



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash
Vol. 50 No. 9 • September 2025



2025 Elders Day of Caring

Respect for Elders is one of our core Athabascan values—and on July 21, that value was brought to life during the first-ever Elders Day of Caring, a community-wide day of service coordinated by Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) with support from partner organizations.

More than 90 volunteers signed up to help Alaska Native Elders in the Fairbanks area with a wide range of home projects, including yardwork, painting, safety improvements, and general maintenance. Out of 46 Elder applications received, 20 projects were selected for the event. Thanks to the incredible dedication and gener-

osity of the volunteers, all 20 projects were completed, and several volunteers even went above and beyond by assisting with additional homes whose projects had not initially been selected.

Partner organizations that made the day possible included Denakkanaaga, the Interior Regional Housing Authority, Doyon, Limited, Fairbanks Native Association, the Council of Laborers Unions, and Jolly Roger, Inc. Additional support came from organizations like Key Bank, GVEA, and other community members.

"It is part of our culture to take care of our Elders," said Chief Brian Ridley.

"I'm grateful to everyone who showed up and gave their time, energy, and heart. It means so much to see our community come together like this in the spirit of service."

With the success of the event, TCC and its partners plan to bring Elders Day of Caring to Interior villages in the future—ensuring Elders across the region feel supported, respected, and cared for.

"This was just the beginning," said Chief Ridley. "We look forward to continuing this work in our rural communities."

MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 4.

MMIP Memorial Bench Dedication

September 3, 2025 • 1:00pm

Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall

Join TCC for a special MMIP Memorial Bench Dedication Gathering, hosted by TCC's Tribal Protection and Safety Division. We will come together to honor and remember our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives with a riverfront bench dedication, words from community leaders, and a heartfelt reading of names.

Indian Tacos will be served. All are welcome.



IN THIS ISSUE...

PAGE 3: Dan Nelson Wins Alaska Immunization Award

PAGE 5: TCC Leadership Meets with HHS Secretary

PAGE 6: Subregional Meetings in Hughes & Beaver

PAGE 7: CHAP Spotlight

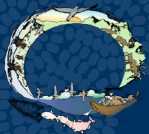


Mission

Tanana Chiefs Conference provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign Tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior Alaska Native people.

Vision

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

Executive Board

Trimble Gilbert, Arctic Village
1st Traditional Chief

Andrew Jimmie, Minto
2nd Traditional Chief

Brian Ridley, Eagle
Chief/Chairman

Sharon Hildebrand, Nulato
Vice-President

Charlie Wright, Rampart
Secretary/Treasurer

Herbie Demit, Tanacross
Upper Tanana

Claude 'Joe' Petruska, Nikolai
Upper Kuskokwim

Nancy James, Gwichyaa Zhee
Yukon Flats

Ivan Demientieff, Grayling
Lower Yukon

Lori Baker, Minto
Yukon Tanana

Charlie Green, Galena
Yukon Koyukuk

Peter Demoski, Nulato
Elder Advisor

Mackenzie Englishoe, Gwichyaa Zhee
Youth Advisor



Letter from the Chief

Dear Tribal Leaders and Tribal Members,

Last month, we welcomed Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., to the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center. During this visit, I, along with the Executive Board, had the opportunity to share issues that are critically important to Interior Alaska. We spoke about the importance of food security and subsistence access as essential to both health and cultural identity, the continued lack of piped water and sewer systems in 13 Interior Alaska villages, the shortage of behavioral health providers and the urgent need for culturally grounded services, and the importance of federal programs such as Medicaid expansion, HRSA, and SAMHSA to support care for both Tribal and non-Tribal residents. These conversations are vital to ensuring that Tribal voices are heard and that the needs of our communities remain a priority at the federal level.

In addition, I recently participated in a roundtable discussion with Senator Lisa Murkowski in Anchorage alongside other Tribal Leaders for the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. The purpose of this meeting was to review and provide feedback on the draft Native Children's Commission Implementation Act, which has the potential to strengthen services and supports for our youth and families across Alaska.

We also concluded our fall subregional meetings last month. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to each of the hosting communities for welcoming us into your villages. These gatherings are invaluable, as they allow us to hear directly from community members about successes, challenges, and priorities. I deeply value my time in the villages, as I believe being on the ground is the best way to truly understand the needs and strengths of our communities.

Now that we are in hunting season and many of you will be out on the land, spending time with family and preparing to put away food for the winter, I want to remind everyone to stay safe. Please practice proper gun safety, let others know where you are going and when you plan to return, and look out for one another. Let's make sure that everyone comes home safe and continues caring for our families and communities.

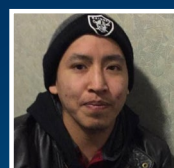
Mahsi' Choo,
Chief Brian Ridley
Tanana Chiefs Conference



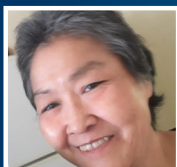
MISSING



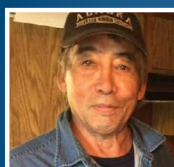
Lorraine
Ginnis



Willis
Derendoff



Debbie
Nictune



Frank
Minano



Doren
Sanford

SUBMIT TIPS ANONYMOUSLY:

Text AKTIPS followed by your tip to
84711 or visit

<https://dps.alaska.gov/ast/tips>



Call the Alaska State Troopers at
907-451-5100, Fairbanks Police
Department at 907-450-6500 or
TCC Public Safety at
907-452-8251 ext.3269.

Visit

www.tananachiefs.org/missing
for more information.

Dan Nelson Wins Alaska's 2025 Immunization Champion Award

Dan Nelson, Director of Pharmacy at Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), has been named Alaska's 2025 Immunization Champion. This award honors Dan for his hard work, leadership, and dedication to helping people across Interior Alaska get the vaccines they need to stay healthy.

Dan is a trusted expert in immunizations. He supports pharmacists, health aides, and doctors in our region. He also works on a statewide team that helps healthcare workers learn the best ways to give vaccines in Alaska's unique and remote areas.

Dan's work is about more than just vaccines—he brings people together. He helped TCC make sure that vaccines were available not only to Tribal members, but to everyone in the community, including teachers and non-Native residents. Dan also partnered with schools and emergency teams to get vaccines to first responders and school staff in rural villages.

Because many of these villages are far apart and hard to reach, Dan created new ways to safely deliver vaccines while keeping them cold. His efforts helped bring vaccines to some of the most remote places in the country.

Thanks to Dan's leadership and teamwork, more people in Alaska have access to important vaccines. Congratulations, Dan, and thank you for helping protect our communities!



Lower Yukon Subregional Meeting Held in Shageluk

In July, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) leadership traveled to Shageluk for the Lower Yukon Fall Subregional Meeting.

Over the course of the gathering, TCC staff presented updates on key topics identified by the subregion, including public safety, education, healthcare, hunting and fishing, energy, and subregional fund distributions. These discussions provided an opportunity for leaders and community members to exchange information, address challenges, and explore solutions that support the well-being of Tribal members.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the community of Shageluk for their warm hospitality and to the leadership of the Lower Yukon for inviting us to be part of these important conversations that strengthen collaboration across the region.



NOW STREAMING

New Episodes Every Week



NEW EPISODES

Tune in every Monday at 9:30AM on KRFF 89.1 or listen on Spotify and YouTube.

Your weekly update from Tanana Chiefs Conference - featuring news, upcoming events, highlights, and more! TCC Weekly is a short-form podcast produced by TCC to keep our communities, partners, and employees informed about what's happening across the region!

Visit www.tananachiefs.org/tcc-weekly to listen and learn more!

SCAN TO LISTEN ON SPOTIFY



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

2025 Elders Day of Caring Photos





Circle of Protection: The Public Safety Dispatch

2025 Fire Prevention Week: Coming to Your Community Soon!

By TCC VPSO Sgt. Nate Becker

In conjunction with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), TCC Public Safety would like to announce our first annual Fire Prevention Week Public Outreach Campaign. The NFPA is a U.S.-based international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating deaths, injury, property damage, and economic loss due to fire, electrical, and related hazards. As a part of their mission, the NFPA endorses and promotes an annual National Fire Prevention Week which always occurs during the week of October 9th. This year marks the 100-year anniversary of Fire Prevention Week, and this year's theme is CHARGE into Safety: Lithium Ion Batteries in Your Home. Previous themes have involved preventing cooking fires, installing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide awareness, to name but a few.

In an effort to promote safe and healthy Tribes, all of our officers will be out in force during the week of October 5th through the 11th, and we are

asking for your help. Our goal is to get as many officers as we can out into the schools and the communities as we work in conjunction with the NFPA to deliver this year's message. We will have games and activities for the kids and lots of useful information to share with everyone. Do have an event going on that week? If so, we would love to be a part of it! Don't hesitate to reach out to one of our officers or Public Safety Manager David Atteberry to see how and when we can bring you this important safety message.

What we need from you are requests for our presence. As we all know, most of our villages don't currently have a VPSO, and while we diligently work to correct that, please know that we have weekly discussions on how to better utilize our officers and get them out to your villages. Our aim is to visit as many villages as possible during Fire Prevention Week, but we need your help. Please communicate with us on how, when and where we can share

this year's message. We will also be reaching out to Tribal leadership to coordinate as many of these visits as possible.

Our goal is make Fire Prevention Week as successful as we can, but we can't do it alone. As our program continues to evolve, our mission is to provide more education and more outreach regarding community safety and wellbeing. Like most of rural Alaska, our region knows the pain associated with accidental fires. Many of our communities have felt severe cultural, social and economic impacts from otherwise preventable fires, and we are committed to the prevention and mitigation of those impacts.

We sincerely look forward to seeing you the week of October 5th-11th as we all work together to keep us safe from the devastating effects of fires.

You can reach the TCC Public Safety Department by calling, 907-452-8251 ext. 2068.

Solar for All Grant Terminated by the EPA

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced they are ending the Solar for All program. On Friday, August 8th, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) received an official termination notice for the Alaska Tribal Solar for All program from the EPA. As a result, TCC has halted work on the program and paused the selection process.

TCC is working with other Alaskan partners, including Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), and Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) to determine further action. TCC is saddened to share this news, but remains committed to securing other funding opportunities as they become available.

TCC Leadership Meets with Federal Leaders to Advocate for Interior Alaska Native Healthcare

In August, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) leadership, including members of the Executive Board, met with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Senator Dan Sullivan to discuss the healthcare needs of Alaska Native people across Interior Alaska.

This meeting was a key opportunity for TCC to advocate on behalf of our communities—sharing priorities, challenges, and solutions directly with high-level decision-makers who can help bring meaningful, lasting change.

Following the discussion, our guests toured the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center. The visit included a stop at the Pharmacy, where they learned more about the vital health services TCC provides throughout the region.

By engaging in these conversations and showcasing the work being done on the ground, TCC continues to ensure that the voices and needs of our Tribal communities are heard at the highest levels.



Yukon Tanana Subregional Meeting Held in Hughes

In August, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) leadership joined Tribal leaders in Hughes for the Yukon Tanana Subregional Meeting.

Over the course of two days, participants discussed key issues affecting our communities, including health updates, subregional fund distribution, housing, education, transportation, public safety, and employment. Each village shared reports highlighting their successes, challenges, and needs from the past year. These reports help leaders and community members work together to track progress, identify solutions, and strengthen services across the subregion.

TCC extends sincere thanks to the community of Hughes for their warm welcome and to the Yukon Tanana leadership for hosting these important and productive conversations. Together, these gatherings ensure that the voices of all our villages are heard and that we continue moving forward in unity.



Yukon Flats Subregional Meeting Held in Beaver

On August 6–7, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) staff traveled to Beaver for the Yukon Flats Subregional Meeting.

During the two-day gathering, the TCC team provided updates on a wide range of programs and services, including healthcare, behavioral health, education, employment and training, Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) and public safety initiatives, as well as hunting and fishing matters important to the region.

These meetings are an important opportunity for TCC and community leadership to come together, share information, and discuss ways to strengthen services for Tribal members. We are grateful to the community of Beaver and the Yukon Flats leadership for their warm welcome and for creating a space for meaningful conversations that continue to build strong partnerships across the region.



Community Health Aide *Spotlight*

Loren Thomas - Tetlin

By Linden Staciokas

I am the person who is lucky enough to interview the TCC health aides and then write up their profiles for the TCC newsletter. I try to remember that the purpose of these write-ups is two-fold: to introduce the hardworking people who are the first responders for the villages across the region covered by TCC, and to be a recruitment tool by giving examples of the many ways people can enter an exciting, interesting and well-paying career. While I have experienced a lot of emotions when talking to various health aides, it was not until I spoke with Loren Thomas that I felt envy for the life of a health aide.

Loren was born and raised in Tetlin, a village of about 100 people who live along the Tetlin River, between Tetlin Lake and the Tanana River. It is located about 20 miles from Tok. She is one of two health aides assigned to the community. The other health aide is her grandma, Lydia David.

As Loren recalls, "I wanted to be in the health field my whole life. I am sure part of it is that my grandmother loves her work as a health aide and helping the community in any way she can." That passion left a lasting impression on Loren and helped spark her own interest in the field of health. When a

position opened up, her grandmother urged her to apply.

"I saw it as my best shot, that being a health aide was a step onto the ladder of medicine." The most surprising thing about the health aide job for Loren was "the amount of learning that goes into it. It is far beyond the basics. It could be overwhelming but the entire Community Health Aide Program rests on providing whatever support a health aide needs to be successful in the position. Other health aides, the supervisors, the staff

people who do tasks like handle our travel...all of them are terrific. The physicians at Chief Andrew Issac who provide consultation and back up to us, treat us with respect and someone is available no matter what the time of day or night."

Loren describes the most meaningful part of her job as, "simply being present," working in the same village she grew up in, surrounded by family and community. "I love being able to help the people I have known my whole life," she says. "It means everything to me to give back to the place that raised me."

When not at the clinic or helping with her family's subsistence activities, Loren enjoys reading in her free time. "I've always liked reading for myself,"

she says. "It's a way to relax and learn outside of work. I like to watch movies. And I occasionally enjoy sewing, especially for potlatches."

Asked what people would need to apply for a health aide job, Loren said the Native Village of Tetlin had to write a letter of recommendation to TCC in support of her application to get into the program, and she had to pass the TCC background checks. "Of course, people have to have an interest in both science and helping people. Every applicant has areas of weakness, but the health aide program is built on fostering success, not failing people out for skills they can acquire on the job. No one is expected to be perfect."

Loren does have some long-range plans, including becoming a nurse. But for now, she is happy with her life: a beloved grandma who encourages her interest in medicine and works alongside her, and a strong family support system in her parents and siblings, who step in when she has to travel to Fairbanks for training or leave in the middle of the night for emergencies. And her supervisors and co-workers with CHAP are equally invested in helping her succeed as a health aide, caring for the very people she was raised around in one of the loveliest parts of Alaska.

I ended the interview with Loren thinking, "Lucky woman and lucky community to have her."

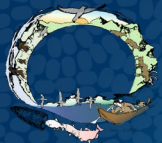


New! Patient Travel

24-Hour Access Phone Number

This dedicated, toll-free number can be utilized for all patient-travel related services. Call this new number to directly schedule your travel, confirm your arrangements, or ask travel-related questions.

Dial
844-747-0808
for all your travel
needs!



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The Council Newsletter

(907) 452-8251 ext. 3424
communications_dept@tananachiefs.org
www.tananachiefs.org

Communications Division
122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701



Sign-Up to receive
our E-Newsletter!
Get important
updates straight
to your inbox.



FIND YOUR PURPOSE

Join Our Team!

New Vacancies

Alatna	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Allakaket	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Birch Creek	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Chalkyitsik	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Circle	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Fairbanks	Dental Services Program Assistant
Fairbanks	Dental Assistant Trainer
Fairbanks	Addictions RN
Fairbanks	Ophthalmologist (Physician)
Fairbanks	Addictions RN
Fairbanks	Addictions LPN
Fairbanks	Credentialing Technician I
Fairbanks	Regional Public Safety Officer - Regional Itinerant
Fairbanks	Government Legal Affairs Director
Fairbanks	Health Information Management (HIM) Technician I
Fairbanks	Forestry Manager
Fairbanks	Pharmacist
Healy Lake	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Hughes	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Hughes	Behavioral Health Aide Trainee
Huslia	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Kaltag	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Koyukuk	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Nenana	Tribal Family Youth Specialist
Region-Wide	Community Health Aide/Practitioner - Itinerant
Region-Wide	Lead Family Contact Coordinator - SOC
Region-Wide	SOC Family Peer Advocate
Ruby	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Tanacross	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
Tetlin	Village Public Safety Officer

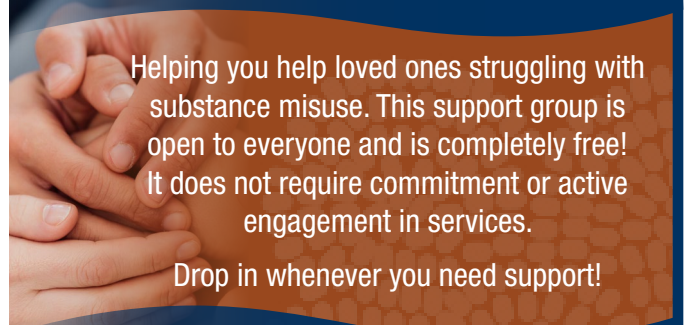


Apply Online or Learn About Our Benefits!

Visit our website at www.tananachiefs.org/careers to see a full list of open positions and learn more about the benefits available through Tanana Chiefs Conference.

JOBS LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF AUGUST 14, 2025

Let's Talk!



Helping you help loved ones struggling with substance misuse. This support group is open to everyone and is completely free! It does not require commitment or active engagement in services.

Drop in whenever you need support!



Scan the QR Code for more info &
join us Wednesdays via Zoom
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEP
1

TCC Offices Closed
Labor Day

SEP
3

MMIP Bench Dedication
1:00pm | Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall | Fairbanks, AK
<https://www.facebook.com/share/1758B2BnfZ/>

SEP 29-
OCT 8

**North Pacific Fisheries
Management Council Meeting**
Egan Civic & Convention Center | Anchorage, AK
<https://www.npfmc.org/three-meeting-outlook/>

SEP
30

Day for Truth & Reconciliation
Orange Shirt Day

OCT
3-5

Garden of Roses Camp
Fairbanks, AK
<https://www.tananachiefs.org/events/garden-of-roses-camp/>

OCT
13

TCC Offices Closed
Indigenous Peoples Day