

Joint-jurisdiction court agreement signed

Henu' Community Wellness Court to serve drug and alcohol offenders

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe has entered a historic government-to-government partnership with the Alaska Court System, signing an agreement in October to create a joint-jurisdiction state-tribal therapeutic court that will serve people across the central Kenai Peninsula later this year.

Representatives of the tribe, state court and the Attorney General Office signed the agreement during a ceremony in Courtroom 203 of the Rabinowitz Courthouse in downtown Fairbanks.

The Henu' Community Wellness Court will serve adults who face legal trouble stemming from substance use. The court will target drug and alcohol offenders – including those in families with Children in Need of Aid (CINA) cases – living in the tribe's service area, which spans from Cooper

See **COURT**, p. 8



Executive Council Secretary Liisia Blizzard hugs Kenaitze Indian Tribe Chief Judge Kim Sweet as signatures come together on a historic government-to-government agreement supporting the creation of a joint state-tribal therapeutic court for Kenai during a ceremony at the Rabinowitz Courthouse in Fairbanks. Alaska Superior Court Judge Anna Moran, Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth and Alaska Court System Deputy Director Doug Wooliver are also pictured.

2 new representatives elected, 1 re-elected to Council

Total membership grows to 1,637

With three positions to fill on the seven-member Executive Council, tribal members voted in two new representatives and re-elected one at the Annual General Membership Meeting on Oct. 1 at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

Diana Zirul and James Segura Sr. were elected to the Council as new members, while Jennifer Showalter Yeoman was re-elected. With 137 tribal members voting – 126 at the meeting and 11 through absentee ballots – Zirul received 50 votes, Segura Sr. 43 and Showalter Yeoman 40. All three will serve two-year terms.

Zirul and Segura Sr. replace Rosalie A Tepp and Audre Gifford, who served as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively. The four other council members, who are in the middle of their terms and were not up for re-election,



René Edelman Azzara drops her ballot in the ballot box during the election at the Annual General Membership Meeting on Oct. 1.

tion, are Bernadine Atchison, Liisia Blizzard, Clinton Lageson and Wayne Wilson.

Paul Lorenzo (36 votes), Sharon Isaak (34), George Wright (31), Tepp (31), Gifford (28) and Ben Baldwin (24) also were on the ballot.

The new Council elected its officers as follows:

- Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Chairperson
- Wayne Wilson, Vice-Chairperson
- Clinton Lageson, Treasurer

- Liisia Blizzard, Secretary
- Bernadine Atchison, Council member
- James Segura Sr., Council member
- Diana Zirul, Council member

Before ballots were cast, portions of the meeting were contentious.

Some tribal members questioned why six of the seven Executive Council members took a trip to New Zealand in June that cost the tribe more than \$130,000. Also attending the trip, which spanned more than two weeks, were some consultants and family members. Of the trip's total cost, more than \$50,000 was spent on consulting fees.

According to a letter sent from Council to tribal members in April, the purpose of the trip was to learn about the education system and other programs developed by the Maori people, an indigenous group. The letter stated that the trip supported one of the tribe's eight vision statements: "By 2025,

See **MEETING**, p. 4

NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Idahdi, Hello friend!

Yaghali du? How is it with you?

This issue of the Counting Cord goes to press as many of you are starting your preparations for the Thanksgiving season. I hope you find many opportunities to give thanks this month.

Within these pages, you will see some of what I am giving thanks for this year. I am grateful that we have the compassionate, dedicated staff we need to serve our people.

I am thankful that a moose gave herself to our youth participating in this year's Dnigi Camp so that they could learn stewardship and respect for our resources, and learn how to respect and support our Elders.



I am especially thankful this month for an agreement we signed in Fairbanks last month that establishes our Henu' Community Wellness

Court. Kenaitze Chief Judge Kim Sweet has worked tirelessly with a diverse team of people from across the peninsula for three years to bring this court into existence.

The court is unlike any in the state of Alaska. It seats a state court judge at the same table as our own judge, in our own Kenaitze courtroom, to help bring restoration to people who have been involved in crimes as a result of substance abuse.

Offenders chosen for the program will accept responsibility for the crime they have committed. Instead of proceeding from a guilty plea to a sentence, however, offenders will instead agree to participate in a program that will help them put their lives back on a good path. They will have access to behavioral health professionals at our Dena'ina Wellness Center and will be monitored and supported by a parole officer employed by the tribe. They will go before Judge Sweet and Alaska Superior Court Judge Anna Moran on a frequent basis to report their progress and to get help with challenges. They will have the support of family, friends, the tribe, other offenders and the surrounding community.

We believe that when they graduate from the program, with benefits from their participation, they will find it easier to continue on a good path in life and will be less likely to re-offend. They will find it easier to return to meaningful work and continue on their path to total wellness.

The Henu' Community Wellness Court is the latest but not last step we are taking in the development of our Dene' Philosophy of Care. The Dene' philosophy features a holistic approach to serving our families. It supports physical, behavioral, spiritual, educational, social and judicial wellness.

In this time of thanks, I pray for your own wellness, with the fullness of the Dene' Philosophy of Care.

Chiqinik,

Jaylene Peterson-Nyren
Executive Director

Tribe announces new medical-legal partnership

Those who receive care at the Dena'ina Wellness Center will soon have access to a new service – legal assistance – thanks to a partnership between the tribe and Alaska Legal Services Corporation.

The Medical-Legal Partnership will make an attorney available to un'ina – “those who come to us” – who face legal issues affecting their health. Those issues will include employment, housing, domestic violence, Elder abuse and neglect, money management, and benefits determination, among others.

Jaylene Peterson-Nyren, the tribe's Executive Director, said the new service aligns with the tribe's holistic Dene' Philosophy of Care.

“At Kenaitze Indian Tribe, we believe that a person's physical, behavioral, spiritual, educational, social and judicial wellness are all connected,” Peterson-Nyren said. “This partnership will help us strengthen those connections.”

The attorney position will be funded by the tribe and an AmeriCorps grant. A launch date has not been announced, nor has the attorney's expected caseload.

In addition to handling cases, the attorney

will train healthcare providers on how to recognize the social and legal issues that affect health. A person with respiratory ailments and a history of poor housing, for example, may be referred to the attorney for assistance finding better housing.

Similar partnerships are in place to bring attorneys to five other locations across the state – the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center in Fairbanks, the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium in Juneau and Sitka, and the Norton Sound Health Corporation in Nome.

“Many complex social problems – such as domestic violence, substandard housing, and denial of public benefits – impede good health for Alaska Native people particularly those living in our rural communities,” Nikole Nelson, Executive Director of Alaska Legal Services Corporation, said in a press release. “These are problems that attorneys are uniquely qualified to help address, and by embedding them directly into the health care team, we can ensure that these needs are met sooner and in coordination with medical treatment.”

Community needs survey underway

A reminder that earlier this fall, tribal members and some customers received a survey in the mail from the McDowell Group, an Alaska research firm.

The purpose of the survey is to gather opinions about the need for tribal programs and services. The survey can be submitted in the envelope included with the survey or it may be filled out online.

Households that complete the survey will be entered into a drawing for a generous prize.

For additional information, please contact Bob Koenitzer at 866-586-6133.

Moving soon?

Please keep in touch

Please keep your contact information current so you don't miss important mailings from the tribe.

Send updates to:

Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Attn: Karissa Oder
P.O. Box 988
Kenai, AK 99611

koder@kenaitze.org
907-335-7204

From the editor's desk

The Counting Cord is a publication for members of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and the tribe's customers.

Find more information on the tribe's website at kenaitze.org and like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/kenaitze](https://www.facebook.com/kenaitze).

For story suggestions or questions about content, contact editor M. Scott Moon at 907-335-7237 or by email at smoon@kenaitze.org.



NOTE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Hello,

Chiqinik – thank you – for your encouragement as our current Council gets on its feet and working toward new goals that we have on our horizon.

I would first like to give a big chiqinik to Rose Tepp, who has been the chair for the majority of the past 18 years. Our tribe has come far in that time.

Our first exciting addition is to launch the Dena'ina Language and Cultural Revitalization Project. Soon, we will have the ability for people to learn our Dena'ina language together, from each other, at the tribe, from a tribally run program!

I am also excited to let you know of additional ways to interact with your Council. We will host open house forums with different programs to hear from you about our services. The first forum will be for Elders on Nov. 23, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The forum will be at Tyotkas Elder Center. The second forum will be at the Dena'ina Wellness Center on Dec. 28. The time will be published in the calendar on our website once it has been set.

My ultimate goal is to have our youth educated so they can not only be our future doctors, teachers, nurses and social workers, but also our leaders. Kotzebue's Manillaq



Association currently has three young medical doctors who are all Inupiaq and from their area. That is amazing and I would like to see that here.

We were busy in October at the National Conference of American Indians and at the Alaska Federation of Natives. At both gatherings, we saw youth involved. The tribe's Youth Council is one place younger people can be active in

the tribe. See information about their next meeting on this page.

We also want to hear from you and we want to see you involved. Please go to the calendar on our website for dates and times for Council and committee meetings. We want to see you attend. Please consider volunteering to sit on a committee. Information on committees is on our website and information on how join a committee is in another article on this page.

I encourage you to contact me or any other Council member with new ideas that will help us continue moving forward.

Chiqinik again for your encouragement and support!

— Jennifer Showalter Yeoman
Executive Council Chairperson

Committee chairs announced; members needed

The Executive Council has announced the following appointments to Council committees and commissions:

- Finance – Clinton Lageson, Chairperson, Diana Zirul, member
- Court Code – Clinton Lageson, Chairperson; Liisia Blizzard, member
- Constitution – Liisia Blizzard, Chairperson; Jennifer Yeoman, alternate
- Education – Bernadine Atchison, Chairperson
- Elders – Bernadine Atchison, Chairperson
- Enrollment – Liisia Blizzard, Chairperson; Clinton Lageson, member
- Traditional Healing – Clinton Lageson; Bernadine Atchison, member
- Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Commis-

sion – Jennifer Yeoman, Chairperson

- Health – Diana Zirul, Chairperson
 - Land – Diana Zirul, Chairperson
 - Head Start Policy – Liisia Blizzard, Chairperson; Bernadine Atchison, alternate
 - Kenaitze/Salamatof Tribally Designated Housing Entity – Jim Segura, Chairperson
 - Arts Committee has been decommissioned.
- Some committees have open seats available. Members interested in sitting on a committee must submit a letter of interest to Sasha Jackson by December 10.

Letters can be sent by mail or can be emailed to sjackson@kenaitze.org.

Call Sasha at 907-335-7202 for more information.

Youth Council annual meeting, election announced

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe's Gganilchit (“Stand Up”) Dena'ina Youth Council is assembling Nov. 30 at 3 p.m. in the administration building conference room for a business meeting.

Their annual meeting will follow to elect new youth council members, discuss upcoming projects and to hear reports. Anyone ages 14 to 24 are welcome to attend.

Gganilchit Dena'ina's Mission is, “to enhance leadership skills in our community and to provide a collective voice and representation of tribal youth in all matters that

concern them; mobilize and collaborate with the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and tribal members, community and other organizations toward positive goals; to promote the development of future tribal leaders; to help solve problems facing Tribal youth; to coordinate school and community service projects and provide opportunities for the youth to interact for fun and fellowship.”

For more information about the group or the meeting, contact Raven Willoya-Williams at 907-690-0993 or at rwilloya-williams@kenaitze.org

TRIBAL COUNCIL

Jennifer Showalter
Yeoman
Chairperson
jyeoman@kenaitze.org



Wayne Wilson
Vice-Chairperson
wwilson@kenaitze.org



Liisia Blizzard
Secretary
lizzard@kenaitze.org



Clinton Lageson
Treasurer
clageson@kenaitze.org



Bernadine Atchison
Council Member
batchison@kenaitze.org



James Segura Sr.
Council Member
jsegura@kenaitze.org



Diana Zirul
Council Member
dzirul@kenaitze.org





Chief Judge Kim Sweet swears in newly elected Executive Council members Diana Zirul, Jennifer Showalter Yeoman and James Segura Sr. at the conclusion of the Annual General Membership Meeting on Oct. 1.

MEETING, from p. 1 the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina have enhanced and strengthened the prosperity, health and culture of their people by developing and implementing a tribal education system."

The Council reported its findings from the trip at a quarterly meeting in July, but did not disclose the cost at the time. That drew the ire of some tribal members.

"It's been an unanswered question ... we need to clear this up," said tribal member George Wright, who ran for one of the open Council positions. "Ignoring it is not going to make the problem go away."

Others questioned why it was Council members who traveled to New Zealand rather than staff members who are certified and formally trained in education.

In response to the concerns, each Council member explained why they participated in the trip and the value it brought to the tribe.

Wilson acknowledged the trip cost a lot of money, but said it was worth it given the substantial investment it would require for the tribe to implement its own education system.

"If I were to vote on something that's going to be millions of dollars ... I want to be as educated as I can be," Wilson said.

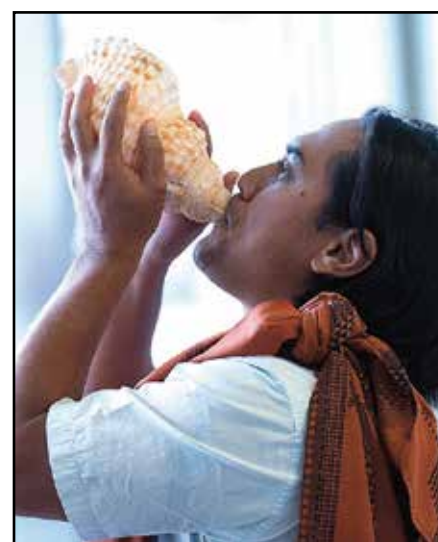
The meeting also included an update from Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren, who re-

capped the tribe's accomplishments from the past year and fielded questions from tribal members on an array of topics – including wait lists for services, staff diversity, the tribe's efforts to recognize veterans, and more.

Throughout the meeting, questions also arose over the absentee ballot voting process, Council member pay and staff turnover at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, among other topics.

Additional highlights included:

- Thirty-one new members were added to the tribe's roster, bringing total membership to 1,637.
- In a financial update, Lageson, chair of the Finance Committee, said the tribe currently has \$23 million in savings and is expected to end the 2016 fiscal year with an additional \$3.7 million in savings. He also said the tribe received another clean audit in 2015.
- Kauila Clark, a Hawaiian traditional practitioner and culture leader, delivered a keynote address prior to the business portion of the meeting. Clark discussed traditional healing and efforts his people have made to preserve their culture and traditions in Hawaii.
- Stan Mishin, President of Kahtnuht'ana Development Corp., a federally chartered business corporation wholly owned by the tribe, reported that the



Above, George Wright asks about the Council's trip to New Zealand. Like some other tribal members at the meeting, Wright expressed frustration that financial information he and others had asked for had not yet been released. At left, Corey Zablan blows the Pū in a ceremony intended to send a vibration into the universe to open it to prayers during a keynote speech given by Kauila Clark, a Hawaiian traditional practitioner and culture leader (not pictured).

corporation acquired Soldotna-based Custom Seafood Inc. in May. Mishin said the corporation is working to grow the business and is looking at ways to begin purchasing seafood

from local fisherman.

- Informational booths were displayed in classroom space at the center showcasing the tribe's many programs and services.

Discovering Na'ini

A woman's plight with domestic violence, and her courageous turnaround

In Alaska, 47 percent of adult women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime, according to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Additionally, the council reports, more than one in three Alaska Native or American Indian women will be raped in their lifetime. What follows is the story of one survivor, whose identity has been modified to protect her privacy and safety.

In her own mind, and heart, the woman was already dead.

The question was when she would turn up dead.

The abuse spanned years – nearly two decades of physical, mental and emotional harm inflicted by the man she married.

Each time she threatened to leave, he became violent only to apologize and promise change that never came.

When she did flee with the children, he tracked her down and brought the family home – threatening to kill them.

"We never knew if today was our last day," she said.

Today, "Martha" is a participant in the tribe's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program, which offers advocacy, education, housing, essential needs, and more, to victims of abuse. The program is open to women, men and children.

Martha shares her story with the hope it will inspire others to seek help. She is not alone.

According to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, 47 percent of adult women in Alaska will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime, and more than one in three Alaska Native or American Indian women will be raped. The tribe recognized October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Martha's situation illustrates the confusion, shame and pain of victims in abusive relationships.

In the beginning, Martha said her abuser portrayed himself as charming and kind. A nice man. But over time, he began controlling her and their children.

In the community, Martha tried to maintain a happy appearance.

But behind closed doors, she suffered.

"For years and years I was too ashamed that we were in a domestic violence family situation," Martha said. "I hid it for a long time and would pretend and act as if we were a good family and that nothing went wrong."

As the abuse escalated, Martha's children struggled in school. At times, she said, the children blamed themselves for the situation. It was all Martha could do to avoid confrontations with the abuser. The way she walked, the way she talked, where she went, it was all scrutinized.

“We never knew if today was our last day,”
— ‘Martha’

It got to a point where she no longer saw colors in the trees. Her world had been turned black, white and gray.

The breaking point came when she left with the children to a new community, hoping to escape, but he found them and demanded they return home.

Because the abuser made death threats, officials escorted Martha and the children to a local women's shelter. Next they were evacuated from the community to the LeeShore Center in Kenai, miles away.

Martha learned of the tribe's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program about three months after arriving to LeeShore. The program

Na'ini

is administered under Na'ini Social Services. In the Dena'ina language, *na'ini* translates to "strength, courage and bravery."

Social services specialist Lucy Daniels, who has been working with Martha since she joined the program around spring 2015, said the name represents the people who walk through the door.

"To me, that fits the clients we see because it takes bravery and courage to ask for help," Daniels said. "To be a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault can be

open up about the abuse. She struggled with trust, always looking over her shoulder, afraid of being found.

But as months passed, she and Daniels built rapport. Martha would vent, Daniels would listen. Martha would confide, Daniels would respond.

It's been a challenging, but rewarding process, made possible because Martha found the courage to ask for support.

"My message to victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault is seek help," Daniels said. "We in our program try to help the women get back on their feet. And the end result I see all the

time is they become healthy, contributing members of society, and that's just a wonderful thing."

As she continues to heal, Martha is excited about the future

She enjoys things that

many take for granted – providing snacks for her children, selecting furniture for her home, going to work. The children are doing well in school and playing sports.

With the abuse behind her, Martha is coming to terms with how it affected her.

The abuser demeaned her so badly, she said, that she was convinced she needed him to survive, yet it was nearly impossible to live. She stayed as long as she did because she knew what to expect, it was predictable, and she was afraid of the unknown.

She said getting out was the hardest part, but the best decision of her life.

For the first time in a long time, Martha feels alive again.

"I feel like I was a seed, a seed that fell. I used to have a really beautiful life before my relationship where I blossomed, and then into my relationship I started dying and became that seed that's hard and dead, because a seed has to die before it's reborn," Martha said.

"For a long time I just felt like that hard shell of a seed. Through this whole thing, it gave me life. It gave me light, a direction to go towards. It gave me hope, and I was nurtured."

It took time for Martha to

If you need help

If you are a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault, please contact the tribe's Na'ini Social Services team at 907-335-7600. Help is available.

What you can do

If someone you know is being harmed

- Listen and believe their story
- Keep information confidential
- Let them know they are not to blame for the violence
- Let them know they are not alone
- Support them
- Allow them to make their own decisions
- Let them know they have choices

'Bigger than ourselves'

Dnigi Moose Camp emphasizes safety, respect and stewardship



When the animal emerged from a clearing in the brush, Gideon Collover wasn't sure what he saw.

He spotted it a couple hundred feet off the road, framed by a tangle of spruce and birch trees, a few minutes after 9:30 a.m.

At 10:01 a.m., a gunshot rang out.

The moose had given herself to the group.

"Seeing it was interesting," Collover said. "I didn't really think it was a moose, but it looked different than the rest of the trees."

Collover, 16, was among seven youth who attended the Yaghanen Youth Program's annual Dnigi Moose Camp in October. The camp takes participants on a moose hunt, teaching firearm safety and education, ethical and respectful hunting practices, survival skills, Dena'ina values and traditions, and more. Camp was held at Spirit Lake in Kenai.

The hunt began on the second day of the two-day excursion after campers enjoyed a night of rest in heated

cabins followed by an early breakfast. With temperatures hovering around freezing, and snow on the ground, the group set out down a gravel road in a caravan of vehicles.

It took less than an hour to see a moose, but the team decided it was not the right one to take. Soon, though, Collover – who was traveling in the rear vehicle of the caravan – spotted something to the side of the road.

Three moose – two cows and a bull – stood under a canopy of trees.

Kaleb Franke, the tribe's safety and security supervising officer, who had been selected as the shooter, got out of the lead vehicle and crept into the trees. After stalking the animals for about 15 minutes, Franke shot from less than 100 yards out. The smaller of the two cows dropped to ground. Franke shot the smaller one because he said it was less likely than the other to reproduce.

"It was about figuring out which animal was the most responsible to take," Franke said.

With the moose down, the group worked together to butcher it. They peeled away the hide, saving much of it, and cut away its front and hind quarters. Working efficiently, they removed the gut sack and rib cage. The group also harvested the tongue and many organs.

Throughout the process, Franke and other staff

members emphasized respect for the animal. When they were finished in the field, campers took the meat to a

nearby building and hung it to dry, a process that helps drain blood, tenderize the meat and enhance flavor.

Four days later, they reconvened to deliver the organs and tenderloins to Elders at the Tyotkas Elder Center.

For camper Joshua Grosvold, who donated meat to Elders after hunting trips as a young boy in Unalakleet, it was gratifying.

"I really like it. They are really happy," he said of the Elders. "If they're happy, I'm happy. That's the way

it's always been and should be."

Elder Marian Van Horne, who received part of the moose's tongue, planned on making soup with it. She said she would cut the tongue into pieces and boil it with bones, similar to the way she makes beef soup, and invite a friend over to share the meal.

"It's been a long time," she said of eating moose tongue. "They are hard to get."

Fellow Elder Ernie Jordan, who has been eating moose since the age of 4, received a piece of tenderloin. Minutes after accepting the meat, he said he appreciates the Yaghanen program and the youth who participate.

"It makes me very happy," he said. "I miss eating moose."

Camper Wally James, 15, said he enjoyed camp and would participate again. His favorite part was cutting up the insides of the moose.

Like Grosvold, he has grown up hunting and enjoys going afield.

"I really like it," he said. "It's been fun."

Meanwhile, Collover, the youth who spotted the moose, said camp was a new and inspiring experience. He said he learned about hunting from a Dena'ina perspective and gained a new respect for Dena'ina beliefs and attitudes toward animals.

"This is amazing. It's a really great chance to learn more about where we live and the place we love and be immersed in something that's a lot bigger than just ourselves and our own thoughts," he said. "It gives me a chance to feel connected to a group and a people, which is really fulfilling."



Kenaitze Indian Tribe Safety and Security Officer Kaleb Franke, right, gives thanks to a moose that came to him during the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's Dnigi Camp as campers Andrew Wilson, Gideon Collover, and Youth Advocate Yuzhun Evanoff watch.



Above, campers Gideon Collover, Braden Lemm and Youth Advocate Jonny Wilson load a moose leg into a game bag after processing the moose in the field. Above right, Youth Advocate Yuzhun Evanoff looks at a preserved moose skull while learning about moose around a campfire at Spirit Lake. At right, Elder Ernie Jordan, in white, receives moose meat at Tyotkas Elder Center from campers. From left are Gideon Collover, Andrew Wilson, Doug Gates, Michael Bernard, Wally James and Corvus Leavitt.



Kaleb Franke, at right, talks about how to build an emergency shelter, like one he constructed at left, as campers listen in a wooded area near Spirit Lake in Kenai.

There's more to Moose Camp than moose

In addition to having a moose come to them on the second day of camp, campers enjoyed a range of activities on Day 1 of Moose Camp.

Kaleb Franke, the tribe's safety and security supervising officer, delivered a presentation on firearm safety and responsible practices. He emphasized the importance of respect – not just for firearms but for the animals and environment.

After the presentation, the group took to the woods. Camp leaders demonstrated how to build an emergency shelter using tree branches. The group built a "lean-to," propping up sturdy branches against a tree trunk and covering them with smaller, bushy branches. Inside the shelter, the group spread branches

over the ground for a makeshift bed. The approach is intended to keep a person dry enough and warm enough should they get stranded in the woods.

Later, campers built snares designed to capture small animals like rabbits. Fanning out into the trees, they looked for animal prints and learned how to set the traps. They also learned how to call moose, taking turns practicing.

As night fell, the youth received general information about moose and how the animal is important to Dena'ina people. Youth advocate Doug Gates showed the group a traditional Dena'ina moose-hunting tactic, passed around bones and explained how they could be used, and shared stories about moose.



Josh Grosvold and Wally James laugh after their attempt to call moose. Campers learned how to track moose, as well as how to call them with both male and female calls.



Fairbanks News 13's Julia Laude and KUAC's Robert Hannon interview Chief Judge Kim Sweet and Kenai Superior Court Judge Anna Moran following the historic signing. They will sit together for hearings in the new Henu' Community Wellness Court.

COURT, from p. 1

Landing south to Nimitchik. Defendants charged with property crimes may also be considered if the offense stems from substance use. The court's mission is to get to the root of participants' problems and give them the resources to pursue sobriety rather than send them directly to jail.

Two judges – Kenaitze Indian Tribe Chief Judge Kimberley Sweet and Kenai Superior Court Judge Anna Moran – will sit together for hearings at the tribe's courthouse in Old Town Kenai.

"We share the same values, we share the same passion," Sweet said.

Added Moran, "This is a chance for us to join together and bring wellness to our community."

The new court will have the capacity to work with 20 participants at a time, but the plan for now, Sweet said, is to gradually build toward that number.

The tribe, state court judges and the Department of Law have been meeting for the past several months with stakeholders and members of "Project TEAM" – Together Everyone Achieves More – to develop the joint-jurisdiction court. Project TEAM includes law enforcement, legal, health and other professionals from across the community. The Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance provided a training and technical assistance grant.

Leaders modeled the project on successful joint-jurisdiction efforts in California and Minnesota, where similar courts have reported reduced recidivism, increased public

safety and improved relationships across communities.

Alaska Governor Bill Walker, who attended the signing ceremony with Lt. Governor Byron Mallott, said Alaska has one of the highest recidivism rates in the United States.

He expressed support for the project, saying it's time to take a different approach when handling substance use cases.

"This is the direction we need to be going," Walker said. "It's much more of a collaborative process, the collaborative relationship is what I'm interested in. So I'm very, very pleased with the work that's taken place for this to happen."

Henu' will be a post-plea, pre-sentencing court, meaning offenders plead guilty to their charges and sentencing is delayed until the participant graduates, opts out or is discharged from the program. There is a more favorable

outcome for those who graduate and a less favorable outcome for those who don't. Participation is voluntary, requiring the consent of the defendant, judge and District Attorney's Office.

Sweet said there are many benefits to participating in the program.

The court will help offenders get reestablished in the community. It will hold them accountable. It also will be designed to provide peer-to-peer support for those involved. And the program will encourage and help participants to pursue employment and education.

"Instead of punitive, it's restorative," Sweet said.

In addition to the substance use connection, there will be specific eligibility requirements. An individual charged with an unclassified or class A felony will not be eligible, nor will anyone with an outstanding felony warrant from

another state. Participants must be at least 18 years old and cannot be on parole, among other stipulations. The court will be open to all community members.

The program will consist of four phases – orientation and assessment, education and planning, skill development and feedback, and maintenance and transition. The phases will last a total of at least 18 months.

Those who enter the program will develop an individualized "Life Change Plan." The plan addresses everything from a participant's criminal influences, to their values and beliefs, to their temperament and personality, to family factors, and more.

Participants also are assigned a tribal probation officer and receive a comprehensive and integrated program of drug and alcohol treatment.

"It's all about helping broken people and broken families," Moran said.

The project aligns with the tribe's Dene' Philosophy of Care. The philosophy takes a whole-person approach toward health, focusing on not just one but all areas of a person's well-being, including physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness.

As part of the program, participants will receive behavioral health treatment at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, which is across the street from the tribe's courthouse.

"It's a major component of this," Sweet said.

Sweet also thanked members of Project TEAM and the many community partners that helped make the project possible.



Executive Council Chairperson Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Executive Director Jaylene Peterson-Nyren, Council Secretary Liisa Blizzard and Gov. Bill Walker talk following the ceremony.



Maria Hargrove, Tanya Lange and Elizabeth Hamre assemble care packages at Na'ini Family and Social Services before delivering them to child care providers that partner with the tribe's Child Care Assistance Program in October.

Offering a helping hand

Na'ini Social Services provides supply packages to local child care providers

Christmas has yet to arrive, but one tribal program is already in the giving spirit.

Employees of the Na'ini Social Services Department spent a recent afternoon assembling supply packages for area child care providers that partner with the tribe's Child Care Assistance Program. The program serves income-qualified Alaska Native and American Indian families seeking child care.

The packages, which included a range of learning materials and classroom supplies, arrived to child care providers in October.

"It's really nice to have organizations support early childhood facilities," said Kandice Hightower, who operates Tower Learning Center in Nikiski. "It helps us to continue to increase the quality of care we provide in the community."

Tower Learning, which opened in 2013 and serves children between the ages of 2 and 12, is one of seven providers with which the tribe partners. Tower Learning serves five children through the tribe's program.

Hightower's connection with the tribe stems back to when she worked at a different facility. That's when she met a grandmother who was looking for day care for her grandchildren, whom

the tribe had been supporting through a custody situation. The two met, and ever since, Hightower has served the children.

"That family is doing great and the kids are thriving," she said.

Na'ini social services specialist Maria Hargrove said the tribe currently serves 22 families through the program.

To be eligible, families must be Alaska Native or American Indian, reside in the tribe's service area and meet income requirements.

Additionally, the applicant or their spouse must work or spend time on work-related activities at least 20 hours a week. The program serves children up to the age of 12 as well as teenagers who are physically or mentally incapable of self-care.

"It provides parents a chance to work, receive training or go to school," Hargrove said.

After a family is accepted, the tribe seeks to place the child or children with a provider. Parents get an opportunity to visit the provider before placement is finalized. In addition to Nikiski, the tribe partners with providers in Soldotna and Kenai.

For additional information or to receive an application, please call 907-335-7600.

"We are always accepting applications," Hargrove said.

Alaska Native Education Program receives \$1.3 million grant award

With the 2016-17 school year underway, the tribe has received a three-year education grant totaling more than \$1.3 million.

The Alaska Native Education Program grant funds education for children preparing to enter kindergarten, a 10-week summer program, and collaborates with Alaska Christian College to provide internship experience for enrolled students.

The grant replaces a grant lost a year ago that the tribe has been self-funding. The amount, \$446,934 each year, is about 25 percent greater than the previous award.

Charmaine Lundy, the tribe's Alaska Native Education Coordinator, thanked the tribe for

supporting the program when the grant was lost for a year and said the new award will go a long way toward supporting students at the Early Childhood Center.

"I'm completely appreciative of the tribe's faith in our program," Lundy said. "This allows us to continue to support these little ones in making a solid foundation to launch their academic careers."

The Early Childhood Center operates a Head Start Program and After School Program, accepting applications year-round. The After School Program is currently full, but applications are being accepted for the wait list. There is no fee to participate in either program.

For additional information, please call the center at 335-7260.

Bequsilna: 'those who are gone'

Fiocla Wilson, who was the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's eldest member, died Saturday, Oct. 8, at Heritage Place in Soldotna. She was 100.

Fiocla was born June 30, 1916, in Kenai. She attended boarding school, but was punished for speaking a language other than

English. She was proud of her heritage, serving as a mentor, teacher, volunteer and supporter of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and many of its members. She volunteered for the tribe's youth and Elders programs.

The following tribal members died over the past year. To recognize them, their names were read aloud at the tribe's annual meeting on Oct. 1.

Gerald Brown

Maxim Dolchok

Marjorie Jordan

Keith Lawrence

Edward Ness

Lee Ann Wheeler

Paul Wilson



Fiocla Wilson

Fiocla was a Sunday school teacher, Cub Scout leader and volunteer librarian for the City of Kenai. She also served on the Kenai Senior Citizen Committee and belonged to the Homemakers Association.

In addition to her community service, Fiocla raised six children, com-

mercial fished with her late husband, Philip, and opened her home and heart to countless individuals. She was a respected Elder of Athabaskan and Russian descent.

Cook Inlet Region Inc., to which Fiocla was the oldest shareholder, named her 2016 Elder of the Year. The corporation commended her for preserving Alaska Native culture and heritage, and for her outstanding service to the community.

Fiocla was preceded in death by her husband, Philip Wilson, and sons Philip Wilson and Arnold Wilson. She is survived by her daughters Joyce Williford, Phyllis (Jim) Bookey and Kathy (Carl) Rodgers; sons Coby (Connie) Wilson, Phillip Wilson and Russell Wilson; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to a charity of your choice.

Yaghali Nusdlan

He or she got well



Tribe recognizes National Diabetes Month

To Pat Cue, a person's health is a like a path – smooth for some, rocky for others, different for everyone.

"How we manage that path is going to be very important to how we live our lives," said Cue, registered dietitian at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. "Are we going to have some little curves and pretty much stay on the path? Or are we going to have hills and valleys and a lot of disease during that process?"

In recognition of National Diabetes Month in November, the tribe displayed information on diabetes prevention, detection and management in the gathering area of the Dena'ina Wellness Center. Diabetes is a leading cause of death among Alaska Native and American Indian people, who are more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic white people to suffer from the disease, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Un'ina – "those who come to us" – were encouraged to complete questionnaires gauging their risk of developing diabetes. Family history, weight, diet and physical activity are among the contributing factors. Symptoms may include excessive thirst, hunger and urination, as well as fatigue.

Cue works closely with un'ina

who are at risk of developing diabetes.

She said a person's diet is one of the most important factors not only when preventing but managing diabetes. Avoiding overly processed foods and maintaining portion control are both vital, she said, as is eating a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

It's also important to get a lot of physical activity, take prescribed medications as directed, maintain good dental health and avoid tobacco.

"It's all a formula for good health," Cue said. "Once we've lost our health, we've lost it. So it's really important to prevent that loss from occurring."

When un'ina come to Cue, she offers tools to help them get on a good path.

They discuss items such as grocery lists and what's in the cupboards and refrigerator at home. They tour the center's gym. They discuss tobacco cessation tools. Cue also hosts "Pathways to Wellness" workshops designed to encourage healthy habits.

"It really is an integrated approach to getting people on the right path," Cue said.

To learn more, please contact the center at 907-335-7500.



Eat well, live well

Food is an important part of life and plays a large role in a person's health. Here are a few things you can do to maintain healthy eating habits:

Breakfast tips

- Wipe a little oil on the frying pan before scrambling eggs
- Replace a medium-sized orange with half a cup of orange juice
- Add a glass of low-fat, nonfat, lactose-free or soy milk

Lunch tips

- Use ketchup and mustard on your hamburger
- Avoid mayonnaise
- Skip French fries
- Add one slice of cheese to add calcium and vitamins

Dinner tips

- Top berries with low-fat yogurt to add calcium and vitamins
- Skip butter or margarine, or use one pat

General tips

- Use a 9-inch plate or 9-inch area of a larger plate.
- Divide the plate into quarters – having equal rations of fruits, vegetables, grains or starches, and meat, fish or poultry.
- Stack food no higher than 1 to 1-and-one-half inches.

*Information courtesy of the Indian Health Service, Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention

Happy skin

Wellness department hosts bath and body workshop

At right, Dena'ina Wellness Center's Tia Holley talks about making lotion from natural ingredients as coworker Bessie Phillip pours cottonwood-infused olive oil during a workshop at the center in October.



Tia Holley turned on the blender, which was about halfway full, and began pouring in liquid.

The contents, creamy and pale, began to thicken as the rumbling machine mixed them together.

"Every once in a while, it doesn't set," Holley said, peering down. "But this looks good."

Soon the batch was ready.

The Wellness Department recently hosted a bath and body workshop at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, teaching participants how to make bath salts and oil-based salves and lotions with all-natural products. About 20 people attended.

During the workshop, which included information about Dena'ina uses of plants and herbs, Holley shared step-by-step instructions for making salves and lotions. She discussed the benefits of using organic products and offered tips on selecting the proper ingredients and equipment when making lotions at home.

After attendees watched Holley mix a batch, they received samples of lotion in zip-close bags. Then they added essential oils to the lotion, choosing between peppermint, lavender and others.

For Nancy S. – who requested her full last name not be disclosed – the workshop was a chance to gain knowledge about a topic in which she's already interested.

"It's all about learning for me," she said.

For Rose Huston, who recently moved to the central Kenai Peninsula from Montana, the workshop

offered a glimpse into Dena'ina life.

Since arriving to Alaska, Huston has been reading books about

Alaska Native people and history.

She said the workshop taught her new ways to use plants.

A guide to making oil-based salves and lotions

Making the oil

Ingredients:

- 1 cup gently crushed fresh herbs/plant, or ½ cup dried herbs/plant
- 2 cups carrier oil
- ¼ teaspoon or three capsules vitamin E for preservatives.

Directions: Combine ingredients in a double boiler and heat on low for four hours. Or, combine ingredients in a Mason jar and heat in oven for four hours at 170 degrees.

Making the salve

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons beeswax
- 8 ounces strained oil

Directions: Add beeswax to oil in double boiler. Heat on low to medium-low until beeswax is melted. Turn off heat and add essential oil, if desired, and ladle into containers. Wait until salve is cool to put on lid.

Making the lotion

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons beeswax
- ½ cup infused oil
- 1 cup carrier oil (such as grape seed oil)
- 2/3 cup coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon special oil (such as jojoba or castor)
- ¼ teaspoon vitamin E (if desired)
- Essential oil of your choice (if desired)
- 2 cups Aloe Vera juice

Directions: Combine the beeswax, infused oil, carrier oil and coconut oil in a double boiler and melt. Once melted, add special oil, vitamin E and essential oil. Let cool for five minutes. Pour mixture into covered blender. Turn on blender and mix in Aloe Vera juice. Lotion will become white and thick. Pour lotion into a zip-close bag and leave open until it cools. Cut hole in corner of bag and squeeze lotion into containers.



"I never realized you could use the cottonwood and the seaweed and things like that. That's pretty cool," Huston said. "I'm just learning a lot of interesting little bits of information."

When she lived in Montana, Huston used an organic hand soap made with hemp oil and Shea butter. She said she enjoyed using it but never really explored other options.

At the workshop, she added lemon to her lotion mix and put peppermint and seaweed into a batch of bath salt.

"It's been fun, it's something different," Huston said.

Among the ingredients Holley suggested using for body lotions were beeswax, coconut oil, Shea butter, Aloe Vera juice and grape seed oil, among others.

She also explained how to use cottonwood buds and dried rosehips – two plants that are commonly found across the area.

In addition to lotion, participants created bath salt mixtures with peppermint and seaweed.

Both the salts and lotion, workshop leaders said, help keep skin healthy.

Bessie Phillip, who works in the Wellness Department, said there are many benefits to making salts, lotions and salves at home with organic ingredients.

"This is natural," she said. "There are no hidden ingredients."

If you are interested in learning more about bath and body lotions, please contact the Dena'ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500.

The Big Picture



Northern Lights rise above a figure from Kenaitze artist Joel Isaak's hammered bronze sculpture installation titled, "Luq'a Nagh Ghilghuzht (Fish Camp)" at the Dena'ina Wellness Center early Oct. 25.

Our Mission

To assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever.

Our Values

These are the beliefs and principles that define our people and will assure our future as a tribe:

Family: Honoring and sustaining health and happiness of family as a first responsibility

Stewardship: Respectful use of land, resources and all creations

Spiritual Beliefs: Acknowledging the existence of a higher power and respecting spiritual beliefs

Education: Passing down cultural knowledge and traditions and supporting formal education

Our Vision

By 2025, the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina have enhanced and strengthened the prosperity, health and culture of their people and tribe by:

- working toward united effort with Native organizations and other governments that impact our people.
- developing and implementing a tribal education system.
- living our traditional values and practices.
- empowering our sovereignty.
- continuing to demonstrate resiliency.
- striving for excellence in all of our programs.
- elevating the wellness of our people.
- using our talents and resources to ensure we are able to take care of ourselves and share with others.

Addresses and phone numbers

Administration Building

150 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7200
888-335-8865 fax

Early Childhood Center

130 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7260

Tyotkas Elders Center

1000 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7280

Yaghanen Youth Program

35105 K-B Dr., Soldotna, AK 99669
907-335-7290

Environmental Program

509 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7287

Dena'ina Wellness Center

508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7500

Na'ini Family and Social Services, Education and Career Development

510 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7600

Tribal Court

508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7217

On the Web: kenaitze.org

On Facebook: facebook.com/kenaitze

