



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash
Vol. 51 • No. 8 August 2026



Annual Partners Trip Unites Tribes with State Leadership

Each summer, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) hosts its Annual Partners Trip, bringing Tribal, state, and federal leaders together to strengthen relationships and deepen their understanding of life in rural Interior Alaska. This year's trip, held June 15-16, included visits to the villages of Nikolai, Telida, McGrath, and Takotna.

The Annual Partners Trip provides a unique opportunity for policymakers, funding partners, and agency representatives to engage directly with Tribal leaders, Elders, and community members. Through open dialogue and

firsthand experiences, participants gain a deeper understanding of the priorities, challenges, and successes of Interior Alaska's Tribal communities.

Throughout the two-day trip, community members shared the issues most affecting their villages, including housing, healthcare access, public safety, infrastructure needs, economic development, and the long-term sustainability of traditional ways of life. By visiting communities in person, participants were able to see both the unique challenges of rural Alaska and the resilience, innovation, and

strength that define each village.

The itinerary included community tours, project site visits, cultural exchanges, and shared meals, creating meaningful opportunities for conversation and collaboration. These experiences help build lasting partnerships and provide decision-makers with valuable context that cannot be captured through reports or virtual meetings alone.

"Strong partnerships begin with our Tribes," said Chief/Chairman Sharon Hildebrand. "By bringing deci-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4.



INTERIOR NATIVE VOTE Candidate Mixer

MEET THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR!

August 8th • 11am - 1:30pm
Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall

Meet the individuals running for local offices, hear directly from them, and ask questions that matter most to you. Enjoy some free swag and food!

Scan for More
Updates



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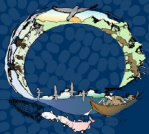


Mission

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 Tribal Leaders and Tribal Members,

July was another busy and rewarding month for Tanana Chiefs Conference as we continued working alongside our Tribes and communities across the region.

One of TCC's greatest priorities is spending time in our villages. During July, we traveled to Birch Creek, Beaver, Chalkyitsik, Koyukuk, and Tanana as part of our ongoing village visits and subregional meetings. There is no better way to understand the needs, strengths, and priorities of our communities than by spending time together and listening. Thank you to everyone who welcomed us, shared your stories, and spoke openly about the opportunities and challenges your communities face. Those conversations help guide our work and strengthen our commitment to serving the people of our region.

Being raised by my grandparents and knowing the love we all share for our grandparents, it is important that we continue to care and love them in a good way. The Elders Day of Caring was created to show the love of our communities for them with all they have given to us. Thank you to the volunteers, organizations, and community partners who came together to support our Elders. TCC is also ensured there was support provided for our Tribes throughout our region in hosting their own Elders Day of Caring. Information and resources were shared with Tribal offices, and we look forward to continuing to honor our Elders in ways that reflect our traditions and priorities.

As we look ahead, I encourage everyone to make a plan to vote. This is an important election year, and the decisions made at every level of government affect our Tribes, our families, and our future. The governor determines who sits on boards that impact our way of life, be sure to vote in candidates that reflect your values. The Alaska Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, August 18, followed by the General Election on Tuesday, November 3. Every vote matters, and I encourage every eligible voter to make their voice heard.

This month, TCC also joined Mayor Mindy O'Neill, the Fairbanks Housing & Homeless Coalition, and other community partners to begin planning for the upcoming winter season and discuss long-term solutions to housing and homelessness. Working together to support our most vulnerable community members is essential, and these conversations will help ensure our communities are better prepared for the months ahead.

As we enter the colder months, our communities have shared the concern of higher fuel costs. We encourage everyone to prepare for winter sooner rather than later. Last winter was one of the coldest on record, and the impacts were felt across our region. With the rising cost of fuel and other household expenses, preparing early can help reduce financial stress and ensure families have what they need during this time. If your tribe needs some assistance in planning ahead contact self-governance and we can make a difference.

There have been some losses in our region, please know that you and your families remain in my thoughts and prayers. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. I wish you a safe, healthy, and successful season ahead. Edeghoyeneeghelhdenek. Until we see each other again, take good care of yourselves.

Ana Masee',
Sharon Hildebrand
Chief/Chairman
Tanana Chiefs Conference



High School Students! Have You Started Planning for Life After Graduation?

Do you know what you want to do after high school? Whether you're planning to attend college, pursue a vocational program, or enter the workforce, it's never too early to start exploring your options.

TCC GO (Growing Our Own) is here to help! TCC GO, a part of TCC's Education & Indigenous Learning program (a unit of the Family Services Division), is dedicated to helping high school students discover career interests and prepare for their future after graduation.

Through career exploration activities, college and career readiness support, and personalized guidance, TCC GO helps students identify career pathways while they are still in high school. Many rural communities have a growing need for skilled professionals in fields such as health-care, education, and other essential industries, and TCC GO can help you begin preparing for those opportunities today.

Seniors: Did you know that TCC GO also offers stipends for completing important college and career preparation activities? You may be eligible to earn money for tasks such as completing the FAFSA, applying for scholarships, submitting college applications, and finishing other program milestones.

Your future starts now, let TCC GO help you take the next step toward a

successful career!

How do I participate?

If you are a Fairbanks-based student, you must be enrolled in a federally recognized Tribe that is part of the TCC region. Any student (Native or non-Native) living in one of the villages within the TCC region that is off the road system is eligible to participate.

For more information, visit our website, <https://www.tananachiefs.org/services/tcc-go/>. Or send us an email tccgo@tanachiefs.org.

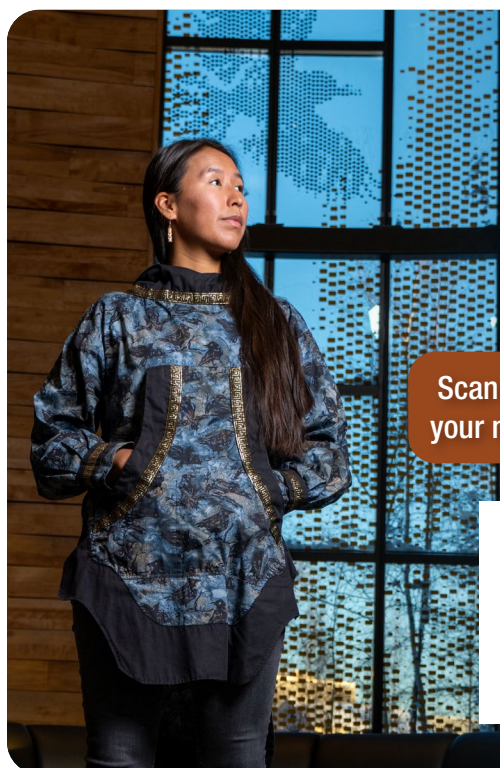
Why Programs Like TCC GO Matter

Programs like TCC GO are vital to students in the TCC region because they bridge the gap between rural high school education and future career or college pathways. By providing access to dual credit courses, career exploration opportunities, and academic support, TCC GO empowers students to see what's possible beyond high school without having to leave their home communities. These programs not only help students build confidence and real-world skills, but they also create a sense of purpose and direction. TCC GO encourages students to take ownership of their futures while honoring their unique strengths, culture, and community values.



When I started high school, I would never have guessed that I would be taking college classes for free. Not only did TCC GO pay for my classes, but it also gave me an opportunity for an activity almost every month. I credit part of my success during high school to this program. Without TCC GO, I would be starting college this fall with no experience of how to take a class on my own. I have recommended this program to many other youth, and I will continue to do so.

-Nevaeh Opferman, 2026 Effie Kokrine Graduate



Scan to submit your nomination



Nominate a Community Leader for an AFN President's Award

Do you know someone whose leadership, service, or dedication has made a lasting impact on our region? The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is now accepting nominations for the 2026 AFN President's Awards, which recognize outstanding Alaska Native individuals who have made significant contributions to their communities and the Alaska Native community statewide.

Award categories include Health, Education, Small Business, Military Service, Law Enforcement, Youth Leadership, Hunter-Fisher, and the Woman of Courage Award, among others. TCC encourages Tribes and member organizations to recognize the remarkable individuals whose work strengthens our communities and inspires future generations.

Nominations are due to AFN by 4:30 p.m. on August 14, 2026. Award descriptions, eligibility requirements, and nomination forms are available on the AFN President's Awards webpage: nativefederation.org/presidents-awards/.

Annual Partners Trip Unites Tribes with State Leadership

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

sion-makers into our communities, we create opportunities for meaningful conversations that strengthen collaboration and ensure Tribal voices shape the future of Interior Alaska.”

The Annual Partners Trip remains an important opportunity to foster collaboration between Tribal governments and the agencies and organizations that support them. By building stronger relationships and encouraging direct engagement, the trip helps advance solutions that are informed by the experiences and priorities of the people who call these communities home.

TCC extends its sincere appreciation to the communities of Nikolai, Telida, McGrath, and Takotna for their generous hospitality and for welcoming participants into their villages. We also thank all of the partners who took part in this year’s trip for their commitment to listening, learning, and strengthening partnerships with the Tribes of Interior Alaska.





Honoring K9 Jack's Service & Welcoming K9 Nipsey

By Karlon Tuluk, TCC Public Safety Assistant

The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Public Safety Department is proud to celebrate the remarkable career of one K9 partner while welcoming another to continue the tradition of service.

Thank You, K9 Jack!

After four years of faithful service, K9 Jack is officially retiring from active duty.

Born on July 15, 2021, in Zagreb, Croatia, Jack completed specialized training in Northport, Alabama, in narcotics detection and handler protection before beginning his career with TCC. Throughout his service, Jack worked alongside three dedicated handlers, becoming an invaluable member of our Public Safety team.

During his career, K9 Jack helped remove dangerous substances from our communities, assisting in the seizure of approximately:

- 21 ounces of illegal narcotics
- 2 ounces of methamphetamine
- 50 fentanyl pills

- 92,900 mL of alcohol (approximately 109 bottles)

Jack's exceptional work, loyalty, and dedication have left a lasting impact on the Tanana Chiefs Conference and the communities we proudly serve.

While we will certainly miss him on duty, we are thrilled to announce that K9 Jack is now officially off duty—for

good! He will enjoy his well-earned retirement at home with Matthew Williamson and his family, where his days will be filled with long naps, searching for pepperoni, belly rubs, and plenty of time with his favorite chew toy.

Thank you, K9 Jack, for your outstanding service and unwavering dedication. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement!



K9 Jack with handler, Matthew Williamson

Welcome to the Team, K9 Nipsey!

As one chapter closes, another begins.

Tanana Chiefs Conference is excited to welcome K9 Nipsey, the newest member of our K9 Unit.

Born on April 28, 2024, in Europe, Nipsey is a Belgian Malinois/German Shepherd mix who completed his specialized training in Northport, Alabama.

Partnered with Corporal Emir DeBose, Nipsey is certified in narcotics detection, tracking, and handler protection.

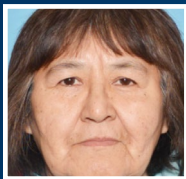
With his extensive training, energy, and drive, K9 Nipsey is prepared to carry on the proud tradition established by K9 Jack and those who served before him. Together, Corporal DeBose and K9 Nipsey are committed to enhancing public safety and protecting the communities served by Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Please join us in thanking K9 Jack for his years of distinguished service and extending a warm welcome to K9 Nipsey as he begins his career with the TCC Public Safety Department.

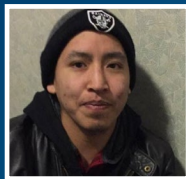


K9 Nipsey with handler, Corporal Emir DeBose

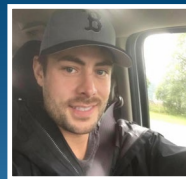
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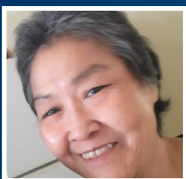
Lorraine Ginnis



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.

OUR VOICE. OUR FUTURE. OUR VOTE.

Be Ready for Alaska's 2026 Elections

PRIMARY ELECTION

AUGUST 18, 2026

Polls Open 7:00am - 8:00pm

July 19	Register or Update Voter Registration
August 3	Early voting begins
August 8	Deadline to apply for an absentee by-mail ballot
August 18	Election Day Absentee ballots must be postmarked and electronically transmitted ballots received

GENERAL ELECTION

NOVEMBER 3, 2026

Polls Open 7:00am - 8:00pm

October 4	Register or Update Voter Registration
October 19	Early voting begins
October 24	Deadline to apply for an absentee by-mail ballot
November 3	Election Day Absentee ballots must be postmarked and electronically transmitted ballots received

Why Voting Matters

Every election helps determine who will make decisions that affect our communities, our families, and our future. From the services we rely on to the management of Alaska's lands and natural resources, elected leaders help shape policies that impact everyday life across our region.

Your vote helps choose leaders who make decisions about:

- » Fish and wildlife management
- » Subsistence and natural resources
- » Health care
- » Education
- » Transportation and infrastructure
- » Public safety
- » Tribal partnerships
- » State and federal funding

How Can I Vote?

Let me count the ways...



1. VOTE EARLY

Early voting is available before both the Primary and General Elections at designated voting locations.



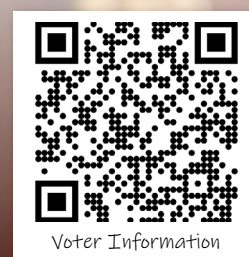
2. VOTE BY MAIL

Eligible voters may request an absentee ballot before each election's application deadline.



3. VOTE IN PERSON

Vote on Election Day!
Polls are open 7:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. on both Election Days.



Voter Information



Interior Native Vote

What is on Your Ballot?

A Snapshot of What's on Your Ballot this Primary Election.

Every Alaska voter will see the same statewide races on their Primary Election ballot. The only section that changes depending on where you live is your State Representative race. Use the guide below to see what to expect before you head to the polls.



Governor/Lieutenant Governor

(Vote for One Ticket)

- Tom Begich/Julia Hnilicka (D)
- Click Bishop/Greta Schuerch (R/ NP)
- Dave Bronson/Josh Church (R)
- Adam Crum/Bob Craig (R)
- Edna DeVries/George B. Hightower (R)
- Meda DeWitt/Christopher Steere (NP)
- Michael Loren Gilbert/Timothy Dean Hickel (R)
- Matt A. Heilala/Jesse M. Sumner (R)
- Shelley Hughes/Blake Gettys (R)
- Jonathan S. 'JKT' Kreiss-Tomkins/ Zac Johnson (D/NP)
- Henry F. 'Hank' Kroll / Tommy R. Nicholson III (R/U)
- Lesil McGuire / Sara E. Rasmussen (R)
- James W. 'JP4' Parkin/ Ramadhani 'Ram' Greer (R/D)
- Destry J. Payne Sr. / Cliff Silvers (U)
- Treg Taylor/ Candi English (R)
- Bill Walker/ Randy Hoffbeck (NP)
- Bernadette M. Wilson/ Michael K. Shower (R)

State Representative (Vote for One)

This race varies depending on your House District.



Find Your District

US Representative (Vote for One)

- Eddie Goldfarb (R)
- Eric Hafner (D)
- Bill Hill (NP)
- James C. "Jim" McDermott (L)
- Yaquelin Reynoso (D)
- David Richey (NP)
- Melanie A. Salazar (NP)
- Matt Schultz (D)
- Clay Strickland (R)
- John B. Williams (D)
- Matthew "Bronco" Williams (U)
- David R. Ambrose II (NP)
- Nick Begich (R)
- Lady Donna Dutchess (U)
- John E. Foddrill Sr. (L)

Ballot Measure 1 (Vote Yes or No)

An Act Restoring Campaign Contribution Limits for Campaigns for State and Local Office.

- » A YES vote means: Limit individual contributions to candidates to \$2,000 per election cycle. Restore limits on contributions to candidates, political parties, and political groups.
- » A NO vote means: Keep current campaign finance laws in place, including no limit on individual contributions to state and local candidates.

US Senator (Vote for One)

- Richard Grayson (Green)
- Carol "Kitty" Hafner (D)
- Gerald L. Heikes (R)
- Sidney "Sid" Hill (U)
- Scott A. Kohlhaas (L)
- David B. Leslie (D)
- Richard B. Mayers (R)
- Heather McElwain (R)
- Mary Peltola (D)
- Reece J. Roberts (NP)
- Shirley A. Saucerman (NP)
- Earl D. "Skip" Southworth (AIP)
- Daniel J. Sullivan Jr. (R)
- Dan S. Sullivan (R)
- Dustin Thomas House Darden (R)
- Fred C. Grauberger (R)



DID YOU KNOW?

Primary elections typically have lower voter turnout than General Elections. That means every vote carries even more weight in deciding which candidates advance to the General Election.

TCC Employees Selected for ANTHC Leadership Development Programs

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is proud to congratulate four employees who have been selected to participate in the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's (ANTHC) leadership development programs for the coming year.

Selected for the Pathways to Leadership program are Courtney Tietz, TCC's Clinical Informatics Analyst I in Information Technology (IT), and Mary Beth Cordova, TCC's Digital Solutions Developer also in IT.



Mary Beth Cordova, Digital Solutions Developer



Courtney Tietz, Clinical Informatics Analyst I, IT

ministrative Support Manager for Clinical Services.

These highly competitive, nine-month programs are designed to strengthen leadership skills across the Alaska Tribal Health System while preparing participants to take on greater leadership responsibilities. Through mentorship, hands-on learning, strategic projects, and monthly lead-

ership training, participants build expertise in communication, organizational leadership, problem-solving, and systems improvement while expanding their professional networks throughout Tribal healthcare.

The programs also emphasize Native leadership values, cultural knowledge, and a commitment to improving the health and well-being of Alas-

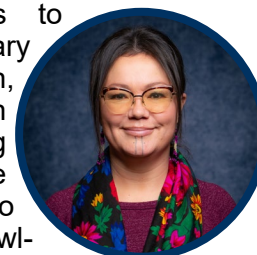


Elizabeth Shoemaker, Senior Administrative Support Manager for Clinical Services

ka Native communities.

Congratulations to Courtney, Mary Beth, Lawreen, and Elizabeth on this outstanding achievement. We look forward to seeing the knowledge, skills, and leadership they bring back to TCC as they

continue advancing our vision of Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes.



Lawreen Buresch, Tribal Government Services Manager

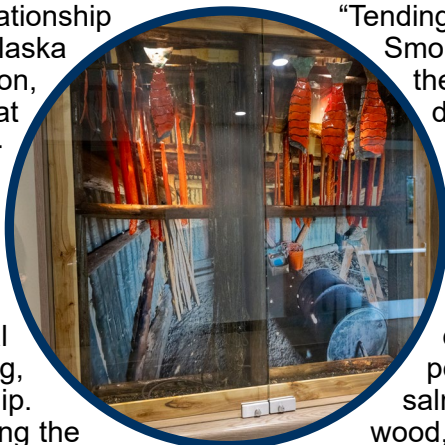
Scan here to learn more



New Art Installations Celebrate Culture, Tradition, and the Enduring Importance of Salmon

Visitors to Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center can now experience two new art installations that celebrate the enduring relationship between Interior Alaska Native people, salmon, and the traditions that have sustained generations. Created by Rampart artist Ramy Brooks, the installations invite patients, families, and staff to reflect on the cultural significance of fishing, family, and stewardship.

Brooks grew up along the Yukon River in Rampart and at fish camp, where he learned traditional ways of hunting, fishing, trapping, dog mushing, and gathering from his Elders and family. Although he once dreamed of attending art school, he instead joined the U.S. Navy before eventually returning home. After competing for years in the Iditarod and Yukon Quest, Brooks earned bachelor's degrees in Geological Engineering and Geology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Today, he combines his traditional upbringing with his academic understanding of the



land to create artwork that tells the stories of his culture and heritage.

Installed in the Cultural Gallery, "Tending to Salmon in the Smokehouse" recreates the atmosphere of a traditional Yukon River smokehouse. Sculpted salmon made from moose antler features copper tails, textured scales, and epoxy finishes that capture the rich appearance of drying king salmon. Weathered driftwood, salvaged tin, Yukon River beach rocks, and an old fishing net complete the installation, transporting viewers to a familiar place where generations have gathered to prepare food for the winter.

Located between Buildings A and B, "Starting the Fire" expands on the story by depicting the beginning of the daily smokehouse routine. Alongside the antlers, salmon and traditional smokehouse materials, the installation features a smoke barrel with glowing flames inside. The depiction represents the careful process of creating the cottonwood smoke used to

preserve salmon.

For Brooks, the installations represent much more than the act of preparing food. They honor the lessons learned at fish camp: working together as families, passing knowledge from one generation to the next, developing responsibility and strong work ethic, and caring for the land and its resources. The displays serve as a reminder that salmon are deeply woven into the identity, culture, and well-being of Interior Alaska Native people.

The artwork also carries an important message about the future. As Yukon River salmon populations continue to face significant challenges, Brooks hopes the installations inspire conversations about protecting the fishery and preserving traditional knowledge for future generations. Brooks shares, "Through action now it is my hope that this display is not just a memory, but a vision of what our future could look like."

The installations are now on display at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center, where they offer patients, visitors, and staff an opportunity to connect with the cultural traditions that continue to shape the communities TCC serves.



2nd Annual Elders Day of Caring

More than 50 volunteers came together on July 13 for the second annual Fairbanks Elders Day of Caring, completing 22 projects for Elders throughout the Fairbanks community.

Volunteers from TCC, Doyon, Limited, Doyon Foundation, Fairbanks Native Association, Denakkanaaga, Interior Regional Housing Authority, KeyBank, IBEW Local 1547, and the offices of the Fairbanks Mayor and Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor donated their time to assist Elders with projects ranging from yardwork and landscaping to home maintenance and cleanup.

The event was created to honor Elders through acts of service while bringing community members together to lend a helping hand. In addition to completing projects, many volunteers spent time visiting with the Elders they served—sharing conversations, stories, and laughter throughout the day.

TCC extends its sincere appreciation to every volunteer and partner who helped make this year's event possible. Their generosity and commitment made a meaningful difference for Elders across the Fairbanks community.

Building on the success of the Fairbanks event, TCC is also supporting Tribes interested in hosting their own community-led Elders Day of Caring events throughout the region, helping even more Elders receive the support and recognition they deserve.



Diidrii haa Tr'aagal: Vashraii K'oo Comes Together for the 3rd Annual John Fredson Day 5K/10K

By Crystal Frank-Welker, a NVVTG tribal member, PhD student and lives in Arctic Village with her husband. "Diidrii haa Tr'aagal" translates to "Running with Our Hearts," reflecting the spirit of the event and the many loved ones honored along the course.

On the morning of July 5, 2026, the weather was a high seventy degrees, sunshine, clear skies, mosquitoes buzzing, and the community of Vashraii K'oo (Arctic Village, AK) gathered for the 3rd Annual John Fredson Day 5K/10K Run/Walk, a wellness and healing event centered on community, remembrance, and resilience. This year's theme, Nako' Nint'aii Gwanah'ii—"Keep Your Fire Strong"—served as a powerful reminder of the strength it takes to overcome challenges and reclaim wellness on our own terms.

John "Zhoh Gwatsan" Fredson is remembered as a leader, educator, and advocate for the Gwich'in people. He is remembered for helping secure Federal recognition for the Venetie Indian Reserve in 1941, now known as the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government. As a young man, Fredson participated in Hudson Stuck's expedition to climb Mt. Denali, where

he cared for the base camp by hunting sheep and taking care of the sled dogs, while Stuck and his team made their historic ascent. Fredson later became the first Alaska Native – Gwich'in to graduate from college at the University of the South Sewanee. Returning home to Alaska, Fredson dedicated his life to serving his people as a hospital worker, a teacher, a tribal leader, and a Chief of Venetie. He was married to

Jean Frank. Today, his legacy lives on through the communities he helped strengthen and through gatherings that celebrate Gwich'in resilience and well-being.

Participants of all ages laced up their shoes and ran or walked in honor of loved ones, carrying memories, stories, healing, and prayers with them along the course. The event was filled with excitement and celebration, but it also created space for reflection on the importance of caring for our phys-

ical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. With every mile, runners and walkers demonstrated that wellness is deeply connected to community, way of life, and the people we hold close in our hearts.

As participants crossed the finish line, Traditional Chief and Elder Dr. Rev. Trimble Gilbert and his wife, Mary Gilbert, welcomed them with medals and words of encouragement. There were smiles, laughter, and an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment in the air. Their presence highlighted the intergenerational spirit of the event and the role that Elders continue to play in guiding and strengthening the community.

Following the race, participants of all ages and spectators gathered to share a meal generously provided by Dishii, a Fairbanks-based catering company. Odin and his wife, Joana, prepared a delicious meal that included Pico De Gallo, quesadillas, pulled pork, and fresh guacamole, a special welcoming meal after the morning run.

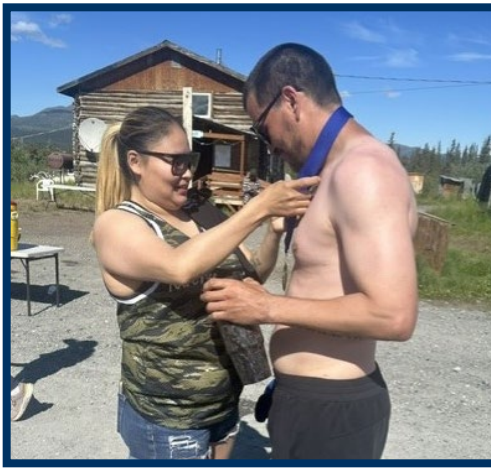
Odin, having roots in Vashraii K'oo, reflected on his return visit home to cook for his community: "I think being

It's amazing what a good run can do to your soul.

It gives you a good boost in your life that you accomplished something that you never thought you were capable of.

First Chief Galen Gilbert





of service to our people is something that is really important. I'm not sure if volunteering is something that even crosses our minds as Gwich'in. We love our people and care for them. Being of service to our Tribe is something that really lifts everyone's spirits, including our own."

The event was made possible through the support of many organizations and sponsors, including Frosty Feet Running Company, Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Wright Air Service, Dishii, The North Face, Arctic Village Council, and the Fairbanks Wellness Coalition. Their contributions helped create a meaningful gathering focused on health, healing, and community connection. Together, they helped create a space where Vashraii K'oo community members could celebrate wellness, remember loved ones, and honor the remarkable legacy and life of John Fredson. A big mahsi' choo (thank you) to our sponsors.

This year marked the largest turnout with 35 total participants. For the first time, a 10k race was added, with 8 runners stepping up to the challenge. Visitor and friend Stacy Fisk reflected on the growth of the event and what it means to the community: "It is great to see individuals getting out and participating. It means a lot to me, I look forward to the event every year."

For many participants, the race represented not only physical activity, but also personal goals and transformation. Donald Tritt shared: "After 10 years away from long distance running, it felt really great to get out there for a running event. I've been losing weight all summer and can't wait until next year. I'll come back in better shape. Thank you to Crystal and Princess for putting on a great event."



Participant Jennifer Hanson reflected on her goals and accomplishments: "I was telling myself a month before July 5th's 5k/10k walk/run I am going to enter this and walk the 10k. When the day came, I was prepared, neck fan, sun visor, and my excitement to actually be involved in a village event. So many entered. It was an exciting day. To complete the 10k in 1.5 hours was an accomplishment that made me feel proud of my heritage, to be in recovery, to be thriving in sobriety. Since then, I am becoming my bubbly kind helpful self. Thank you to those who sponsored the walk/run."

Others reflected on the ways that movement and wellness extended across generations. Jordan Felix spoke about the importance of setting an example for his children: "Being active helps me to keep up with my kids. I'd like to show them the competitiveness and to put your mind to something and tell yourself that you can do it."

First Chief Galen Gilbert reflected on the broader impact the event has on Vashraii K'oo: "Since starting the John Fredson running race, I've noticed that we have more people participating and even training for this event. Continuing celebrating after July 4th has everybody looking forward to having a two-day holiday with new visitors and good food. The race really cleanses the soul, going for a run and also people running and walking for a really good reason. It's very healing to our people. It's amazing

what a good run can do to your soul. It gives you a good boost in your life that you accomplished something that you never thought you were capable of."

Event coordinator Princess Johnson, reflected on what this race means to her: "The John Fredson Day run is something I look forward to every year. Seeing everyone out either running or walking and encouraging one another is a way not only to honor and remember the life of Zhoh Gwatsan, but to honor the spirit of our homelands and the work that has been done by our community to protect the Gwich'in way of life."

Event coordinator Crystal Frank-Welker, who founded the race in 2024, reflected on the importance of the event: "This event is one of my most favorite events of the year. I started this race in 2024. My vision was to get my community excited about running and to honor our ancestor, John Fredson. Running is my medicine, and I want to share that with my community. It's crucial that we care for our wellness and mental well-being. This event helps us to reconnect with ourselves and to allow the land to heal us."

The John Fredson Day 5K/10K has become more than a race. It is a celebration of resilience, an opportunity to honor loved ones and ancestors, and a reminder that healing can take many forms. As the race continues to grow each year, it remains rooted in our Gwich'in values: keep your fire strong for ourselves, our families, our communities, and future generations.

Seeing everyone out either running or walking and encouraging one another is a way not only to honor and remember the life of Zhoh Gwatsan, but to honor the spirit of our homelands and the work that has been done by our community to protect the Gwich'in way of life.

Princess Johnson, Event Coordinator

Interior Native Vote Hosts Candidate Mixer

Community members had the opportunity to meet local and state candidates during the Interior Native Vote Candidate Mixer held July 20 in Fairbanks. The nonpartisan event gave voters a chance to speak directly with candidates, ask questions about issues important to them, and learn more before casting their ballots in the upcoming Primary Election.

In addition to meeting candidates, attendees were able to learn which legislative district they live in, identify the candidates who will appear on their ballot, and receive information about the upcoming election. The event provided a welcoming opportunity for voters to become more informed and prepared before heading to the polls.

Candidates attending represented races for the Alaska State House, Alaska State Senate, Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly, and Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board. The informal, open-house format encouraged one-on-one conversations between voters and candidates.

To encourage attendees to engage with multiple candidates, participants who spoke with candidates were entered into prize drawings. Door prizes were generously donated by Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks Native Association, Doyon, Limited, and the Gwich'in Steering Committee.

Interior Native Vote is a nonpartisan voter engagement initiative led by Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks Native Association, and Doyon, Limited. Through events like the Candidate Mixer, the partnership works to help voters access election information, connect with candidates, and participate in the democratic process.



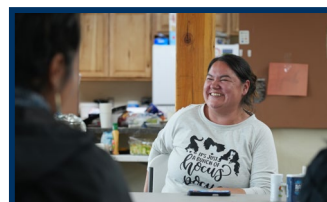
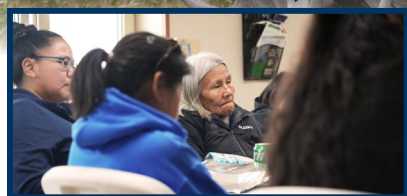
Birch Creek

VILLAGE VISIT • JULY 7, 2026



Beaver

VILLAGE VISIT • JULY 16, 2026



Chalkyitsik

YUKON FLATS SUBREGIONAL MEETING • JULY 21-22, 2026



Start a Garden or Farm. Volunteer, Work for, or Intern at one. Gain a Skill or Earn a Certificate in Agriculture. You Might be Surprised Where it Leads.

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

I was recently invited to talk about gardening on Talk of Alaska. Before the show, I was asked how I got into the work I do. It got me thinking about how I got into the work I do.

My first job was working on a farm at age 13 in 1995. My neighbor got a greenhouse and farm at auction after a marijuana bust. One greenhouse was full of gorgeous roses of all colors. I worked from 7 to 11 a.m. It was tough to get up that early when I was accustomed to sleeping until 10 a.m. in the summers. But it was satisfying to be productive and get some exercise before the time I would normally wake up.

The bike ride was short, but I lived at the top of Coyote Trail, so biking home included a hill with 600 feet of elevation gain in one mile. I gathered big and small eggs from guinea hens, chickens, ducks and geese. There were peacocks, but they were just for looks. I pollinated tomatoes, wrapped English cucumbers and stuck the Alaska Grown logo on them. I sidebudded, cut and stripped roses. I sold eggs, tomatoes, cucumbers, and roses at the Tanana Valley Farmers Market — the oldest and longest continually running farmers market in Alaska.

I didn't understand why I didn't sell out every week at the market, but at the time, interest in local foods was not mainstream. My least favorite part of that job was feeding the turkeys and butchering them. They were mean. I remember my hands freezing, digging up potatoes in the fall. Looking for eggs in the morning was like going on an Easter egg hunt every day. I liked working in a greenhouse full of roses.

My next job, while in high school, was at a greenhouse and farm across the street — Ann's Greenhouses. I started as a transplanter, uppotting seedlings of all types into six packs. I was paid by the flat, so I learned to work quickly. I was kept on for the

summer doing all manner of jobs.

One day, Ann asked me why the plants were wilting, and then, I was in charge of watering several large greenhouses. I planted, transplanted, moved plants from here to there, watered, pollinated, weeded, harvested, and ran between all those tasks lest I be scolded. Again, I sold produce and plants at the Tanana Valley Farmers Market, often harvesting in the early morning before the market opened, then driving myself in a rickety old van or truck to market and setting up.

My least favorite job was spreading blood meal on rows of brassicas to supposedly deter the moose from eating them in the unfenced field. It would blow away as I spread it with my hand and into my face. The moose still came. Every day, Ann put out an impressive smorgasbord for lunch, from scratch, often with fresh produce from the farm. I don't know how she managed that in addition to running a greenhouse. Among many other things, including noticing wilting plants, I learned to see what needed to be done and do it quickly.

In college, I worked for Gretchen Kerndt, owner of Basically Basil, a brilliant grower. I set up plastic mulch and low tunnels for the basil and opened and closed them depending on weather conditions or to harvest basil. I grew and harvested green basil, lemon basil, Thai basil, cinnamon basil, ruffled basil, and purple basil, as well as mint, thyme, marjoram, oregano, baby salad greens, edible flowers, and more.

I dried and bottled herb-infused vinegars that Gretchen sold as value-added products all year long. I was the speediest weeder on the farm.

I also worked at Calypso Farm and Ecology Center for a summer in college. I biked there and back, over 30 miles, uphill both ways. The hill there,



Heidi bringing plants to Arctic Village.

up the Old Nenana Highway, is over 1,000 feet elevation gain, and the one back being Coyote Trail.

I taught kids about farming and ecology. There, I learned to farm organically and without running water. I turned a lot of compost piles and moved a lot of water up and down the hill. I pumped water out of a snow and rain catchment pond. The irrigation was primarily gravity-fed. I took their goats running in the forest with mixed success. I learned the ins and outs of what a Community Shared Agriculture Program was. I learned how to make sourdough pizza in a wood-fired oven.

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: <https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/>

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Scan here to read more about Heidi's journey and how you might get into farming.



TCC Honors Latest Community Health Aide Graduates

This June, Tanana Chiefs Conference recognized three new Community Health Aides who have completed the Basic Training requirements of the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP), marking an important milestone in strengthening health care throughout Interior Alaska.

Loren Thomas will return to serve her home community of Tetlin and Chance Shank will work in Dot Lake, while Karissa McCarty will provide care in an itinerant role throughout the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) region. Their graduation reflects months of rigorous training and a commitment to delivering quality care in rural communities where Community Health Aides are often the first point of contact for patients.

The graduation ceremony was led by Terri Cadzow, Executive Assistant of Health Services, and included re-

marks from Dr. Michael Brumage, Senior Medical Director, and Dr. Gabe Schuldt, CHAP Training Center Manager. Dr. Alisa Alexander also shared her appreciation for the Community Health Aide Program, reflecting on the invaluable lessons she learned from Community Health Aides while training to become a physician.

Family, friends, colleagues, and

mentors gathered to celebrate Loren, Chance, and Karissa's accomplishments, sharing stories of their dedication, perseverance, and compassion throughout the program.

Congratulations to the graduates on this achievement and on the vital role they will play in providing trusted, community-centered care across Interior Alaska.



Have You Talked with Your Kids About the Benadryl Challenge?

Tanana Chiefs Conference is encouraging parents, caregivers, and trusted adults to have conversations with children and teens about medication safety and the risks of dangerous online trends.

What families should know:

- Benadryl (diphenhydramine) is safe and effective when used as directed, but taking excessive amounts can cause serious and potentially life-threatening health complications.
- Health officials have reported an increase in teen overdoses involving diphenhydramine, with cases linked to harmful social media content, substance misuse, and, in some instances, intentional self-harm.
- Ask your child what they're seeing on social media and encourage honest, judgment-free conversations.
- Remind young people that not everything shared online is safe or accurate.
- Keep medications stored securely and out of reach.
- Check in regularly about your child's mental health and emotional well-being.

If someone has taken too much medication:

- Call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.
- Call 911 if the person is difficult to wake, has trouble breathing, experiences a seizure, or has collapsed.

Mental health support is available:

- If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health or thoughts of suicide, call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24 hours a day.

Open conversations, secure medication storage, and regular check-ins can help keep our youth safe and healthy.



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council Newsletter

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New Vacancies

Fairbanks	Health Records Receptionist
Fairbanks	Urgent Care Lead RN
Fairbanks	Urgent Care RN
Fairbanks	Anesthesiologist (Physician)
Fairbanks	Phlebotomist
Fairbanks	Fund Accountant I
Fairbanks	Certified Medical Assistant II - Village Clinical Support Coordinator
Fairbanks	Registered Nurse - Infusions and Oncology
Fairbanks	Behavioral Health Aide Program Manager
Fairbanks	Training Development Specialist
Fairbanks	RN Diabetes Care and Education Specialist - Advanced
Fairbanks	Diabetes Care and Education Specialist
Fairbanks	Patient Care Coordinator
Fairbanks	Registration & Admissions Specialist
Fairbanks	Phlebotomist
Fairbanks	Licensed Practical Nurse I - Advanced
Fairbanks	Addictions RN
Fairbanks	Medical Laboratory Technician
Fairbanks	Environmental Health Specialist I
Nenana	MCDHC Operations Technician II
Nenana	Urgent Care RN
Tok	Subregional Prevention Coordinator I



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 JULY 22, 2026

Not Sure What Job is Right for You?

You Don't Have to Guess.

If you're Alaska Native or American Indian, apply through our 'General Posting for Alaska Native/American Indian Applicants'. Submit your resume once, and our Human Resources team will match you with jobs that fit your skills and experience.

Apply today at www.tananachiefs.org/careers.



UPCOMING EVENTS

**AUG
5**

Interior Native Vote Gubernatorial Candidate Mixer

11:00am - 1:30pm • Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall
<https://www.facebook.com/share/1FzUgNZFHC/>

**AUG
12**

Traditional First Food Circle

12:00pm - 3:00pm • Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center,
Building A Lobby • Follow us on Facebook for more
information.

**AUG
18-20**

Executive Board Meeting

8:30am - 5:00pm | Fairbanks, AK

**SEP
7**

TCC Offices Closed

Labor Day

**OCT
12**

TCC Offices Closed

Indigenous Peoples Day

**OCT
27-29**

Healing Together Gathering

8:00am - 5:00pm & 6:30pm - 9:00pm • 8 Star Event Center
Stay tuned for more information.