



The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash
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"You are Tanana Chiefs. You are our people. You make us stronger. All of you—together. We can do this." -Chief/Chairman Sharon Hildebrand



Leading in a Good Way

TCC Tribes Elect Sharon Hildebrand as Chief/Chairman

The 42 member Tribes of Tanana Chiefs Conference elected Sharon Hildebrand of Nulato to serve a three-year term as Chief/Chairman during the 2026 Annual Convention and Full Board of Directors Meeting, held March 9–12.

Following the announcement of the election results, Chief Hildebrand invited incumbent Brian Ridley of Eagle to address the delegates, asking those in attendance to recognize his leadership and service.

"He stepped in during a hard time for our people. He stepped forward with

grace and dignity, and I just want to ask each of you to honor him," she said.

Chief Ridley expressed his appreciation to the delegates for the past four years, reflecting on his time in leadership.

"Sometimes life takes us down paths we don't expect. I hope that I can serve our region in some other way," he shared.

Standing with her family gathered beside her, Chief Hildebrand spoke to the strength of the Interior Tribes and the shared culture that unites the re-

gion. Her message centered on coming together, moving forward in a good way, and recognizing the power of the people.

"You are Tanana Chiefs. You are our people. You make us stronger. All of you—together. We can do this."

She also reflected on the personal experiences that have shaped her journey and her commitment to serve with humility and respect.

Chief Hildebrand is committed to leading with humility, transparency, and respect, grounding her approach

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Wear Red on May 5th!

May 5th is Missing & Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Day. Join us in wearing red to honor our loved ones who are missing or who have been murdered and to raise awareness about this important issue.



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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

Sharon Hildebrand, Nulato
Chief/Chairman

Rhonda Pitka, Beaver
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 Tribes and Tribal Members,

I am humbly honored and grateful to have been elected as the Chief/Chairman of Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC). This is a great honor, and I will carry it with respect for those who came before us and with a strong commitment to those who will come after.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate Chief Rhonda Pitka on graciously accepting the Full Board of Directors' nomination to complete the remainder of my Vice-Presidential term. I look forward to working alongside Chief Pitka as we continue guiding the work of our organization and supporting our Tribes across the TCC region.

Our Elders, who have guided us and brought us to this place, knew our younger generation will be watching. It is important that we continue to move forward in a good way for those looking to us to protect the path forward. This work is not about one person. It is about you, our tribal members, delegates, Chiefs, Second Chiefs, and Presidents—and the strength we carry together as one region.

On the first day of my term, I made it a priority to connect with our staff. It was time spent meeting and visiting each of our buildings here in Fairbanks and connecting with the people who carry out this important work for you every day. I want you to know that TCC has a strong and dedicated team, and I am grateful for their commitment to our Tribes and communities. As we move forward, we will be looking at ways to continue improving our services, so they reflect our guiding principle of Ch'eghwtsen'—providing accessible and trusted, world-class services with unconditional love, compassion, dignity, and respect.

Our communities are facing real and urgent challenges. We see it in the need for safe and stable housing, access to quality healthcare, strong public safety, reliable energy, and meaningful employment. These challenges touch every village and every family. They remind us that we must stand together in unity, just as our ancestors taught us.

We must continue to uplift our people by strengthening Native hire, protecting our lands and waters, and staying grounded in the purpose of TCC—to serve and support our villages. Our lands, our languages, and our ways of life are not separate from this work—they are at the heart of it.

As I step into this role, my commitment is simple. I will listen. I will lead with humility. I will be transparent in my actions and decisions. And I will always respect the voices and leadership of our Tribes.

Together, we can move forward in a good way. Together, we can create positive change for our people and ensure that TCC remains a healthy, strong, and unified voice for all of our Tribes—today and for future generations.

Ana Masee'

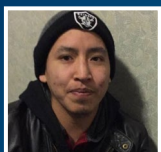
Sharon Hildebrand, Chief/Chairman
Tanana Chiefs Conference



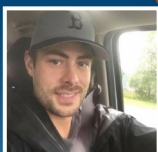
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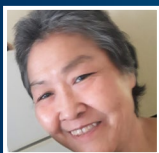
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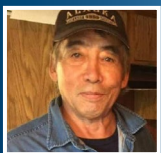
Willis Derendoff



Doren Sanford



Debbie Nictune



Frank Minano



Craig Albert

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.

Carrying the Promise Forward: Keynote Address Recap

The theme of this year's Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Annual Convention was brought to life through a powerful keynote reflecting on the past, present and future of Tribal health. The address featured long-time leaders, Second Traditional Chief Andy Jimmie and Dr. Jessica Black, who shared stories of perseverance, vision and deep commitment to the people of the region.

Chief Andy Jimmie, who was first elected to the TCC Executive Board in 1976 and later joined the Health Board in 1983, reflected on decades of progress in building the Tribal health system. He spoke candidly about the challenges faced along the way and the persistence required to move initiatives forward.

"Everybody had to put their heads together," Jimmie said. "We went to Plan B many times. But we managed to get the job done."

He emphasized that no single person could be credited for these accomplishments, noting that many ideas began at the village level and grew through collective effort. "To thank individuals, it's pretty hard to do, because so many people are involved in one project," he said.

Jimmie shared a deeply personal story that shaped his lifelong commitment to improving health care. In 1969, as his mother was being flown to Fairbanks for care, she asked him to make a promise: to work for the people and create better conditions for health aides and communities.

"I want you to work for the people," she told him. "Don't quit until it's done."

That promise became a driving force behind his work. Decades later, in 2005, the first standalone clinic was built in Minto — a milestone that represented years of planning, advocacy and determination.

"I was standing in front of there, and

I said, 'There it is, Mom,'" Jimmie recalled.

He described the development of village clinics as a long journey, one that began with small spaces and grew into fully equipped facilities serving communities across the region. Despite the progress, he acknowledged there is still more work ahead.

"If we stay united, and all work together as one, we will at one time be where we want to be," he said. "Right now, we've got a ways to go."

Jimmie also highlighted the strength of the Alaska Tribal Health System, noting that it has drawn attention from across the country and beyond. He encouraged younger generations to step forward and continue building on that foundation.

"To the young people, we need you to step up to keep that health system going," he said.

He closed with a message of unity and perseverance: "We got this far because we didn't give up."

Following Jimmie's remarks, Dr. Jessica Black, who took over as Chair of the TCC Health Advisory Board after Chief Jimmie retired from the role, reflected on the legacy of leadership that has shaped today's Tribal health system and the responsibility to carry that work forward.

"We truly stand on the shoulders of giants," Black said. "I'm only here because of those who built what we have today — a self-determined Tribal health system that has evolved into a world-class system."

She shared her vision for the future — one that brings together high-quality health care and the strength of In-



igenous knowledge and practices.

"I have a vision of our people reclaiming their ancestral practices, coupled with world-class health care, to become the best and healthiest versions of themselves," she said.

In closing, Black delivered a powerful and emotional poem titled "I See You, Brother. I See You, Mother." Her words centered on compassion, connection and seeing the whole person behind each patient.

"I see you," she repeated throughout the piece, reminding providers, leaders and community members alike of the importance of empathy and understanding.

Her poem spoke to the weight many people carry, while also uplifting the strength rooted in family, community and ancestral knowledge. She emphasized that healing happens not only through treatment, but also through connection to culture, to people and to identity.

"There is a team of people — your people, your communities, your ancestors — that stand behind you," she said. "You do not walk alone."

Together, the keynote speakers reflected a shared message: that the strength of the Tribal health system is built on unity, persistence, and deep care for one another. Their words served as both a reflection on how far the region has come and a call to continue the work for future generations.

"If we stay united, and all work together as one, we will at one time be where we want to be."

Chief Andy Jimmie

"I have a vision of our people reclaiming their ancestral practices, coupled with world-class health care, to become the best and healthiest versions of themselves,""

Dr. Jessica Black



Scan to watch the keynote address

www.tananachiefs.org/carrying-the-promise-forward-keynote-address-recap/



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in listening to the people and honoring the knowledge within each community. Guided by the principle of *Ch'egh-wtsen*, she emphasized that "Hear me" is a responsibility to truly listen to Tribes, Tribal members, Elders, and leaders with compassion and empathy. She shared that the strongest solutions come from the Tribes themselves, and that her role is to support and uplift those voices.

Her election marks a meaningful moment for Tanana Chiefs Conference—one that reflects the strength of the region and a shared commitment to move forward together, in a good way.



Tanana Chiefs Conference 2026 Election Results

Executive Board of Directors



**CHIEF/
CHAIRMAN**
Sharon Hildebrand,
Nulato
Term: 2026-2029



VICE PRESIDENT
Rhonda Pitka,
Beaver
Term: 2026-2028



**UPPER TANANA
REPRESENTATIVE**
Herbert Demit,
Tanacross
Term: 2026-2029



**YUKON KOYUKUK
REPRESENTATIVE**
Charlie Green,
Louden
Term: 2026-2029

Education Council

YUKON TANANA SUBREGION
Phyllis Erhart, Tanana
Term: 2026 - 2029

Interior Athabaskan Tribal College

UPPER KUSKOKWIM SUBREGION
No Candidates Declared
Term: 2026 - 2029

YUKON TANANA SUBREGION
No Candidates Declared
Term: 2026 - 2029

YUKON FLATS SUBREGION
No Candidates Declared
Term: 2026 - 2029

Regional Health Board of Directors



YUKON FLATS
Patricia Salmon,
Chalkyitsik
Term: 2026-2029

Interior Regional Housing Authority



SEAT E
Patricia MacDonald
Term: 2026-2029

Celebrating Excellence at Tanana Chiefs Conference

During the 2026 Tanana Chiefs Conference Annual Convention, several outstanding individuals and families were recognized for their leadership, service, and dedication to strengthening Alaska Native communities across the Interior.

Patti Hyslop Leadership in Sobriety Award

This year's recipients are Bruce Ervin of Northway and Connie Walker of Holy Cross.



Bruce Ervin has maintained sobriety for 21 years, turning his personal journey of healing into a source of strength for his family and community. He serves as Acting Vice President of Native People's Action and as an Assistant Professor at the University of Alaska, where he teaches the Upper Tanana language and Traditional arts and crafts. Bruce is also a Cultural engagement leader who shares Athabascan ways of life with Youth.



Connie Walker was nominated by her daughter, reflecting the deep respect she has earned within her family and community. As the only Health Aide in Holy Cross, Connie provides care to multiple surrounding villages. Her dedication to sobriety, service, and compassion continues to uplift those around her.

Tribal Administrator of the Year

Kristin Willis of Nikolai was recognized as an extraordinary leader and

dedicated public servant. Kristin consistently steps forward to address community needs, from resolving infrastructure challenges and coordinating fuel deliveries to supporting housing development.

Through COVID/ARPA and TCC economic development funding, her leadership has helped bring four completed homes to Nikolai, with three more underway or planned. She also serves as a vital liaison between the city, school, and Tribe, strengthening collaboration across the community. Her work has helped support local families, bring Tribal-member children back to the village, and sustain the long-term future of the community.

Excellence in Public Safety Award

Karlon Tuluk received the 2026 Excellence in Public Safety Award for his dedication to supporting TCC Public Safety operations. From volunteering on Search and Rescue missions to managing critical equipment and logistics for officers serving rural communities, Karlon's reliability and commitment help ensure the safety and readiness of the department.



Foster Parents of the Year

Timothy and Myra Thumma of Venetie were named Foster Parents of the Year. Longtime foster parents, they currently care for three children and are known for providing a loving, safe



home. Through a healthy, drug- and alcohol-free lifestyle and Traditional activities such as fishing, hunting, and gathering, they help children grow into responsible and compassionate young people.

Rural Employee of the Year

Dr. Samantha Ervin was named Rural Employee of the Year. A pharmacist at the Upper Tanana Health Center in Tok, Dr. Ervin provides exceptional care to communities across the Upper Tanana region. A proud Native daughter of the region, she represents TCC's "grow your own" philosophy and was recently honored statewide as Alaska Pharmacist of the Year.



Urban Employee of the Year

Clara Mayo received the Urban Employee of the Year award for more than 32 years of dedicated service. As a Probate Specialist, Clara has helped thousands of families navigate the complex probate process with compassion and patience, supporting people through some of their most difficult moments.



Tanana Chiefs Conference is proud to honor these recipients for their leadership, service, and commitment to the wellbeing of our Tribes and communities. Join us in congratulating each of them for their well-deserved recognition.





2026 Convention Report: Resolutions Update

Each year, resolutions are submitted for review by the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Full Board of Directors. These resolutions guide the direction of TCC and its employees throughout the coming year and beyond. At the 2026 TCC Annual Convention & Full Board of Directors Meeting, 22 resolutions were submitted, with 18 resolutions passing after thorough discussion and debate.

| 2026 Proposed Resolutions | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| # | Title | Status |
| 2026-01 | Establishing a Partnership with the University of Alaska Fairbanks to Offer Academic Credit for Tanana Chiefs Conference Training Opportunities | PASSED |
| 2026-02 | Support of School Choice | PASSED |
| 2026-03 | Requesting Tribal Leadership Training Opportunities for TCC Villages | PASSED |
| 2026-04 | Review and Address Leave and Access to Care Inequities for Community Health Aides and Rural Tanana Chiefs Conference Staff | REFERRED TO E-BOARD |
| 2026-05 | Establishing a Contracting Evaluation Preference Policy Supporting Tribal Member-Owned Contractors and In-Region ANCSA Village Corporations | PASSED |
| 2026-06 | Expand and Enhance Services to Improve Maternal and Infant Health and to Research the Feasibility of Developing a Tribally Aligned Birthing Facility and Associated Maternal Support Services, Including Culturally Grounded Pre- and Post-Natal Care | PASSED |
| 2026-07 | Development of a TCC Convention and Tribal Meeting App | PASSED |
| 2026-08 | Honoring the Service and Contributions of Kenneth B. Charlie, Former Health Board Chair and Champion for Tribal Health in Alaska | PASSED |
| 2026-09 | Oppose the Roosevelt Mining Exploration Project and Wiseman Mining Exploration Project | PASSED |
| 2026-10 | Upholding Tribal Sovereignty in Interactions with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) | PASSED |
| 2026-11 | Wellness Plan & Activities | PASSED |
| 2026-12 | Supporting Regional, Capacity-Building Support for Tribal Courts Across the TCC Region | PASSED |
| 2026-13 | Expand Action-Oriented Support for Addressing Bed Bug Infestation in Interior Alaska Villages | PASSED |
| 2026-14 | Establish and Fund Indigenous Healing Initiatives, Traditional Medicine Clinics, and Immersive Care Technologies at CAIHC and TCC Village Locations | PASSED |
| 2026-15 | Accountability and Regular Reporting on TCC Board Resolutions | PASSED |
| 2026-16 | Comprehensive Resolution Review (Combined with 2016-15) | |
| 2026-17 | Resolution for the TCC E-Board | PASSED |
| 2026-18 | Funding for Elder Assistance | PASSED |
| 2026-19 | Support of a Road from Ruby to Ophir | TABLED |
| 2026-20 | Annual Recognition of TCC Hunters | WITHDRAWN |
| 2026-21 | Iditarod to Maintain Record of the Nenana to Nome VS Anchorage to Nome | PASSED |
| 2026-22 | Energy Assistance | PASSED |

Resolutions passed by the Full Board set TCC's priorities and work for the coming years. Updates on the work being done related to these resolutions can be found at www.tananachiefs.org/resolutions.

Moments that Mattered:

Inside the 2026 Annual Convention & Full Board of Directors Meeting





Circle of Protection: The Public Safety Dispatch

675 Miles, Nine Villages, One Mission: Community Safety

By David Atteberry, TCC Public Safety Manager

TCC Public Safety officers traveled the Yukon River by snowmachine this winter to connect with communities, provide safety education, and strengthen emergency response across the region.

This February, officers from the Tanana Chiefs Conference Public Safety Department completed a 675-mile snowmachine trip across the Interior, visiting nine Yukon River communities while delivering public safety education and strengthening relationships with residents.

The trip served several purposes. Officers visited villages to connect directly with community members, provide safety education to students and families, and maintain a visible public safety presence during the winter travel season. At the same time, the journey provided advanced snowmachine training for newer officers as part of the rollout of TCC's new Regional Rover Program.

Traveling long distances by snowmachine across remote country is a reality for many of the communities we serve. This trip allowed our officers to experience the same conditions our residents face every winter while also strengthening the skills needed to safely respond to emergencies in rural Alaska.

The trip began with five officers traveling to Circle before departing by snowmachine to Fort Yukon. Along the way, officers encountered real-world trail conditions including overflow,

open water, and deep snow off trail. These situations provided valuable opportunities for officers to practice recovery techniques and teamwork while navigating challenging terrain.

From Fort Yukon, teams traveled to Birch Creek and Chalkyitsik where officers visited with residents and checked on the partially constructed VPSO house in Chalkyitsik. These visits allow officers to maintain connections with the communities they serve and better understand local needs and concerns.

The team continued on to Beaver where officers joined students, parents, and school staff for breakfast and later provided fire prevention education for students. Community safety education is a core part of the Public Safety program, and these visits give young people the opportunity to learn important safety practices while building positive relationships with officers.

Travel then continued to Stevens Village where officers met with tribal leadership and discussed future opportunities for fire prevention training, fire extinguisher use, and support for developing local Search and Rescue and EMS response capacity.

During the visit to Rampart, officers provided both fire prevention and gun safety education for students at the school. These discussions help ensure youth have the knowledge they

need to stay safe while living and traveling in rural Alaska.

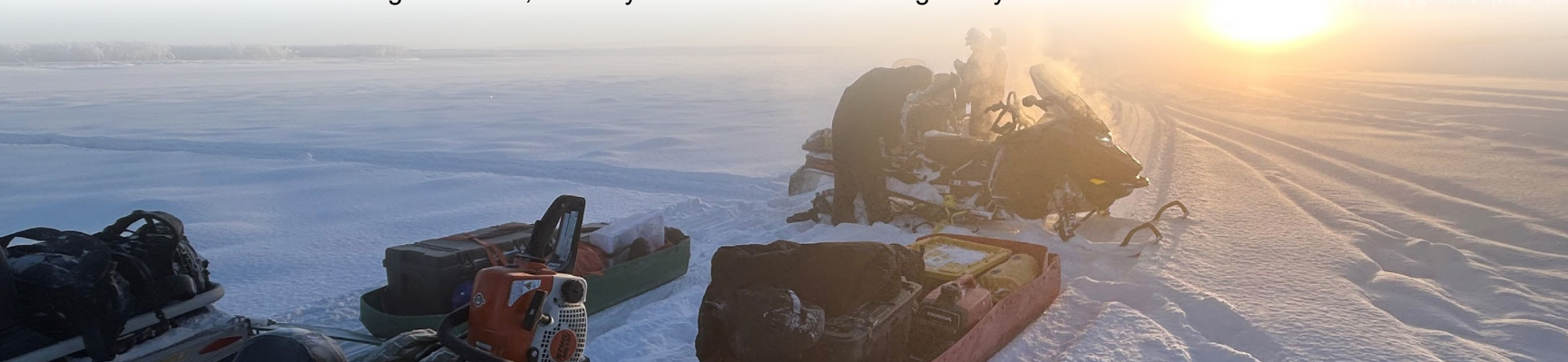
Throughout the trip, officers experienced extremely cold temperatures and difficult travel conditions including jumbled river ice and heavy trail conditions. These experiences are critical training opportunities, helping officers build the skills and confidence needed to safely respond to emergencies across the region.

After traveling through Manley Hot Springs, the team concluded the trip in Nenana when worsening river overflow conditions and an approaching snowstorm made further travel unsafe.

In total, the team traveled approximately 675 miles by snowmachine and successfully visited nine of the ten planned communities. Officers delivered public safety education in several villages and spent time meeting with community members, students, and local leadership along the way.

Trips like this highlight the unique challenges of providing public safety services across such a large and remote region. They also demonstrate the commitment of TCC Public Safety officers to staying connected with the communities they serve.

By traveling village to village, sharing safety information, and building relationships with residents and tribal leaders, our officers continue working to strengthen community safety throughout the TCC region.



Supporting Wellness at the Indigenous Healing Gathering

On Saturday, March 7th, the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center hosted a day with Indigenous Healers. The day began outdoors with a smudging ceremony, where participants were cleansed and then asked to set intentions for the gathering. Next, the Dene' Eslanh Dance Group invited everyone to join in singing and dancing—filling the atrium with movement, joy, and shared energy. Elders and youth gave speeches of health and wellness, and traditional healer, Dr. Allison Kelliher, presented medicine bags to Physician Assistants Mara Becker and Marilyn Attla, who are training in Indigenous Healing techniques.

Attendees signed up to receive acupuncture, healing touch, reiki, traditional healing, massage, and counseling. Artists taught beadwork and gillnet weaving, and Native Arts and Crafts vendors and plant medicine resource tables were on site as well.

The event was a peaceful, uplifting place for healing and a preview of a future program where beneficiaries can obtain similar services at the clinic as part of their care. We would like to thank all who came and participated in this event, especially our partners, Interior Wellness Healers, Alaska Native Birthworkers, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Indigenous Studies.



TCC Elder Nutrition Program Update

By Paul Ostbloom BSN, RN, TCC Home Care Program Manager

The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Elder Nutrition Program continues its dedicated work in service to TCC Elders. Our program is committed to providing sustainable, nutritious meals that support the health and well-being of Elders throughout our region.

To ensure quality and nutrition, the Elder Nutrition team carefully reviews and evaluates all items included in shelf-stable meal boxes. Each meal is thoughtfully planned by Elder Nutrition Coordinator, Jeff Wilt, working in collaboration with a TCC Dietitian and the Title VI Nutrition Program to ensure meals are economical, bal-



anced and nutritionally valuable.

This work is truly a team effort. Jeff also partners closely with volunteer groups in Fairbanks, coordinating 90-120 volunteers who help assemble and prepare meal boxes for Elders.

Volunteer Spotlight

Thank you to our volunteers!

Each month, dedicated volunteers come together to support the TCC Elder Nutrition Program by assembling, labeling, and stacking shelf-stable meal boxes for Elders. Their time, energy, and compassion play a vital role in ensuring meals are delivered efficiently and

with care.

This month, we would like to recognize Fairbanks North Star Borough Bridge Kids, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and TCC's employees for their outstanding support. Their willingness to lend a hand strengthens our community and directly supports the well-being of TCC's Elders.

To package, label, and stack these shelf-stable meal boxes, it takes 90-120 volunteers each month—a powerful example of community teamwork!

Contact Information

Do you have questions about this program? Contact me at 907-452-8251 ext. 3678.

Upcoming Re-Accreditation Survey

By Jolene Malemute, TCC Accreditation Manager

TCC Health Services will be undergoing a re-accreditation survey by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) from April 20-22, 2026. AAAHC accreditation is a nationally recognized standard that helps ensure we continue to provide safe, high-quality, and patient-centered care.

Why This Is Important

Accreditation means our organization is regularly reviewed against national standards for safety, quality, and patient experience. It helps us identify opportunities to improve care, strengthen our processes, and ensure we are meeting the needs of the communities we serve.

During this time, you may notice surveyors visiting our clinics. Currently, TCC has 13 accredited village clinics, and on April 21, we will be specifically

visiting the following clinics:

- Galena
- Tok/Northway
- Nenana/Minto

Surveyors will be observing processes and speaking with staff. In some cases, they may ask patients about their experience with care. Please note that public participation is completely voluntary, and your decision to participate or not will not affect the care you receive.

How to Contact AAAHC

A notice of the accreditation survey has been posted in accordance with AAAHC requirements and will remain until the survey concludes or for a minimum of 30 days. If anyone wishes to reach out to AAAHC for any reason, you may contact them at:

- **Mail:** Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc.
5250 Old Orchard Road, Suite 200
Skokie, IL 60077

- **Email:** feedback@aaahc.org

- **Telephone:** 847.853.6060

- **FAX:** 847.853.9028

Please be assured that patient privacy and confidentiality remain a top priority. Surveyors follow strict confidentiality requirements and do not remove or share personal health information.

This process is vital for us to continue improving how we deliver care to better serve you and our communities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with a member of our team or contact me at jolene.malemute@tananachiefs.org.

Thank you for trusting us with your care!

Understanding Alcohol Misuse: Awareness, Reflection, & Support

Recognizing your relationship with alcohol and its potential harmful impacts can be difficult. During Alcohol Awareness Month, check in with yourself to see if any of the following apply.

Signs of Alcohol Misuse

Drinking more or longer than intended.

Spending a lot of time drinking or thinking about alcohol.

Loved ones or trusted friends have made comments about your drinking.

Finding that drinking interferes with daily activities, family, friends, or work.

Having legal problems due to drinking.

Needing to drink more than before to get the desired effect.

Continuing to drink even though it causes depressed or anxious feelings or adds to another health problem.

Trying to cut down or stop drinking but not being able to.

Experiencing symptoms of withdrawal when you don't drink, like shakiness, sweating, tremors, headaches, anxiety, irritability, and/or insomnia.

Help is Here

If you feel alcohol may be negatively impacting your life and you're ready to make a change, help is available! Talk to your healthcare provider about the benefits of and strategies for curbing your alcohol use. You can also connect with Elders and community members who are leading a sober lifestyle to learn traditional ways to support your journey towards a healthier life.

To learn more about some of the supports available to you through Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), visit www.tananachiefs.org/services/wellness-prevention/.

Have an Alcohol-Free Weekend

Even one weekend without alcohol can clear your mind, give you more energy to focus on your goals, improve your sleep, and help you save some money. Join others from across the TCC region for our annual Alcohol-Free Weekend April 3-5, 2026. Share how you'll be spending your alcohol-free weekend on our social media page for a chance to win a pressure cooker. We can't wait to celebrate sobriety together!



TCC Ride for Life Tour: Sharing a Message of Hope, Worth and Support

By Steve Ristow, TCC Suicide Prevention Program Manager

In February 2026, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) successfully carried out its annual Ride for Life suicide prevention outreach tour, connecting with several remote communities through a wellness journey rooted in resilience, adaptability, and purpose.

Originally planned as a 1,000-mile snowmachine trip, this year's Ride for Life required flexibility as this year's adverse weather conditions impacted our travel routes. Despite the challenges, our team pivoted seamlessly—utilizing a combination of snowmachine travel, flights, and other transportation methods—to ensure that almost every intended community was reached.

The journey started with visits to the villages of Minto and Manley Hot Springs, followed by snowmachine

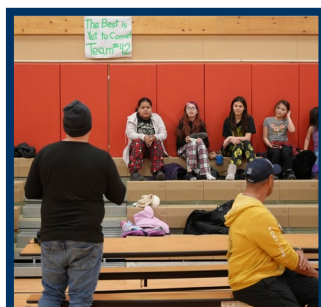
travel to Tanana. From there, the team flew onward to McGrath and Ruby, continuing their mission to connect with communities across our region.

At each stop, we hosted community dinners, creating a welcoming space for conversation and connection. Our goal was to provide opportunities to engage locals in meaningful discussions about suicide prevention, wellness, and available support services. Additionally, information about key TCC programs was shared, including Family Services, Tribal Protection and Justice, and Wellness & Prevention, alongside resources from the American Red Cross and the Fairbanks Crisis Response Mobile Team.

In addition to community-wide events, our team spent time with local

youth, visiting schools to deliver messages centered on intrinsic worth, personal value, wellness, and safety. Our team also nurtured important connections with community leaders, service providers, and families, strengthening partnerships and reinforcing a shared commitment to supporting the health and well-being of TCC's communities.

In retrospect, the weather changed our travel plans but didn't lessen the impact of the Ride for Life tour; instead, it showed our team's dedication and adaptability, ensuring messages of hope, worthiness, and support reached every community. This event proved that even with challenges, our commitment to serving one another always finds a way forward.



April 29th George Attla Jr. Day

“You’re trying to beat time and then eventually time catches up with you. You can try your best; you may beat the competitors but you can’t beat time.”

-George Attla Jr.-
In Attla’s Tracks

George Attla Jr. Day is a special occasion in Alaska, dedicated to honoring the memory of a remarkable individual. George Attla Jr., known for his extraordinary talent in dog mushing, was not just a sports hero but also a symbol of strength and cultural identity.

Born in 1933 near Koyukuk on the Yukon River, George grew up in a traditional lifestyle, learning essential skills like fishing and hunting from his family. However, it was his love for dog mushing that made him famous. By the 1950s, he had already gained a reputation as a legendary sprint dog racer, earning the nickname “Huslia Hustler.”

George’s accomplishments in the

world of dog mushing were exceptional. He won numerous races worldwide and received recognition for his achievements, including induction into the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame. His talent and dedication earned him the title of the Best Musher of the 20th Century.

In 1988, Governor Steve Cowper declared April 29th as “George Attla Day” in honor of his contributions.

In 2015, the Beaver Village Council submitted a resolution to officially recognize April 29th as George Attla Jr. Day, a decision supported by the TCC Full Board of Directors. This day serves as a time to remember and appreciate Attla’s legacy, celebrating his impact on Alaskan culture and sports.



George Attla Jr. Day is not just about commemorating a sports legend but also about honoring a man who inspired others through his skill, determination, and cultural pride. Though George may no longer be with us, his spirit continues to inspire generations of Alaskans.

Spring Flood Preparedness: Steps to Take Before Breakup

With record snow fall and ice pack this year, it’s important to begin planning and preparing for spring breakup now. While we hope that there won’t be flooding, early preparation now will save you time and worry later. Tanana Chiefs Conference’s Office of Environmental Health offers tips and important reminders to keep your family prepared and safe this season.

Visit our website to learn how to make an emergency kit, where to find your community’s plan, and other great tips to make sure you’re ready if the river starts to rise.

SCAN ME!



April is Child Abuse Awareness Month

By Niisha Walsh, TCC Tribal Social Services Manager

April is Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month, a time for communities to come together to recognize that protecting children is a shared responsibility. In our communities, children bring us together and represent the strength and future of our people and raising them has always been rooted in collective care. Elders, leaders, aunties, teachers and cousins all play an important role in guiding and protecting young people. When we support families and look out for one another, we help create safe and nurturing environments where children can thrive. Prevention begins with strong connections. Building those connections can start in small ways such as offering encouragement to a parent, checking in on your neighbors during cold winter days, or participating in community events. Another important part of prevention is reporting

concerns when they arise. Reports can be made anonymously to OCS' Intake, 1-800-478-4444. When abuse goes unreported, it often continues or escalates, causing more harm over time.

As we recognize Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month, let us reaffirm our commitment to protecting the next generation. When communities work together, children are safer, families are stronger, and our culture continues to thrive.

Since 2025, TCC's Tribal Social Services Prevention program has supported over 80 Family Fun Nights throughout the region to help bring family engaging activities, resources, and books for youth in an effort to strengthen relationships and build networks of support. We look forward to bringing more activities throughout the year.



Did You Know

You Can Protect Your Child from Oral, Head & Neck Cancer with One Vaccine?

YOU CAN. The HPV Vaccine can prevent more than 6 types of cancer and is up to 90% effective when given to children between the ages of 9-12.

PROTECT THEM.

Ask your provider about the HPV Vaccine today.

FACTS ABOUT THE HPV VACCINE:

- The sooner your child is vaccinated, the more effective it is.
- Over 15 years of monitoring and research have proven that the HPV vaccine is safe.
- HPV vaccination prevents the development of precancerous cells, lowering the risk of cancer in the future.
- The HPV vaccine does not cause fertility problems; in fact, it helps prevent diseases that might affect fertility.
- HPV vaccines provide long-lasting protection, remaining highly effective for at least 12 years.

Call 907-451-6682 or talk to your health aide to schedule your child's vaccine today.





Our Voice. Our Future. Our Vote.

2026 is a major election year for Alaska, and the decisions on the ballot will directly impact our lands, our subsistence, our schools, and our future. From salmon management to healthcare access to rural education funding—these elections shape our everyday lives.

When we vote, we make sure Interior Alaska is heard.

We've Done This Before

Our people have a strong history of showing up. In 1982, more than **73% of voters in the TCC/Doyon region** turned out to protect subsistence rights. That level of participation helped defend our way of life. Today, turnout has dropped to **less than 20%**. That means fewer voices, fewer protections, and fewer decisions reflecting our communities.

We can change that—and this year is the time.

Why Voting Matters

Voting is how we protect what matters most:

- Subsistence and traditional ways of life
- Tribal sovereignty
- Land and resource decisions
- Rural schools and education funding
- Healthcare and community safety
- Housing, broadband, and infrastructure



Get Ready to Vote

Getting ready is simple:

- **Register or check your status:**
<https://voterregistration.alaska.gov/>
- **Find your polling place or request an absentee ballot:**
<https://myvoterportal.alaska.gov/>

If you're turning 18 soon, you can register **up to 90 days before your birthday** if an election is coming up.

Mark These Dates:

-  **Primary Election:**
August 18, 2026
-  **REAA School Board:**
Elections: October 6, 2026
-  **General Election:**
November 3, 2026

Stay Informed

The Interior Native Vote Initiative is a nonpartisan effort helping our communities stay informed, prepared, and ready to vote.

Follow Interior Native Vote on Facebook and Instagram for election updates, reminders, and resources.



Hanging baskets with Black-Eyed Susan vines outside of Bahn Thai.
Photo by Heidi Rader.

Jaw-Dropping Hanging Baskets. Here's How.

By Heidi Rader, Professor of Extension at University of Alaska Fairbanks

I often make a point to photograph the stunning hanging flower baskets around Fairbanks. A few years ago, I wrote an [article](#) about [Festival of Fairbanks'](#) baskets and other standouts. In 2025, the baskets outside of Bahn Thai Restaurant stood out to me.

It took me a while to sleuth out where the baskets came from. After calling Bahn Thai a couple of times, I talked to Nonthapun Jaikunta, who has taken care of the baskets for the past three years. He told me Somnuk Wiggs, the owner of Bahn Thai, purchases the baskets from Lynn at the Farmers Market, which then led me to Lynn Mayo of Spinach Creek Farm.

It turns out, according to the Tanana Valley Farmers Market Manager Brad St. Pierre, Lynn and Spinach Creek Farm are not only [famous for their carrots](#) but also for their hanging baskets.

I asked Lynn to walk me through her process.

She said, "What I do is totally simple. I'm not quite as qualified as the greenhouses; I just put it all together."

Here is her method:

Spinach Creek Farm has two greenhouses — one small and one large. The greenhouses are off-grid and so use no supplemental lighting. The flowers are started as early as mid-March depending on their variety on the heated cement slab of their smaller greenhouse. Wave petunias are started first. Lynn used to buy plugs, but they've become prohibitively expensive, so she starts all her flowers from seed.

Hanging Basket Recipe

- 2 Thunbergia (Black-eyed Susan vine)
- 2 Calibrachoa (Million Bells)
- 2 Bacopa, white



Hanging basket outside of Bahn Thai with Somnuk Wiggs the owner. Photo by Nonthapun Jaikunta.

• 2-3 Shock Wave petunia (possibly one different color added)

• 2 Early Wave petunia

Each basket contains 6-8 total flowers, a combination of the above list, with each pair usually the same color. The Waves go in the middle, and the smaller plants go in each corner.

Plant in a 12-inch, square hanging basket from Western Pulp Products.

Lynn says the color scheme is a guess, but she hinted at a few color preferences. She said

purple has been the most popular and dependable. One customer had issues with yellows attracting pests, and she stays away from reds. The baskets are all basically the same design, with different colors.

Lynn uses square, 12-inch hanging baskets from [Western Pulp](#), made from recycled paper. She thinks this helps the baskets breathe and retain moisture. They use soil from Spinach Creek Farm with a bit of compost. She adds a bit of slow-release fertilizer.

Customers get a chance to choose their color schemes when the flowers are blooming and before the baskets are planted. After they start heating their larger greenhouse in mid-April, the baskets are hung above newly planted tomatoes to maximize the space. The hanging baskets are ready for customers to pick up in mid- to late May.

Once the customers pick up their baskets, it's up to them to keep them looking beautiful all summer. Lynn recommends fertilizing weekly with soluble fertilizer and a quart or two of water a day. Her baskets prefer full sun.

Nonthapun Jaikunta is responsible for watering and fertilizing the baskets outside of Bahn Thai. Each morning, Nonthapun waters the baskets. Every other day, he fertilizes using 1½ tablespoons of soluble fertilizer (such as Miracle Grow) mixed with 176 ounces (or 22 cups) of water. He uses 22 ounces per basket (and waters without fertilizer every other day with about the same amount).

Lynn has been planting and selling hanging baskets for about 25 years. Although the Mayos sold them at the farmers market a few times, now they have regular customers and sell about 90 baskets a year for \$65 each. Lynn recalled that some years, whole neighborhoods would request their hanging baskets. But, she said, what she does is really basic, and anyone could do it (although having a heated greenhouse helps).

But I think Lynn's baskets combined with Nonthapun's precise care makes for some uniquely stunning flowers, and I'm impressed by their quiet dedication to creating and maintaining something so beautiful each year.

Questions about gardening or the Tribes Extension Program?

Visit www.uaf.edu/ces/tribes

Contact Heidi at hbrader@alaska.edu or (907) 474-6620.

For more articles like this, go to: itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/

Heidi Rader is professor

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Beautiful basket outside of Bahn Thai. Photo by Heidi Rader.



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The Council Newsletter

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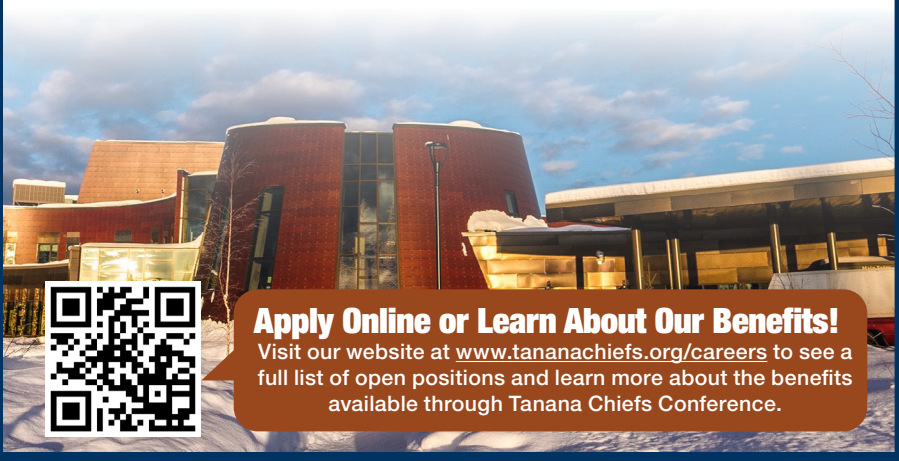


FIND YOUR PURPOSE

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 |
| Evansville | Community Health Aide/Practitioner |
| Fairbanks | Certified Medical Assistant I |
| Fairbanks | Administrative Assistant II - Clinical Office Staff |
| Fairbanks | Alternate Resource Manager |
| Fairbanks | Perioperative Nurse II-ASC |
| Fairbanks | Nurse Manager - Urgent Care |
| Fairbanks | RN Diabetes Care and Education Specialist - Advanced |
| Fairbanks | RN Diabetes Care and Education Specialist |
| Galena | Urgent Care RN |
| Healy Lake | Community Health Aide/Practitioner |
| Hughes | Community Health Aide/Practitioner |
| Kaltag | Community Health Aide/Practitioner |
| Nenana | Infant/Toddler Teacher |
| Nenana | Cook (EHS) |
| Old Minto | Traditional Counselor II |
| Ruby | Community Healthy Aide/Practitioner |
| Stevens Village | Community Health Aide/Practitioner |
| Tanacross | Community Health Aide/Practitioner |



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 MARCH 27, 2026

NEED TO
TALK?

Help is just three
digits away.

988

Connects You to Careline,
Alaska's Suicide & Crisis
Lifeline.



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

UPCOMING EVENTS

**APR
13-17**

North Star Computing Class

8:30am - 4:00pm | Koyukuk, AK | Request a training for your community here: www.tananachiefs.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Training-Request-Form-09.2025.pdf

**MAY
5**

MMIP Awareness Day

Wear red to honor our missing and murdered relatives.

**MAY
25**

TCC Offices Closed

Memorial Day

**JUN
19**

TCC Offices Closed

Juneteenth

**JUN
19-21**

Emerging Leaders Youth Summit

Fairbanks, AK | Registration required.
www.tananachiefs.org/events/emerging-leaders-youth-summit/

**JUL
2-3**

TCC Offices Closed

Independence Day