities which contribute to healthy and thriving communities . . . and sharing those best practices with you so we all benefit.

Thank you for your ongoing support and warm wishes for the coming year!

Janie Leask, President & CEO

First Alaskans Institute

Happy Holidays



It's once again that time of year when friends, family, co-workers and community partners come together to celebrate the year's achievements and look forward to the exciting year ahead. Earlier this month, First Alaskans Institute hosted a Holiday Open House at the Alaska Native Arts Foundation. Willie "Iggiagruk" Hensley, chairman of the Institute's Board of Trustees, welcomed the many guests that were in attendance.

From the Trustees and employees at the Institute, we warmly wish you a safe and wonderful



Board of Trustees Oliver Leavitt and Willie ("Iggiagruk") Hensley with President/CEO Janie Leask (middle)

Alaska Native Opinion Study Released at AFN

First Alaskans Institute President/CEO, Janie Leask, and three members of the Institute's Board of Trustees released preliminary findings from an Alaska Native Opinion Study at the 2007 AFN Convention in Fairbanks, Alaska. The study consisted of a survey, which was conducted in April 2007, and a series of conversations held between May and August 2007. Alaska Natives and non-Natives were polled and included in the conversations.

"As Native people, we have been the subject of countless numbers of surveys and studies – this project marks the beginning for us to do our own work," said Leask. "The project will provide objective and accurate information for Native leaders and public policy makers to use as an additional tool to develop appropriate policy initiatives to address issues of concern to Alaska Natives and the state as a whole."

The goals of the project were as follows:

- establish a baseline for periodic survey of Alaska Native and non-Native households to learn attitudes and opinions on issues of importance to the Native community and Alaska
- identify potential areas of study for the Alaska Native Policy Center
- collect information that can be used as a foundation for further discussion between urban and rural Alaskans, which could potentially lead to public policy changes

"Over the course of the conversations, there was a consensus in recognizing that we know the underlying issues and that we need to prioritize them for action. The need for increased communication, transparency and working together to break down 'silos' of thought and action so that a sense of shared priorities and collective action might be established," said Byron Mallott, Alaska Native Policy Center senior fellow and the Institute's Board of Trustees member.

"As Native people, we need to address the issues raised in the survey and conversations. The Institute is committed to be a part of the solution as we move forward," said Leask..

For more information about the conversations and survey, visit www.firstalaskans.org.



Kirsten Kinegak-Friday and Ashley Anderson authored two papers that are now available at www.firstalaskans.org.

Leadership Development Recruitment Begins

Summer 2008 marks the fifth year of First Alaskans Institute's Summer Internship Program for Alaska Native undergraduate and graduate students. Since its inception in 2004, nearly 100 students have been placed in businesses and non-profit organizations, both in urban and rural communities throughout Alaska, and we look forward to continuing to train future Alaskan Native leaders.

In addition to the Summer Internship Program, the Institute and the Alaska Native Professional Association (ANPA) have partnered and are pleased to announce their collaborative Leadership Plus pilot series. Leadership Plus will provide 30 entry-to-mid-level Alaska Native professionals with networking opportunities and educational seminars that are closely similar to the "Leadership Friday" component of the Summer Internship Program. These seminars are designed to increase understanding of Alaska Native history and tradition, to raise awareness of current and emerging issues, and to provide knowledge that will help them excel in their careers. The curriculum will be presented in half-day sessions that will be delivered between January 2008, and April 2008.

Applications for the spring 2008 "Leadership +" series and the 2008 Summer Internship Program are now available. Visit www.firstalaskans.org or call (907) 677-1700 for more information.

Policy Center Releases Two Reports

Two new reports have been released by the Alaska Native Policy Center and are available online at www.firstalaskans.org.

The American Community Survey (ACS) & Alaska Natives explains what the ACS is and how it differs from decennial census. It also identifies what Alaska Natives should know about the ACS and what they should be doing in regards to this new demographic tool. Ashley Anderson, Tlingit and Aleut, a political science major at the University of Alaska Southeast compiled the issue paper. Anderson was a First Alaskans Institute summer intern placed at the Alaska Native Policy Center in 2007.

The Solution to Alaska's Energy Crisis is a briefing paper that examines the current energy situation in Alaska, provides short and long term solutions to the situation and recommends the development of a statewide energy policy. Kirsten Kinegak-Friday, Yupik and Cup'ik, a student at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law authored the briefing paper. Kinegak-Friday was also an Institute summer intern who worked at the Alaska Native Policy Center.

Where Are They Now: Robin Morales



Robin Morales, 2005 Intern

Robin Morales participated as an intern in the First Alaskans Institute's Summer Intern Program in 2005. She interned at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP).

Morales is currently the Shareholder Outreach Manager at

Bristol Industries, a Subsidiary company of Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC). Morales assists shareholders with employment and training opportunity questions. She also manages the Shareholder Talent Bank, a growing talent pool of shareholders who are looking for work and/or training. Using the Shareholder Talent Bank, she matches qualified candidates with company job openings or refers shareholders to other Native corporations or agencies who can support them in their job search. She will also send out material, upon request, regarding local services and programs available for Alaska Natives in the Anchorage area to BBNC shareholders.

Morales also coordinates a couple of programs. The Bristol Job Shadow Program, which is a summer 2-week internship for shareholders or descendants to introduce them to the professional work environment, and a College Internship program at UAA. "I am on campus every week at the ANSEP program seeing how the BBNC students are doing," says Morales. She does presentations to different groups about the program including the BBNC Village Leadership Workshop, and gives quarterly updates to the BBNC board members and staff.

When Morales was an intern, what she liked best about the program was that she was able to work at UAA ANSEP with young incoming college students from around the state. "It is great to be part of a program that provides new students an opportunity to gain some college experience before actually beginning college. I also enjoyed the Friday (leadership) meetings. It was an honor to have so many current Native leaders visiting us and sharing their stories," states Morales, "I also enjoyed being in a program with other interns. It was a great way to network and know that there are many aspiring leaders among us."

Morales is married and a mother of five children (three boys and two foster daughters), so family keeps her pretty busy. Morales is completing her bachelors degree in Psychology, and will graduate in May 2008. After completing her degree, she will be applying to medical school.

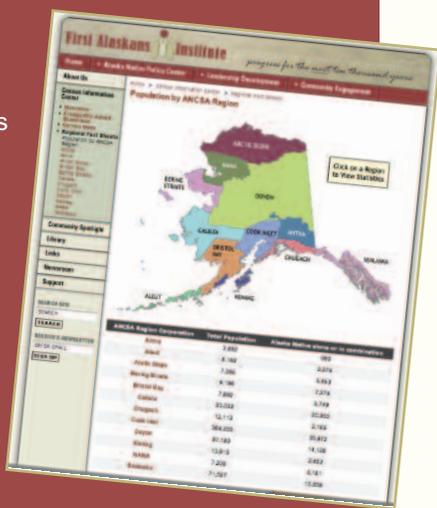
Good luck Robin!

New Census Data Available Online

Demographic information by Alaska Regional Corporation boundaries is now portrayed in map-form on the Census Information Center portion of the First Alaskans Institute's web site, www.firstalaskans.org. Users scroll over a region on the colorful map and click to drill down on information on total population, Alaska Native population, median age, median household income, male-to-female ration, drop-out rate, high school graduation rate, and electricity costs.

Another addition to the online Census Information Center is Alaska Native data from the 1950s and 1980s that was recently converted by the Census Bureau. These two decades were previously missing from the online information. With this addition, users can access demographic data from Census Bureau files from 1880 through 2000. To access the files, visit www.firstalaskans.org, click on the Census Information Center tab on the left, and then click on Census Data.

If you have questions about accessing the information or have trouble opening or downloading any of the files, please feel free to contact the Alaska Native Policy Center at (907) 677-1700.



Welcome Kane and Chythlook

Joan Kane and Gary Chythlook recently joined the First Alaskans Institute team.

Joan Kane, Inupiaq Eskimo with family in King Island and Mary's Igloo, joined the Institute in October as director of the Alaska Native Policy Center (Policy Center).

Kane brings extensive public policy expertise to the Institute as well as more than a decade of experience non-profit program administration and education programming, and communications experience. Prior to joining the Institute, Kane was a research analyst and consultant for Information Insights where she focused on health policy and rural development at the local and statewide level.

Kane graduated from Harvard College with honors and is the first Inupiaq Eskimo to receive a bachelor's degree from the college. She continued her education, receiving a master's of fine arts degree from Columbia University.

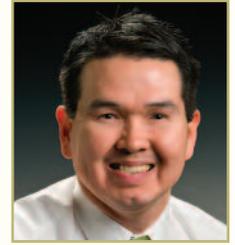
Gary Chythlook, Yup'ik Eskimo with family in Dillingham, joined First Alaskans Institute as communications manager in October. He is responsible for overseeing media relations, community relations, special events, and marketing.

Prior to joining the Institute, Chythlook was the public relations manager for Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, AK. He owns a web design and development company.

Chythlook graduated from Walla Walla College in College Place, WA, with a bachelor's of arts degree in psychology and a bachelor's of science degree in elementary education with a minor in special education.



Joan Kane, Alaska Native Policy Director



Gary Chythlook, Communications Manager



Funder's Spotlight: Denali Commission

First Alaskans Institute is pleased to recognize and thank the Denali Commission for its many years helping Alaska Native communities and people.

The Denali Commission is a federal-state partnership designed to provide critical utilities, infrastructure, and economic support throughout Alaska, but with an emphasis on remote communities.

"The Commission has been an integral partner with us in helping to develop local, regional, and statewide leaders of the future," said Janie Leask, the Institute's President/CEO. "They fully understand it takes leadership at the local level to ensure the lasting success of projects they've funded."

The relationship with the Institute began in 2001 when the Denali Commission awarded a \$1.2 million grant to assist Alaska's rural community with planning and development activities. As a result, 25 rural Alaska communities received financial awards through this project.

Alaska Native leadership development is a key area of focus for the Institute and important to the Denali Commission. Since 2004, the Institute has received a total of \$780,000 from the Denali Commission's Training Program to fund the Summer Internship Program.

The Summer Internship Program's goal is to develop a future generation of Alaska Native leaders which includes interactive sessions with Alaska Native Elders and community and

business leaders. The Denali Commission's financial support has been instrumental in creating a program that gives rural Alaska Native juniors, seniors and graduate level students intern opportunities in their home communities. In addition, the Commission has provided financial support of the annual Elders & Youth Conference.

Economic development in Alaska's rural areas is a major focus for the Denali Commission and important to the Institute. The Denali Commission funded the Rural Development Performance Measures (RDPM) research project, a collaborative partnership that looks at indicators for use in measuring the impact of economic development on poverty reduction. This massive undertaking was recently completed and is available on the Institute's web site at www.firstalaskans.org.

"We are thrilled to have such a close working relationship with everyone at First Alaskans Institute. To really advance quality of life in rural Alaska, we need to understand existing conditions and develop tomorrow's leaders who can move us ahead from here. The Institute's Internship program is a model for the country and its groundbreaking indicators program is essential for working effectively on economic development and poverty reduction. We look forward to further collaboration, and we appreciate the recognition for our partnership," states George Canelos, Federal Co-chair of the Denali Commission.

Thanks to the Denali Commission for their commitment to and support of the Alaska Native community!

Elders & Youth Conference Recap

The 2007 Elders & Youth Conference drew 785 youth, Elders, chaperones and observers to Fairbanks, AK, Oct. 22-23, 2007, for two days of dynamic speakers, relevant workshops, dance presentations, and community events and activities. All 13 regions were represented at the conference.

During regional breakout sessions, participants discussed and voted on resolutions that had been submitted prior to the conference and recommended from the resolutions workshop during the conference. The five resolutions that passed included:

- Resolution 07-01: Support Statewide for Teen Centers
- Resolution 07-02: 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

The 2008 Elders & Youth Statewide Council representatives were also elected in the regional breakout sessions. The 2008

Elder representative

include: Roy Tansy, Sr., Ahtna; Vince Tutiakoff, Aleut; Rex Okakok, Sr., Arctic Slope; Daniel Karmjun, Sr., Bering Straits; Anecia Kritz, Bristol Bay; Bob Aloysius, Calista; Donald Kompkoff, Sr., Chugach; Dorothy Cook, Cook Inlet; Dee Olin, Doyon; Nick Alokli, Koniag; Willie Goodwin, Jr., NANA; and Florence Sheakley, Sealaska.

Youth representatives for 2008 include: Douglas Rock, Ahtna; Delores Gregory, Aleut; Selma Khan, Arctic Slope; Vanessa Tahbone, Bering Straits; Sheryl Wassillie, Bristol Bay; Dustin Evon, Calista; Kelly Barker, Chugach; Steven Holley, Cook Inlet; Clara Perdue, Doyon; Desiree Heglin, Koniag; Lexi Staheli, NANA; and Krista Lamp, Sealaska.

For more information on the Elders & Youth Conference, visit www.firstalaskans.org.



Elder and youth delegates at 2007 conference

Looking Ahead to 2008

Continued from page 1

Development efforts, including the Summer Intern Program and the Elders & Youth Conference. They also supported two new initiatives: "Leadership +" a five-month program designed to provide an opportunity for Alaska Natives in the workforce to participate in a series of seminars on topics such as culture, history, management skills, etc. The second new initiative is the Public Policy Internships, which are based in Juneau, AK and Washington, D.C. These internships will provide emerging Alaska Native leaders the opportunity to learn more about the legislative process.

Development efforts, including fundraising and increasing the endowment fund, will be a focus in the upcoming year. The Trustees set a goal to add \$3 million to the endowment over the next two years. The Institute is in the planning stage for sponsoring three national "friend raisers" to build awareness and support for the organization.

To learn more about the Institute's initiatives, programs and projects, visit www.firstalaskans.org.

Denakkanaaga, Inc.

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The first show, a directorial debut by Wesley Roberts Dalton of Authentic Alaskan Productions, will be held in April 2008, at the Chena River Convention Center. The plays are mainly for educational purposes and attendees will not be charged for admission.

The play highlights the intent of the Community Engagement Awards, which was to spark collaboration between organizations to result in outcomes beyond the life of the award. Stevens has worked hard to bring together the University of Fairbanks (UAF), Effie Kokrine Charter School, Doyon, Limited, Doyon Foundation, Fairbanks Native Association, Interior Regional Housing Authority, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and Denakkanaaga Inc. to create this innovative program. The student participants will earn college credit from this program.

This project exemplifies the intent of the Institute's Board of Trustees support of this initiative, which is to encourage organizations at the local levels to come together to discuss and identify solutions for the issues important to them. In this project, Sidney Huntington is being acknowledged and recognized for his many years of beating the drum on the importance of staying in school and knowing our histories. Along with other Elders, he will provide guidance and wisdom on this project to the youth to help them understand the importance of knowing where they come from, and to use that pride in heritage as the foundation for where they are going.

The Institute has completed its first round of funding for this initiative which was based on the Native Community's feedback and recommendations from participation in Education Summits, the Summer Internship Program, Elders & Youth Conference, Policy Center research projects and Discussion Series, and participation in statewide and local advisory groups.

The Trustees has approved a second year of funding for 2008. A total of \$300,000 will be awarded to projects that meet the criteria for funding. Applications will be available in January, 2008 and information is available on the Institute's website, www.firstalaskans.org. Notification on this opportunity will also be sent via e-mail to the Institute's database list.

Sarah Scanlan Receives Service Award

Sarah Scanlan recently announced her departure from First Alaskans Institute and at the December meeting; the Institute's Board of Trustees presented her with a certificate of appreciation for her many years of outstanding service. "Sarah has contributed to numerous projects benefiting the Alaska Native community over the six years with the Institute," said Janie Leask, President/CEO, "we wish her well and know she will succeed at whatever she decides to do next." Sarah's last day with the Institute was Dec. 14, 2007. She plans on taking some time off before beginning her next adventure.

Sarah Scanlan with Board of Trustees Willie "Iggiagruk" Hensley and Byron I. Mallott



Meet Our Team

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Vision

Progress for the next ten thousand years
True to Heritage and Values, Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future.

Mission

Advance Alaska Natives through community engagement, information and research, collaboration, and leadership development.

Values

Integrity
Collaboration
Traditional Knowledge
Responsibility
Excellence

Meet Our Board of Trustees

Willie (Iggiagruk) Hensley, Chairman (*Inupiaq*)
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Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak

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Former State Senator

Byron I. Mallott (*Tlingit*)
Senior Fellow, Alaska Native Policy Center

Marie Nash (*Aleut*)
Director, Ugashik Tribal Village Council
Retired Staff to Senator Ted Stevens

In Memoriam:
Morris Thompson (*Tanana Athabascan*)
Our Friend and Colleague

Visit us at www.firstalaskans.org

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