

Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center

Research Paper

July 2005



Completed for the Association of Village Council Presidents
by Agnew::Beck Consulting, LLC

All photos in document: Agnew::Beck Consulting

Top: Mosaic at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, Bethel

Middle: Potlatch, Emmonak

Bottom: Kalskag elder Willie Pitka Sr.

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■ INTRODUCTION

“When there’s something going on, be visible to the people you are trying to help. They will start respecting you and also, if you work without tiring you will accomplish a lot.”

Paul John, Elder, Toksook Bay

Scope of Report

Over the past four years the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) has operated the Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat program. This program has engaged villages throughout the Yukon-Kuskowkim region on a journey towards wellness and self-determination. One of the primary lessons learned from the program is the need to preserve and celebrate the region’s rich heritage. As part of their strategic planning, the board of AVCP also identified cultural heritage preservation as a priority for the organization, and requested staff to investigate creating a regional heritage center.

To this end, AVCP entered into a contract with Agnew::Beck Consulting, LLC, to complete preliminary research on the concept and feasibility of a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center. This report details the findings from a one-month study of community visions and goals, market trends, likely user groups and funding sources.

While this study is limited in scope, the following report is intended to be a beginning of a much longer discussion and investigation. What follows are the first ideas generated by community stakeholders. The intent of this report is to foster deeper and wider conversations across the region to further develop and refine the concept and find a feasible and community-supported way forward.

Executive Summary

The concept for the Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center, while still in its infancy, has many promising aspects. The region has in place a number of excellent programs already doing much of the work conceived for a regional heritage center. While these efforts are not well coordinated at present, the value of increased collaboration is clear. The region also has a well-maintained and attractive cultural center already in place. While this facility is currently not configured in a way that allows for a full heritage program to be housed there, both programmatic and physical modifications are possible that could utilize this facility to house the envisioned programs.

Many of the region’s organizations and communities are increasingly aware of the value of preserving and celebrating the region’s rich heritage. A strong grounding in the identity and values of the traditional culture has many social, economic and community wellness benefits. With such rich heritage and intricate histories, the region is well-poised to expand these efforts. The region also recognizes the urgency of these efforts: the elders of the region, who lived



traditional lifestyles and were taught the *Yuuyaraq* by their elders, are passing on. As each one passes, a link to the region's way of life is lost.

The Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center is envisioned as a regional heritage center. While it may be physically located in the hub community of Bethel, it will represent the entire region and investigate the varied histories and experiences of different peoples within the region. It will also celebrate the varied heritage of the region. Russian, Scandinavian, Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Athabascan and other immigrant and native cultures form integral parts of the region's stories. The heritage center will take a many-varied approach to exploring the heritage of the region. Likewise, the land, the resources, the animals and plants all take rightful places in the region's stories. The heritage center will feature and explore these aspects of the region as well.

Activities envisioned for the regional heritage center are numerous, both in their content and method of exploration. Some examples include, Elders conferences; cultural demonstrations and classes; a full artifact repository; archeological and anthropological research (conducted by scholars from the region); an oral history archive and searchable database; museum exhibits teaching about the ways of the region; an interactive website; living history demonstrations such as Elder storytelling and field trips; mapping of traditional place names and sub-regions; an arts & crafts market; and many, many others.

Work session participants emphasized that the heritage center should not only focus on the past but on how real life is lived today, and what the future of the region might be. While some of the programs will be presented live and face-to-face, others will take advantage of print, audio and visual media. Reaching people from a distance, by using two-way videoconferencing and the Internet will extend the reach of the heritage center throughout the region and across the globe.

The Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center will be a vibrant place with strong ties to the communities of the region. It must gain support from all local organizations, and be able to sustain its facilities and programs well into the future. It will reach out to the communities and ensure people are informed of programs and events. In short, it will be a place that accurately represents the people of the Yukon Kuskokwim region: resilient, enduring, vibrant, intriguing and engaging. It will be a welcoming place that gathers the region's people, practices and values in a way that is accessible to the people of the region, and that can be shared with many other communities around the world.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



“We really don’t know what is ahead of us. But talking to our children, we can help our children and the youth.”

Simeon Harpak, Mountain Village

Cultural Facilities & Programs

The Yukon Kuskokwim region is widely recognized for its rich heritage and the present-day practice of ancient language and traditions. The region is home to approximately 24,000 people, nearly 20 percent of Alaska’s total Native population. Yup’ik, Cup’ik Eskimo and Athabascan, cultures dominate this vast 56,000 square mile lowland delta in southwestern Alaska. Yup’ik and Cup’ik remain the first languages of many children born in coastal communities. The 2000 census identified 1,406 people who are 62 years and older residing in Yukon-Kuskokwim communities. Efforts to teach younger generations about traditional life and culture are thriving in the region as awareness increases of the urgency of passing on traditional knowledge while elders are still alive.



This section details some of the existing programs and facilities whose mission is to educate and perpetuate the traditions of the Yukon Kuskokwim region. These existing efforts should form the basis for a regional Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center.

Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat

AVCP’s region-wide wellness program has operated for the past four years, with funding expiring at the end of July 2005. The region is divided into units, each of which has two coordinators. The project has been guided by an Elders Council comprised of elders from around the region. The elders have directed the project and provided ongoing guidance over its life. Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat completed an exhaustive village-based assessment of the problems and solutions identified by village groups. Each village determined how to best respond to their identified problems and enact solutions. Region-wide, ‘lack of parenting’ and ‘alcohol and drug abuse’ were most often identified as priority problems. Many of the solutions identified by village teams involve improving community law enforcement and governance, and strengthening traditional culture. Increasing activities for youth and grounding the region’s youth in a stronger sense of their heritage and identity were also often identified as solutions. Increasing involvement between elders and youth is another high priority.

Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat succeeded in energizing a broad cross-section of village residents to take greater control of their communities, and revitalized interest in the region's culture and heritage. The wellness program also employed a successful model for engaging elders as leaders in project design and implementation. This model can be used in the planning and development of a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center.

Calista Elders Council

Calista Elders Council has taken active steps to share their vast years of wisdom and experience by developing and implementing activities to strengthen communities and families. The main objective of the Calista Elders Council since its inception has been the celebration, documentation, and dissemination of Yup'ik cultural traditions. The council has been successful in transmitting cultural knowledge to local people through gatherings, and reaching a broader audience through books and articles.

The Vision of the Elders is that, *“Knowledge and information will be transferred from the Elders to the Youth so that they can come to know and live the Yupiaq way of being, ‘Yuuyaraq’; and the health and general well-being of Elders will be promoted through programming and services directed to Elders.”* The words of wisdom and expertise that guide our Elders must be transmitted to younger generations in order to sustain healthy communities.

Calista Elders Council hosts many events and activities, which could provide excellent programming for a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center. Currently, Calista Elders Council hosts events in a variety of locations, including schools and village halls. Centralizing some of this activity would provide a strong focus for the work, and greatly enhance a heritage center. In addition, Calista Elders Council possesses a vast library of raw oral history recordings, transcriptions and translations. These are stored in a number of locations around the state making access to the collection difficult. Calista Elders Council is currently working to create a central catalogued archive and to develop educational materials to increase access to traditional teachings.

Lower Kuskokwim School District

The Lower Kuskokwim School District is renowned for the quality of materials and instruction in Yup'ik cultural and language instruction. The district has developed curricula that are used in many school districts, including a curriculum that follows the traditional seasons and uses traditional activities and practices to teach academic subjects. The Lower Kuskokwim School District operates a Yup'ik immersion elementary program in Bethel called Mikelinguut Elitnaurvia, as well as a variety of Yup'ik and English language immersion programs and literacy development programs in schools throughout the district.

Lower Kuskokwim School District could utilize a regional heritage center to increase access to materials developed by their teachers and staff. Other activities hosted by the center would provide enrichment to LKSD students. Teachers new to the area could also utilize a heritage center to improve their understanding of the cultural history and practices prevalent in the region.

Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center and Museum

The Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center and Museum is centrally located in Bethel near the University Campus and city offices. Construction of this facility was completed in 1995, funded through a State appropriation of federal funds. Total cost for construction was \$6.15 million.

The Cultural Center building is owned by the University of Alaska, which oversees facility operations and maintenance and provides building security. The University is also in charge of renting out the facility's conference space. The Association of Village Council Presidents operates the museum and gift shop. This facility also houses the Consortium Library, which is operated by the City of Bethel and the University of Alaska.

The museum is located within the 18,000 square foot cultural center and houses approximately 500 pieces of art, pictures and artifacts. The areas related to the museum total 3,800 square feet and include storage, a gift shop, and offices.

Two galleries display the permanent exhibits of Ahtabascan, Cup'ik and Yup'ik people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in ancient and contemporary times. The third gallery is reserved for short-term exhibits that include some Native collections.

The most popular exhibits with local and regional visitors are school district art shows, the Life and Time of St. Innocent, photos of the region, and art shows. Visitors from outside of the region tend to gravitate toward the permanent exhibits such as clothing, implements and objects of transport of the region.

The Association of Village Council Presidents is interested in increasing the connections between this facility and the surrounding villages. At a strategic planning session, held in 2004, AVCP determined the need for this facility to better represent, serve and perpetuate the language and culture of the region.

Presently, the museum and gift shop employs one part-time Curator. The Curator reports that volunteers assist with museum operations by doing everything from organizing and maintaining artifacts, to setting up shows and staffing events, providing a significant amount of support. This very minimal level of staffing prevents the museum from engaging in development efforts, or village-based programs as much as both the Curator and AVCP would like.

The University presently has a three-year grant from US Housing and Urban Development to increase the sustainability of this facility. The University is applying for a three-year continuation of this grant. The City contributes to library operations. AVCP controls museum space and gift shop and pays a lease of \$20,000 per year.

Other events held at this facility include: weekly Saturday Markets, Cultural Nights, Summer Arts Camp (for local youth), art classes (held during the regular school year), dance nights (in which local dance groups perform for the public), and fiddle dances. A University representative reported that they try to schedule activities that are tied to arts and culture.

The Board of Directors for the museum and gift shop is the Association of Village Council Presidents. The entire facility is owned and managed by the University of Alaska, Kuskokwim Campus.

Some issues with the current facility identified by participants in the work sessions and staff of the museum include:

- The museum is located at the far end of the cultural center, limiting its visibility to visitors. One participant stated that many people in the region don't know where the museum is located. The current configuration lacks a welcoming gathering space that would increase visitation by people who live in villages in the region.
- Due to staff shortages the operating hours of the museum and gift shop are minimal. This leads to a general impression that it is often closed.
- Also due to staff shortages, the current facility lacks an ongoing public awareness campaign that would increase visibility of the facility and its programs, both to Bethel residents, visitors and village residents around the region.
- The current facility lacks storage space for artifacts, making extensive repatriation difficult.
- With only one part-time staff person, any development efforts or plans for new projects are greatly curtailed.
- Since the rest of the cultural center is operated by the University, and often leased out for other functions, there is very little space for other cultural activities or exhibits. Scheduling can be a challenge due to the significant demand for meeting space and facilities in the cultural center.
- The current facility has no classroom for teaching classes or giving demonstrations.
- Sustaining the facility is a challenge. The meeting spaces are the sections of the cultural center that generate revenue, and these parts of the facility tend to dominate the museum functions. However, if a greater portion of the facility were dedicated to museum and heritage center activities, other sources of revenue would be needed to sustain the operations of the facility. A full business plan is needed to establish sustainable strategies for operating a heritage center.
- Currently, the cultural center and other cultural programs operating in the region are not collaborating closely. In order to combine efforts, and widen the reach of all of the programs and facilities, closer working relationships will need to be developed.
- The current facility does not have a catalogued archive of research and materials on the culture of the region. A central repository is needed to make this work accessible.

Summary

The Yukon Kuskokwim region is starting from the right place with plans for a regional heritage center: with quality programs and facilities already in place. While these have much room for growth, they are an excellent starting point for developing the Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center.

■ COMMUNITY CONCEPT

“We should put on words of wisdom like a garment to protect us from ailments of the mind and body.”

John Phillips, Sr., Elder, Kongiganak

Community Vision

The following statements are from members of the work sessions convened to help build the concept for the Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center. Most of the stakeholders listed at the end of this section were able to attend one or both of the work sessions. This builds on the work completed by the strategic planning session convened by AVCP in 2004. The comments have been grouped under themes to better articulate the vision for the heritage center.

Empower Communities to be Strong in Culture, Heritage and Language

Establish ownership and maintenance of indigenous knowledge.

Preserve art and traditions.

Maintain traditional values.

Engage Elders.

Educate youth.

To preserve the past: a place for everyone else to see the past and learn from research.

A living language: The Yup'ik language is changing and evolving in meaning and inflection. There is a difference between the way people used to speak and the way that they speak today. “High level” Yup'ik is not being passed on. Young people have new words and new ways of speaking. All of this should be preserved and perpetuated.

For the Whole Region

A resource center – a catalyst – a place for anyone, students and visitors, to learn about ALL area cultures – resources, ecology, language and arts. Not just Yup'ik culture, it's for the entire region. There is a lot of mixed heritage including Russian and many other nationalities, all should be included.

Not just a Bethel center – incorporate the whole region – create monthly evening broadcasts to villages using two-way video. Schools could host in the villages and the heritage center could give presentations, or presentations could come from the villages out to the region.

Acknowledge both languages (like US Fish and Wildlife exhibits narrated in English and Yup'ik).



Gather and Combine Efforts

Start with the existing cultural center and use it as a starting point to evolve into a regional heritage center by bringing together a consortium of organizations that support this effort.

Combine efforts of existing museum, Calista Elders Council, Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat, Lower Kuskokwim School District, University of Alaska – all the activities that take place under the heading of culture.

A place where entities that work closely together can be co-located.

Take a “partnership approach”.

“A Library of Congress for the region.”

Bring Artifacts Home to the Region, Make them Accessible to our People

Place to relocate artifacts and storage that are currently spread all over the world.

Decentralize the Smithsonian, and the Anchorage museum – create a site here in Bethel.

Make research and artifacts “accessible and useful” to the people.

Create Events and Materials to Spread Yup'ik Culture Around the World

Educate about the culture of the region.

Incorporate modern life. “We have a right to be modern.”

Create events to bring people here, for example, we could create an annual film festival to showcase Alaska Natives in film.

Educate teachers and new residents to the region.

A place that brings out the “living” aspects of the culture; not just showcasing the past, but showing the present and projecting into the future.

No “fake” exhibits. “Focus on life now, how we are coping today, using knowledge of old to survive in today’s world.”

Develop Local Talent and Expertise

Need to have a key person to run the center with “a fire in their belly” to make great things happen.

“Grow our own experts.” Host local students and assist them with their research.

Museum without walls – focus on subsistence and seasonal activities, take visitors out to work with people doing subsistence activities.

THE place to go for anything related to the culture of the region. Facilitate and coordinate resources. Turn the tables – *we* are the experts on our heritage, “here’s *our* Yup’ik dictionary”

Programs & Activities

This section describes initial ideas from the work sessions on the programs and activities the heritage center should offer.

- Develop a good website with Yup'ik language with examples, sounds and definitions.
- Bridge the language gaps between generations and between 'speakers' and 'scholars'. Develop reference and other language materials with Yup'ik speakers to test and refine them.
- Convene gatherings to document stories, language, and knowledge. Calista Elders Council convenes topic specific gatherings that bring elders together for three or four days to record knowledge. Some gatherings have audiences, sometimes students and others, in order to disseminate knowledge.
- Gather for Native dance ceremonies, dance festivals, oral history discussions and language and culture camps.
- Map Yup'ik place names for communities, landmarks, sloughs and rivers.
- Preserve art and tools, bring back artifacts to the region, and replicate those that can't be brought back.
- Create a product from the center, such as "Yup'ik culture in a Box" that could be sent to interested schools and institutions around the world. This could include a package of materials such as dolls, carvings, books, posters, and a DVD. This could eventually be translated into many languages.
- Inventory and archive all existing documents and materials that are currently stored in many places around the region and state.
- Create a clearinghouse for research and publication in the region. Students have approached AVCP about needing research materials. We need to have catalog of available materials and perhaps a place to centralize research that has been done or that needs to be done, for example, researching the potential impacts of mining on our culture.
- Create a central storage area of cultural artifacts, information, and records, to engage in research and produce cultural documents and materials. Existing material includes translated and transcribed interview texts, un-translated cassette tapes currently held by school districts, the University and Calista Elders Council, and videotapes.
- Offer community classes in Native cooking and sewing.
- Establish an annual event to raise public awareness about the heritage center, and to get ideas for the future; invite all villages to attend.
- Utilize school district technology, such as two-way video to offer programs that could broadcast across the region and bring many villages together.
- Publish a newsletter with information on upcoming events and accomplishments. Create an ongoing public awareness campaign to make sure the community knows what's happening at the heritage center. Use the radio to broadcast weekly updates.

- Create an Artist in Residence program, to bring artists and experts to the center to give demonstrations and teach others.
- Cama'i is getting too big for the cultural center or high school to host. We could consider constructing a convention center and using the cultural center for expanded heritage programs.

Preliminary Target Audiences

The target audiences of the center will in many ways define which programs and activities are most effective. The following lists primary groups that the work sessions identified as target audiences.

- Younger generations who are losing their language and cultural identity.
- The entire community: make sure they support and embrace the center.
- Elders need to be consulted and engaged as leaders. They should be asked: how should artifacts be displayed? What information should be shared?
- New people to the region, teachers, new residents; the center should be a place to introduce and orient new residents and provide cross-cultural education.
- School district teachers, employees, and students.

Stakeholders

The following list gives a starting point for who needs to be included in planning and developing a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center. Some members of the work sessions described the consortium of organizations that came together to develop the vocational education center, Yuut Elitnaurviat. This model was very effective in developing this project. A similar model could be employed to develop the Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center.

- Calista Corporation
- Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
- University of Alaska, Kuskokwim Campus
- Calista Elders Council
- Association of Village Council Presidents
- Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center and Museum
- AVCP Housing Authority
- Coastal Villages Region Fund
- Delegation of the US House of Representatives and Senate offices
- Yuut Elitnaurviat
- All traditional and village councils in the region
- All school districts in the region
- Private donors and artifact collectors
- Bethel Native Corporation

- Bethel City Council
- Orutsaramuit Native Council
- Kuskokwim Natives Association
- The Kuskokwim Corporation
- Senator Lyman Hoffman
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Representative Mary Kapsner
- Bethel Chamber of Commerce
- Bethel Lions Club
- Bethel Community Services Foundation
- VFW Ladies Auxiliary

Summary

Even though planning for a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center is still in the beginning stages, many excellent ideas for programs and partners have been shared. By continuing the discussion and including other ideas in planning and then evaluating the feasibility of desired programs, a vibrant heritage center for the region will start to take shape.



■ MARKET RESEARCH

“It’s like what we’ve been taught has resurfaced. What they used to teach in the qasgiq.”

Emma David, Elder, Kongiganak

Lessons Learned from Other Alaska Cultural Facilities

One way to understand the challenges and possibilities associated with the creation and operation of a heritage center is to study similar facilities and learn from the examples they provide. The following section presents a summary of lessons learned from six similar facilities within the state of Alaska. These include: the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage; the Alutiiq Museum and Archeological Repository in Kodiak; the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow; the Museum of the Aleutians in Unalaska; the Alaska Sea Life Center in Seward; and the Museum of the Arctic in Kotzebue.

Though they vary in size and focus, a number of themes remain constant. Among these are: the desire to perpetuate and preserve the culture, language, history and values of a particular area; the importance of each facility and its programs to the people in the community and region; the challenges associated with securing funds for construction; and the challenge of creating a sustainable operation.



Construction & Capital Funding:

- All heritage centers surveyed received funding through external entities to complete initial construction of facilities. Examples of this include, the Alutiiq Museum, which was constructed with funds from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill; the Alaska Native Heritage Center, which was constructed with funds from a mixture of sources that included corporations, federal and municipal governments, foundations and individual donations; and the Museum of the Aleutians, which was constructed with funds from the City of Unalaska.
- Others had generous operating support from a local organization to engage in lengthy capital campaigns, such as CIRI Inc. for the Alaska Native Heritage Center, which helped to raise the capital funds from other sources.

Operations Funding:

- This is the most challenging aspect of sustaining a heritage center. Almost all of the centers receive some support from local Native organizations and City and Borough entities. For example, in Barrow the North Slope Borough owns the facility. In Unalaska, the City of Unalaska provides operating support for staffing and facilities. In Kotzebue, NANA Regional Corporation owns the museum and Tour Alaska, a for-profit subsidiary

that brings visitors to the facility from Anchorage and Fairbanks. At the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, operations are supported in part by a \$500,000 corporate endowment.

- While some funding may be available for special projects, research does not provide significant funding to help subsidize operations. Kodiak and Unalaska both engage in archeological research, but this has become an increasingly minor portion of their operating budgets. Only the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward has significant research funding, and this is for their live animal program.
- Relying on grants for operating funds is very risky. For example, Barrow greatly overestimated the amount of funding they would secure: \$1.5 million anticipated, \$450,000 was actually raised. In Kodiak, the research funding they received for this year is \$30,000, which makes up only 3% of their annual operating budget. A museum representative reported that this amount is higher than it has been in past years and says the average amount contributed through research grants is about \$5,000.
- Local organizations, and particularly local Native corporations and associations, as well as municipal entities make significant annual contributions to keep the centers open and operating.
- Though many of these operations are the recipients of generous contributions from a number of sources and work hard to make their operations sustainable, it is often necessary to cut back hours and services offered during the winter months. Kotzebue's Museum of the Arctic is open only during summer months, and is not offering tours in 2005. The Alaska Native Heritage Center, which draws from a much more significant population base, decreases its staffing by half in the winter. Though it offers many educational programs throughout the winter season, it is only open to the public one day a week from October through April.
- Some facilities benefit from creating a volunteer program. This is a way to increase sustainability and enhance the community's connection to the facility. The Alutiiq Museum estimates that volunteers donate hundreds of hours of their time in positions that range from Docent to Archeological Site Assistant.
- Creating an internship program is another way to add staff, increase connections with the community and qualify for funding sources that might not be otherwise available. The Alutiiq Museum's internship program is grant funded and was created in partnership with the Kodiak Island School District. Three interns will spend the summer learning about the area's history, cultural and archeology and also increase the staffing at the Museum. The Museum of the Aleutians received grant funding from the Alaska Humanities Forum for four intern positions. These students are digitizing historic photographs from the museum's collection which will update the museum's database records.
- Offering event rental space can generate significant revenue, especially in communities where such a service is greatly needed. At the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center and Museum in Bethel, it is estimated that conference space rentals and events generate around \$80,000 per year. The Alaska Native Heritage Center charges between \$500 - \$1,600 per day for facility rental and reports that event rental, along with revenue

generated by its gift shop, special events, admission and tours makes up about half of their \$6 million per year operating budget.

- Many facilities include some sort of retail space such as a gift shop or book store as a way to increase operating revenues.

Programs:

- Research and artifact collection and care take up a large part of most centers' activities. Village and community presentations are also very important, particularly in Kodiak. A variety of cultural demonstrations and classes are offered by most museums and cultural centers. The Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage offers an extensive program during the summer months, targeting visitors, and during the winter months offers classes and gathering for the local Native communities.

Users:

- School groups comprise a large portion of all centers' users.
- Out-of-area tourist visitors do not make up a significant portion of annual visitation for any of the centers located off of the road system. Therefore, admission fees also make up a small percentage of the centers' operations funding.
- For the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, visitation has been between 110,000 to 120,000 per year. Since the center is open to the public only one day per year in the winter, we can assume that most of this occurs during summer months.

Governance:

- Most of the centers are owned and operated by a local government entity, or by a consortium of Native corporations and organizations. Even those that are organized as non-profits have representation from local Native and municipal entities on their boards.

Summary of Bethel Meeting Facilities

The following section provides a general overview of facilities located in the Bethel community that provide meeting space for small or large groups. This information is important to consider when projecting revenues from renting meeting space in a regional heritage center. A market analysis should be conducted to see where demand exists for facility rental.

Yupiiit Piciryarait Cultural Center

The Yupiiit Piciryarait Cultural Center offers a large meeting space that can be broken into three smaller sections (with the use of moveable partitions) or can be opened into one large room. The capacity for the large space is estimated at 400 persons. Rental fees are \$350 per day, per section or \$1000 per day for the entire space. The space has a stage and stage lighting, a partial kitchen and an audio visual room.

Bethel National Guard Armory

The Bethel National Guard Armory has a standard sized gymnasium space which can be used for large events such as YKHC's Rural Providers Conference, which was held there in 2005. There are plans to construct a new armory facility in the near future.

VFW Hall

The Bethel VFW Hall hosts Bingo six nights a week. Cost for rental of this facility is \$600 per event.

City of Bethel, Parks & Recreation Log Cabin

The Log Cabin is available for rent and under certain conditions is available free of charge to non-profit and community groups. A cleaning deposit of \$200 is required prior to rental. The main room can accommodate approximately 40 people. Use of the main room only is \$25 per day. Use of the main room plus kitchen is \$35 per day. Additionally, if the facility is used for fundraising or to generate a profit, 5% of profits will be paid to the City.

Bethel Regional High School

The Bethel Regional High School hosts events in its standard sized gymnasium. Events held at the high school include sporting events such as games and tournaments and the annual Cama'i Festival, which is held for three days in April. It is reported that the Cama'i Festival is so well-attended (estimates say that over 1000 people attend each year) that this space has reached its capacity and a larger venue is needed.

Church Meeting Facilities

Bethel Moravian Church

The Bethel Moravian Church offers a large meeting space in the foyer entrance to the church sanctuary. This space has a large kitchen, two entrances and could easily accommodate 200 people (with room for some overflow into the sanctuary area). Cost for rental is about \$600 per

day, although it was reported that for some special events, the Church will let the space free of charge.

Bethel Immaculate Conception Church

The Bethel Immaculate Conception Church's Fellowship Hall is available for events and can accommodate approximately 100 people. This space is outfitted with a stage at one end for performances. A kitchenette is also available.

Hotel Meeting Facilities

Long House Hotel

The Long House Hotel offers conference space that can accommodate approximately 120 people. Cost is \$400 per day. Meal service is not available, however catered events are welcome.

Pacifica Guest House

The Pacifica Guest House has a number of small meeting spaces including a small board room with a long table that can accommodate between eight and ten people. Additionally, the Guest House has a larger conference space that can accommodate between 55 – 65 people. The cost per day for this space is \$400, but this price is significantly discounted if the group using the space is also renting hotel rooms. Meal service is also available.

Tourism Data

The Bethel area is visited by only a few “tourists” traveling for pleasure. However, because Bethel is the business and social services hub for the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, the community is an important destination for business travel, visiting friends and relatives, meetings and conferences, and for residents from surrounding villages.

Cultural centers in other communities benefit from a small but regular flow of visits by out-of-town business travelers and visiting friends and relatives. This potential could be better developed in Bethel. Likewise, with better marketing and improved services and facilities, the rich cultural traditions and remarkable wildlife of the area have potential to attract more pleasure travelers.

Defining the Region

This section focuses on travel to Bethel and the surrounding region. Definitions of “the surrounding region” vary. State tourism statistics include the Bethel area with the remainder of Southwest Alaska, including the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutians, Bristol Bay and Kodiak. State Fish and Game hunting and fishing data are organized by river drainage. This short analysis focuses on Bethel, and the surrounding area that generally relies on Bethel as a transportation and service hub. The report also makes reference to tourism and travel activities in a broader area that includes the Kuskokwim and lower Yukon Rivers.

Out-of-Region Visitors

Any attempt to quantify types of visitation to the Yukon-Kuskowim region is problematic given the lack of research data currently available. The most current visitation data available is the 1993 Alaska Visitor Statistics Program data, which aggregates the Yukon-Kuskokwim region with all of southwest Alaska. However, if one assumes that visitors to this area have demographics similar to visitors to the entire southwest Alaska region, the following applies:¹

VISITORS TO THE REGION INCLUDE:

Visitors by Trip Purpose	% of Visitors
Vacation/Pleasure Visitors	49.84%
Visiting Friends and Relatives	9.31%
Business and Pleasure	7.02%
Business Only	33.83%
Visitors by Travel Type	% of Visitors
Package	22%
Independent	74%
Inde-Package	4%

While this data shows that the majority of visitors to southwest Alaska are traveling on vacation or for business purposes, this is not entirely true of Bethel - far fewer people travel to the area on vacation or for pleasure than for business purposes.

¹ Rural Alaska Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment: Lower Yukon – Kuskokwim Delta. DCED

Pleasure Travelers

Bethel is well off the beaten track of Alaska tourism. Based on the Alaska Visitor Statistics Program, fewer than 5000, likely as few as 1000, out-of-state visitors travel to the Bethel area for pleasure each year. This is a very small percentage of the 1.5 million visitors that come to Alaska annually.

To the extent that people do travel for pleasure to the Yukon Kuskokwim region, this travel focuses on hunting and fishing well upstream from Bethel, where there are a number of small lodges and outfitters. In addition, south of Bethel are several popular fishing and floating streams, including the Kanektok and Arolik, running through the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. Many of those who do visit the area are Alaska residents rather than out-of-state travelers.

While the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and other lands and waters surrounding Bethel attract hunters and anglers, a majority of the hunting and fishing in the area are local residents. The Refuge attracts approximately 2,000 people a year but it is estimated that very few of these visitors are “pleasure travelers” or not from the area.

In terms of sport fishing, angler days in the lower Yukon and lower Kuskokwim region has averaged approximately 23,200, with a slight decrease in the most recent five-year period (1998-2002). More specific to the Bethel region, angler days in the lower Kuskokwim River and Kuskokwim Bay also show a slight decrease in the most recent six-year period (1997-2002). Angler days in this region peaked at 26,442 in 1997. In 2002, angler days were reported at 17,774. Recent regulation changes and circumstances have had a negative effect on participation in the area sport fisheries. In 2000, the Board of Fisheries recognized rod and reel as a subsistence method within the AVCP region, and this was extended to the whole Kuskokwim drainage in 2001. A decline in the nation’s economy has driven angler effort into a decline. These factors combined with recent national security issues and air travel have compounded the negative effect on participation in sport fisheries of the state, region and area.²

Hunting in this area is generally practiced by residents for subsistence purposes, therefore not attracting a large amount of nonresidents. In general, there are no moose hunters visiting this area (Game Management Unit 18) for two reasons. First, under federal regulations (which apply on federal lands and nearly all of Unit 18 is federal land) only Unit 18 residents (with a couple of minor exceptions) are allowed to hunt moose in the unit. Second, there is no moose season in much of the unit. Caribou on the other hand does bring a few nonresidents to the area. In 2002, there were 381 hunters including 65 nonresidents, in 2003 there were 807 hunters including 137 nonresidents, and in 2004 there were 285 hunters including 108 nonresidents. This data is mixed but shows an overall increase in nonresident caribou hunters. With time, this amount should decline since the caribou herd is declining, and is expected to continue to decline. For grizzly bears, there is a federal restriction on the number of guides in the unit and because nonresidents are required to hire a guide to hunt grizzly bears, generally only 5-10 nonresidents are taking grizzly bears each year.³

There are a few adventure companies based in Bethel that offer wilderness trips and cater primarily to out-of-state visitors. *PaPa Bear Adventures* offers flight seeing, fishing tours, un-

² Fishery Management Report for Sport Fisheries in the Lower Yukon and Lower Kuskokwim Management Area for 2002-2003. Robert Lafferty.

³ Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Conservation. GMU 18, Roger Seavoy.

guided hunting assistance and rental equipment. Most of their clientele is from the lower 48. They own the Lakeside Lodge, and because their guests stay, eat and base themselves there, they spend little or no time in the city of Bethel. *Kuskokwim Wilderness Adventures* also offers wilderness trips such as boat charters, dog sledding rides, and wilderness camping.

Business Travelers

While Bethel is not a tourist attraction, it is an important destination for other types of travel. This conclusion is demonstrated by the fact that there are approximately eight hotels and inns in the community, with over 100 rooms available. As part of this study, Agnew::Beck conducted interviews with three hotel operators. All three hotel owners said they see very few pleasure travelers (less than 1% of all their visitors). Most of their clients are business people (government, medical trainers, school district employees, accountants, rural development consultants, etc.) from Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau. In the summer they get more cab drivers and construction workers but fewer visitors doing education and social service work. Because of this mix of clientele, business is steady year-round, a benefit shared by few communities in Alaska.

Most visitors that come to Bethel stay for only one night. They use Bethel as a stop over before they continue on to smaller villages. According to the operators interviewed, very few travelers take time to see the city of Bethel, as there is little to do and the activities and sites that are available (museum and cultural center, Saturday market, restaurants, Native arts and crafts in the hospital) are not well marketed.

Visiting Friends & Relatives

Visitation by “VFR’s” (visiting friends and relatives) is an important and often overlooked travel category. This includes visits by in-region, in-state and out of state travelers. Many of these travelers stay with friends and families, and so they don’t require lodgings, but are often interested in a facility like a cultural center.

In-Region Visitors

Another important category of traveler is residents of surrounding villages. The total population of the Yukon Kuskokwim region is approximately 24,000. Bethel is the hub for approximately 5,888 residents of the area. These people come to the area to shop, for services, to see friends or while passing through en route to Anchorage.

Other

A final important category of travel is linked to Bethel’s role as a center for service organizations, including organizations focused on regional health, education, economic development, and fisheries development. These groups hold many gatherings, which bring in people from surrounding villages and Anchorage.

Travel “Infrastructure”

Bethel has a major airport and year-round daily jet service from Anchorage. A number of air taxi operators provide convenient air service to surrounding villages. There is no road system

that connects communities in the region. Most travel between villages is by air, supplemented by boat travel on rivers in the summer, and in winter, by snowmachine and ATV on frozen rivers and trails.

Bethel has a range of accommodations, as well as stores, restaurants and cab companies. Some, but not all outlying villages have places for travelers to stay, as well as a community store.

See the previous section for a summary of Bethel meeting facilities.

Other attractions in the area include:

- *The Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center and Museum* – including a museum, library and gift shop
- *The University of Alaska-Kuskokwim Campus* – with classrooms and meeting rooms
- *Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge* headquarters – displays of regional wildlife and cultural artifacts
- Regional attractions – including accessible archeological dig sites, historic photos displayed at the *Aniak Visitors Center*, and the *Moravian Children's Home* in Kwethluk (listed on the National Historic Register).
- Recreational activities and services such as: sport fishing and hunting, boat charters, birding tours and wildlife viewing, dog sled rides, cross country skiing, river rafting, and boat, kayak and canoe rentals.

Numbers and Types of Travelers to Bethel

Bethel is currently not visited by package travelers (such as tours linked to a cruise company). Package travel makes up the largest, and fastest growing share of the Alaska tourism market.

There are no reliable data available to document the numbers of travelers to Bethel. It is possible however to prepare some crude estimates. One way to do this is to create an estimate of “room nights” based on numbers of people staying overnight in local accommodations. The three lodge owners interviewed for this report described their occupancy as “generally full” and that the stream of visitors was “steady” throughout the year with little seasonal fluctuation.

Another way is to use emplanement data. From 2000 to 2003 the number of people who boarded a plane in Bethel rose by about 8,000, or about 6%, from 129,567 boardings to 137,782.⁴ This increase in passengers is slightly less than the 7% population increase that has occurred in the past few years.

Potential for Growth in Future Travel

Travel for business and to visit friends and relatives is correlated to population growth, and consequently these categories of travel are difficult to influence. Communities can affect the benefits they receive from these types of travelers. More on this point is offered in the final section of this chapter.

⁴ Source of data: FAA, Office of Airport Planning and Programming, FAA Airport Division, Anchorage Federal Office Building, 907-271-5438.

The Yukon Kuskokwim region offers potential for expanded tourism, based on its unique mix of cultural traditions, diverse wildlife, federally-designated wildlife refuges and river systems. The section below, derived in part from the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge website, provides a short overview of the resources that over time, could provide the basis for expanded tourism.

Landscapes, Parks and Refuges

Bethel sits in the middle of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, established to conserve shorebirds, seabirds, whistling swans, emperor, white-fronted and Canada geese, black brant and other migratory birds, salmon, muskox, and marine mammals. The refuge's more than 19.5 million acres give it an area larger than the state of Maine. It is the second largest refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System after the Arctic Refuge. Seventy percent of the refuge is below 100 feet in elevation, and consists of a broad, flat delta interlaced with countless ponds, lakes and rivers, streams, inlets, bays, and coastal areas.

Wildlife, Waterfowl, and Fisheries

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta supports one of the largest populations of water birds in the world. The abundance of water provides habitat for waterfowl from all four North American flyways. More than one million ducks and half a million geese breed here annually. In terms of both density and species diversity, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta is the most important shorebird nesting area in the country. Alaska's two largest rivers, the Yukon and the Kuskowim, and their tributaries, flow through the refuge, creating hundreds of miles of spawning and rearing habitat for 44 species of fish (including 5 species of Pacific salmon). Two species of sea duck that frequent the refuge, the spectacled and Steller's eiders, are listed as threatened and are protected under the Endangered Species Act. The coastal waters of the Bering Sea support harbor, ribbon, ringed and bearded seals, and walrus. Several species of whales pass along the coast during their migration.

The refuge covers a vast expanse and diverse topography from the Bering Sea, across subarctic tundra and rising to mountain peaks over 4,000 feet in height. Because of these topographical and ecological extremes, the refuge supports a variety of interesting large mammals including whales, seals, muskox, caribou, bear, and moose. In fact the refuge spans the southernmost latitude at which all three species of North American bears (brown, black and polar) can be found.

The 1.1 million acre Nunivak Island portion of the refuge supports an introduced herd of muskox. The herd was used as a breeding stock to reestablish herds elsewhere in Alaska and Russia.

Cultural Resources

The Yukon-Kuskokwim delta is the ancestral home of the Yup'ik and Cup'ik Eskimo. The lower delta includes more than 40 Yup'ik villages whose residents continue to live a largely subsistence lifestyle. Native culture and traditions are perhaps stronger in this area than any other region of Alaska.

Festivals are important in the area, and drive significant travel to the region and around Alaska. Important festivals include:

- Annual Cama'i Festival (April)
- Kuskokwim 300 Sled Dog Race (January)

- NAPA Eddie Hoffman Sled Dog Race
- Kuskokwim Ice Classic

Summary

- Cultural centers and museums rarely generate more than 20% of their annual operating revenues from admission fees. For most cultural centers located off of the road system, this portion is much diminished, often less than 5%. While admissions are not a large source of revenue, it is nonetheless important for the sustainability of a cultural center.
- A quality, lively cultural facility could be a popular destination for a wide range of travelers – business, visiting friends and relatives, pleasure travelers, and both in-region and out-of-region visitors.
- The most promising near term visitor markets are in-state and in-region, especially business, conference and visiting friends and relatives. Much more could be done to encourage these travelers to spend more time and money in Bethel. Examples of possible actions include designing programs at the facility likely to be of particular interest to these types of travelers, and marketing directly to these groups, for example by placing information about the center in each of the community's hotels.
- Encouraging more meetings and conferences to occur in Bethel (rather than Anchorage) is an important step in increasing spending in the community. Bethel's central location in Western Alaska and good air connections have the potential to make the community a destination for meetings of groups sharing a common interest in Western Alaska issues. While currently Bethel does not have meeting facilities large enough to meet the demand from regional organizations and is nearing capacity for annual events such as Cama'i, enhanced meeting facilities, such as a Bethel Convention Center, could increase visitation. This would in turn increase market demand for a heritage center.
- Over the longer term, the cultural and wildlife resources of the area could attract growing numbers of pleasure travelers. Key to this effort will be improved marketing, partnerships with package tour groups, and improved accommodations and activities in villages.

Participants from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region identified a number of infrastructure and service needs for expanding tourism in the region. A few of these needs are as follows:⁵

1. Establish and fund a regional tourism coordinator position in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Service Area.

This coordinator would examine other regional programs for appropriate models, involve all regional tourism interests in planning and decision making, and identify available financial resources.

2. Establish a regional visitors center in Bethel.

Tourism industry development is hampered by the lack of a focal point for gathering and disseminating information about the tourism attractions and opportunities in the region.

3. Complete the interior rivers arts & crafts cooperative building in Aniak.

⁵ Rural Alaska Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment – Lower Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. DCED

Redesign and complete the building housing the Interior Rivers Arts & Crafts Cooperative and the Aniak Visitors Center to better inform visitors about the community and the region and to provide local artists with an outlet to sell their work. The challenge is identifying funds to complete the project and for ongoing operations.

Additional projects and needs identified were:⁶

- Village Needs
 - Inns and bed and breakfast facilities
 - Campsites
 - Improved airport services including food service, phones, and safety equipment
 - Airport information kiosks
 - Transportation services into villages
- Bethel
 - Larger supply of guest rooms with baths and phones
 - Community gathering areas
- Regional
 - Communications network to share tourism-related information
 - Small business and visitor industry workforce training
 - Regional visitor information center with trained staff
 - Airport improvements
 - Public lands access sites
- Transportation Needs
 - Improved harbor and dock facilities
 - Airport shelter facilities with public phones
 - Visitor information signage

⁶ Rural Alaska Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment – Lower Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. DCED

■ FUNDING RESOURCES

“We were losing our culture. Seems like we caught it and stood it up again.”

Lucy Sparck, Elder, Chevak

Potential Funders

A full table of potential funders for a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center is included in the Appendices of this report. Some general recommendations regarding funding follow:

Establishing Long-term Sustainability

Funders generally fall into two categories, those who like to fund capital projects and those who prefer to fund programs. In the current funding climate it is much easier to secure capital funds, those for building facilities or purchasing equipment, than it is to secure program funds. This is certainly true for grant funding.

To secure capital funding a project must be able to demonstrate long-term sustainability. This must be grounded in an ‘earned income’ strategy, which means funding that is not restricted by the donor. A grant will always be limited in scope, due to the guidelines of a funder. Unrestricted dollars are those that are generated in other ways. Some of the most promising sources of earned income for a heritage center include: gift shop revenues; admissions; individual and corporate donations; proceeds from an endowment; annual committed contributions from local organizations and corporations; and, lease income from tenants in the facility.

Earned Income Strategies

Gift Shop Revenues

All of these earned income strategies must be evaluated in terms of their applicability for a rural heritage center. For example, a gift shop that primarily sells local artwork may not generate as much revenue for the center as one that focuses on manufactured goods. This is because local artists tend to want to sell their work on consignment, or with minimal mark-ups, limiting the revenue that can be generated for the center by the sale. However, for a heritage center to establish excellent connections with the region, promoting and selling local art must be a priority. Local arts & crafts is a vital form of cash income for many village residents.

Some strategies that may increase revenue generation from craft sales include purchasing artwork outright from the artist, at their asking price. Another is to mix consignment sales with other items that generate greater revenue for the center. Another is to help artists establish a web-based retail operation, or establish an artists co-operative that helps run



and manage the gift shop. The key to the success of a gift shop is to establish excellent working relationships with vendors, in this case, local artists, and to engage in marketing that goes beyond foot traffic into the facility. This way local artists see a benefit for selling their work at the center, and the center gets greater exposure beyond the local area.

Similarly, revenue from admissions is only a limited portion of the operating budget for most cultural centers in Alaska located off of the road system. Placing too great an emphasis on tourism or expecting local residents to pay too high a price to visit the center are common mistakes best avoided in business planning for the center.

Individual and Corporate Donors

Establishing a dedicated base of patrons for the center from the local community is one of the most important means for establishing long-term sustainability. Creating a Friends of the Heritage Center society, or selling annual memberships for the facility can generate significant income. The important part of a donor-development strategy is that you give donors benefits for membership and that you acknowledge their gifts in both private and public ways. They also must feel engaged in the mission of the center and be given the opportunity to help steer the direction of the organization. By assuring their meaningful involvement, donors can continue to support an organization year after year, making this a very sustainable form of earned income.

Collaboration of Existing Organizations

Another possible source of operating revenue for a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center could come from increased collaboration between organizations or programs that are currently operating independently. By co-locating in the center, pursuing funding opportunities as a consortium and sharing operating costs, greater efficiencies can be created that could assist with ongoing operations.

Facility Rental

Finding an 'anchor tenant' for a facility, or renting out a portion of the facilities for community events, as occurs currently at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center and Museum, can generate significant earned income. The issue in the current facility, however, is that so much of the space is taken up with conference facilities that little is left over for the cultural aspects of the facility. To reach a better balance, the existing facility could be expanded, or some of the existing functions moved to a separate facility. Before either of these options was pursued, the impacts on long-term sustainability would need to be closely evaluated.

Suggested Funding Strategy

From initial work sessions and previous planning efforts by AVCP, the beginnings of a concept for a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center are emerging. In order to ensure that the heritage center has the greatest chance for success, both in terms of securing funding and limiting the burden on local organizations that would own or manage the center, the following strategies should be considered:

Programs Drive Facilities, Not the Other Way Around

The Yukon Kuskokwim region has some excellent successful and community-supported programs and facilities already in existence. These need to form the cornerstones of any future efforts. The existing cultural center is only twenty years old. It is a well-maintained and attractive facility. The issues with the facility have been identified, listed in the first section of this report, but these notwithstanding the existing facility is the right starting point for expanding programming.

Within the cultural center is the museum and gift shop, which, while small, are attractive and informative and house an excellent collection of artifacts and objects. The Calista Elders Council convenes an array of events and activities, as well as producing high-quality research that they would like to make widely available. AVCP's Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat has galvanized broad interest from village residents in preserving the culture of the region. The area's school districts and university campus also have a number of classes, programs and curricula that could benefit a heritage center, and give them in turn greater exposure. In short, the region has a number of programs, some of which are not described here, that can drive high-quality programming at a regional heritage center.

As the combined program of events, publications, research and projects comes together, the appropriate facility to house these functions will need to be evaluated. This evaluation needs to take place both in terms of the physical space needed to adequately provide programs, and the long-term financial sustainability of the facility. For example, while it may be tempting to convert the entire existing facility into space for cultural events and programming, eliminating the revenue generating aspects of the facility would have dire consequences for the center, if replacement funding was not secured.

Generate Broad Community Support

Perhaps the most important first step in securing support from outside entities for your project is generating deep and broad support from within your own community. For a regional project, such as the Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center, communities across the region need to be included in the planning and development of the project. If they are left out at the beginning it is much more difficult to request their support when you need it for funding applications. Presenting the preliminary ideas and opening discussions with village councils, and other community groups, and then incorporating their suggestions into the plan is a surefire way of generating support. In addition, funding commitments from local entities, for both capital and operating support will need to be in place before asking outside funders to come to the table.

Complete a Business Plan Prior to Pursuing Capital Funding

If it is established that an expansion of the existing facility is needed, or even that an additional facility would best house cultural programs, the first step should be to complete a business plan and feasibility study for the project. This should be conservative and realistic about operations funding strategies. Funders will raise red flags if they see a large portion of the operating budget funded through grants or other non-sustainable sources of income. The best strategy is to find a mix of revenue sources and to be conservative for the first few years. It may take time for a web-based gift shop to become established. Anchor tenants may need to complete complicated approvals, especially if they are a federal or state agency, before committing to space rental. Making sure your strategy allows for some lean start-up years will ensure that you are prepared for the responsibilities of operating an expanded facility.

Establish a Workable Governance Strategy

Collaboration is key, but in the end usually one entity assumes ownership and responsibility for a facility. Making sure the right organization takes the helm and that other stakeholders have a meaningful and ongoing way of assisting with management and decision-making will strike the right balance between ownership and community support.

Find the Person with “A Fire in their Belly”

No center can operate well without the dedication and passion of key staff members. Behind every successful cultural center and museum you will find one or two people who have committed large parts of their lives to making it succeed. Finding these people, and ensuring that they are in it for the long haul, is the most important thing you can do to ensure success. Finding local people who are passionate about the culture and heritage of the region, and are skilled administrators and program developers may be challenging, but is perhaps the most important step in a successful center.

Establish Relationships with Funding Entities

Usually a significant project will have multiple funders. These entities are colleagues of one another and enjoy supporting each other's priority projects. Establishing close working relationships with representatives from funding organizations can lead you to other funders, and ensure that when plans change or challenges arise, that the funder will work with you as a partner.

Summary

Securing funding from outside funders becomes much less challenging if the community has done its own homework. Decisions must be made at the local level, and a plan developed and determined feasible, before outside entities will pledge their support. By conscientiously working at the local level prior to involving outside entities, it becomes easier to explain your project and demonstrate key support when the time comes to engage folks from outside.

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

“If villages don’t take control of our communities, there is no good end. We must take control of our villages. To live a good and simple life.”

Joe Lomack, Elder, Bethel



Possible Ways Forward

The stakeholders in this project are still at the very beginning of planning and developing a Yukon Kuskokwim Heritage Center. What is presented in this report is very preliminary and needs to be shared widely and discussed in a variety of forums throughout the region. Through these discussions a firmer concept will emerge.

Even at this preliminary stage, however, a few alternatives have emerged as possible ways forward. Some of them are shorter-term solutions, others may take years to realize. What follows are suggestions, taken from participants in the work sessions, staff and consultants, as a basis for further discussion.

Increase Programming and Dedicated Space within the Existing Cultural Center

This alternative would need to follow a sequence of actions. The first would be to bring together the key staff from existing programs and the current museum, to establish a plan for working together more closely. The goal of this plan would be to establish an annual program that would provide as many of the activities discussed in this report, and through other discussions, as possible. These would be provided by combining forces and determining which organization should take on each part of the program. A key step will be establishing dependable funding streams to provide adequate staffing and program support. If it was deemed appropriate, these organizations could be brought together under one organizational umbrella. This could have the benefit of sharing operational costs and streamlining funding applications and administration.

Following the establishment of the plan for collaborative programming, necessary facilities would be evaluated. Starting with the existing cultural center and acknowledging the need to cover facility costs, a number of options could be pursued. One would be to dedicate additional space within the facility to cultural functions. Existing functions could be moved to another facility, or perhaps reduced in scale. For example, perhaps one third of the current meeting area could be dedicated to heritage center functions. The fiscal impact of this would need to be carefully considered, as would the adequacy of this additional space.

It may be considered for a different organization to operate the existing cultural center, instead of the university. AVCP could offer to take over the facility and full responsibility for operations and maintenance. In this case, AVCP would control the leases for the facility as well as rental space. AVCP would likely also want to assume control over the current museum collection. Once AVCP had control over the facility, they could consider finding funding to modify the

space to either expand it, or to move elements around, with the object of accommodating expanded heritage center functions.

Prior to considering this option, AVCP would need a solid business plan to explain how they would fund the facility's operations and long-term maintenance.

Construct an Additional Facility

If the current center was deemed inadequate, and if a strong case could be made for the ability to fund and operate an additional facility, one alternative is to design and build an additional facility. Before embarking on a capital campaign to build a facility a solid business plan would need to be in place to show how operations funding would be provided and how the costs of the capital campaign would be covered.

This is a challenging alternative and should only be considered if a very strong case can be made for the inadequacy of the existing facility. Funders will immediately question the need for two similar facilities in a community the size of Bethel. In addition, a capital campaign is a very labor-intensive and expensive process. It often takes many years to complete design and secure funding, as well as secure an appropriate site. The costs for developing designs, funding applications and promotional materials can become very sizable for a project of this scale.

All of the effort and resources that would go into a capital campaign may be better used to develop the desired programs and to move forward with many of the suggestions contributed by work session participants. Much can be accomplished with the right collection of energized people and adequate support from local organizations.

A Heritage Center Without Walls

Another alternative is to develop on a Heritage Center Without Walls model. This would focus resources on developing new programs and coordinating existing ones, provided through a network of web-based, village-based and some hub-based facilities. This would utilize existing facilities and programs but would provide some central coordination and an expansion of networking abilities, so that stronger links could be formed among the region. This would perpetuate some of the same model used in Kinguliamta Ciunerkaat where equal attention is paid to all units in the region, and activities are spread out, with only a few centralized in the hub. This would require greater coordination between organizations providing the programming, such as AVCP, Calista Elders, LKSD and others, but would not require an expensive capital campaign.

Summary

Deciding among these alternatives, or generating others, will require extensive discussion among stakeholders and community members. The best next step for this project will be to use this report and other information generated by stakeholder organizations to discuss the preliminary concept to refine and develop it. Once the concept is agreed upon, and commitments of support from the community have been granted, a business plan is often the next step. Whether this would evaluate the feasibility of a combined group of programs into one entity, or the feasibility of a construction project, a business plan allows for lengthy consideration and ensures that the plan adopted has the best chances of success.

■ APPENDICES

Funding Source Matrix

Reports from Other Alaska Cultural Facilities

Bibliography

■ FUNDING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
Administration for Native Americans Grants www.anaalaska.org	Federal Agency: provides financial assistance to tribes and ANCSA communities for projects which will provide jobs, promote economic well-being, self-sufficiency and community health. ANA funds equipment and planning, but NOT construction.	P.J. Bell, ANA Project Manager	Native American Management Services, Inc. Administration for Native Americans, Region III 11723 Old Glenn Hwy., Suite 201 Eagle River, AK 99577	(907) 694-5711 or Toll Free: (877) 770- 6230	(907) 694-5775	director@anaalaska.org
Rasmuson Foundation www.rasmuson.org	Invests in well-managed Alaskan based organizations that provide a unique public service, thereby ensuring that basic human needs are met and that quality of life for all Alaskans is enhanced. Rasmuson is primarily interested in capital funding, not for operations.	Rosie Ricketts, Grants Administrator	301 West Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 400 Anchorage, AK 99503	(907) 297-2825	(907) 297-2770	rricketts@rasmuson.org
<i>Rasmuson Foundation: Individual Artist Award Program</i> http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php?switch=viewpage&pageid=92	Grants provide Alaskan artists, at any stage in their artistic career, funds to support specific, short-term projects that have a clear benefit to their growth as an artist	Victoria Lord		(907) 297-2827, 877-366-2700		Vlord@rasmuson.org

Funding & Technical Assistance Resources						
ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
	and creative development of their art.					
<i>Rasmuson Foundation: Art Acquisition Fund</i> http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php?switch=viewpage&pageid=90	Provides grants for Alaska museums to purchase current work by practicing Alaskan artists.	Michael Hawfield:	PO Box 853 Homer, AK 99603	(907)235-6078, (907)299-0290		hawfield@alaska.net
<i>Rasmuson Foundation: Creative Ventures Fund</i> http://www.rasmuson.org/index.php?switch=viewpage&pageid=115	Provides matching grants of up to \$50,000 to augment and enrich the programs offered by Alaska's arts and cultural organizations.	Victoria Lord		(907) 297-2827, 877-366-2700		Vlord@rasmuson.org
M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust www.murdock-trust.org	The Trust's mission is to enrich the quality of life in the Pacific Northwest by providing grants to organizations that seek to strengthen the region's educational and cultural base in creative and sustainable ways	John Van Zytveld, Senior Program Director	PO Box 1618 Vancouver, WA 98668	(360) 694-8415	(360) 694-1819	johnvz@murdock-trust.org
Paul Allen Foundation www.pgafamilyfoundation.org	Paul Allen offers funding in four program areas: Arts & Culture, Youth Engagement, Community Development & Social Change, Scientific & Technological Innovation	Anna Fulton, Grants Administrator	505 5 th Avenue South, Suite 900 Seattle, WA 98104	(206) 342-2030	(206) 342-3030	info@pgafamilyfoundation.org
National Science Foundation (NSF) www.nsf.gov	The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950.		4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230	(703) 292-5111		info@nsf.gov

ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
	<p>The purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering." Primary focus includes financing for research, education and training projects.</p>					
<p>U.S. Economic Development Administration</p>	<p>To assist in the creation of public facilities needed to initiate and encourage the creation and retention of permanent jobs in the private sector in areas where economic growth is lagging behind the rest of the country and where there is significant economic distress.</p>	<p>Bernie Richert, Director, Alaska Region</p>	<p>510 L Street, Suite 444 Anchorage, AK 99501</p>	<p>(907) 271-2272</p>	<p>(907) 271-2274</p>	<p>brichert@eda.doc.gov</p>
<p>U.S. Department of Education (DOE) http://www.ed.gov</p>	<p>The U.S. Department of Education is providing nearly \$38 billion this year to states and school districts through formula based grant programs, to improve primary and secondary schools and meet the special needs of students.</p>					<p>http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html</p> <p>For a listing of grant programs with contact information, please visit the above page. There are many programs listed, with new</p>

ORGANIZATION SERVICE CONTACT ADDRESS TELEPHONE FAX E-MAIL						
ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
						opportunities announced regularly.
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) - Indian Community Block Grant (ICDBG) www.hud.gov	The ICDBG Program provides eligible grantees with direct grants for use in developing viable Indian and Alaska Native Communities, including decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities, primarily for low and moderate income persons.	Colleen Bickford, Office Director	3000 C. Street, Suite 401 Anchorage, AK 99503	(907) 677-9800 Toll Free in Alaska: (877) 302-9800	(907) 677-9803	
AK Department of Community & Economic Development (DCCED)						
<i>DCED</i> Div. of Community & Business Development <i>Office of Tourism</i> www.dced.state.ak.us/tourism/		Caryl McConkie, Development Specialist	P.O. Box 110809 Juneau, AK 99811	(907) 465-2012	(907) 465-3767	caryl_mcconkie@dced.state.ak.us
<i>DCED</i> Div. of Community & Business Development <i>Development Section</i>		Ruth St. Amour, Development Specialist II	550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1790 / Anchorage, AK 99501	(907)-269-4527	(907) 269-4539	Ruth_St.Amour@commerce.state.ak.us
<i>DCED: Small Business Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund</i> Provides start-up and expansion capital of small businesses.						
<i>DCED: Rural Development Initiative Fund Loan Program</i> Small business loans to expand						

ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
<p>employment opportunities in rural Alaska.</p> <p>Anchorage T: 907-269-8150 Fax: (907)-269-8147 Juneau T: (907)-465-2510 Fax: 907-465-2103 investments@dced.state.ak.us</p>						
<p><i>DCED: Mini-grant Assistance Program</i></p> <p>www.dced.state.ak.us/cbd/grt/blockgrants.htm</p>	Economic and/or comm. development projects, including projects using natural resources.	Jo Grove, Program Coordinator	Div. of Community & Business Dev. 209 Forty Mile Ave. Fairbanks, AK 99701-3100	(907) 452-4468	(907) 451-7251	Jo_Grove@dced.state.ak.us
<p>First Nations Development Institute www.firstnations.org</p>	Provides training, technical assistance loans and grants in economic development to tribes and ANCSA communities	Jeff Jeffers, Director of Grant Making	11917 Main Street Fredericksburg, VA 22408	(540) 371-5615	(540) 371-3505	jjeffers@firstnations.org
<p>State of Alaska Alaska Community & Economic Development Resource Guide http://www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/edrg/EDRG_Build_Browse_List.cfm</p>	Provides an extensive overview of resources and funding opportunities for Alaskan organizations/individuals.	Indra Arriaga		(907) 465-4750	(907) 465-5085	Indra_Arriaga@commerce.s
<p>United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) www.rurdev.usda.gov</p>	(see below)	Dean Stewart - USDA Rural Development	800 W. Evergreen, Suite 201 Palmer, AK 99645	(907) 761-7722	(907) 761-7793	dstewart@rdmail.rural.usda.gov
<p><i>USDA: Rural Business Opportunity Grants: Assists with costs of providing economic</i></p>						

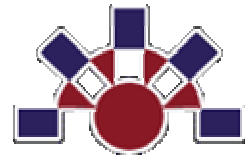
ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
planning for rural communities, technical assistance for rural businesses, or training for rural entrepreneurs or economic development officials.						
<i>USDA: Housing & Community Facilities:</i> Community Programs administers programs designed to develop essential community facilities for public use in rural areas. These facilities include schools, libraries, childcare, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted living facilities, fire and rescue stations, police stations, community centers, public buildings and transportation.						
Alaska State Council on the Arts	Offers grants to assist the development of the arts; distributing state and federal funds through programs to support both individual artists and arts organizations.	Charlotte Fox, Executive Director	411 West Forth Avenue, Suite 1E Anchorage, AK 99501	(907) 269-6610	(907) 269-6601	Charlotte_fox@eed.state.ak.us
National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) http://www.neh.gov/	(see below)		1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20506	(202) 606-8269, (202) 606-8267		publicpgms@neh.gov

ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
<p><i>NEH: Consultation Grants for Libraries</i></p> <p>http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/public-consult.html</p>	<p>Consultation grants help museums, libraries, historical organizations or community organizations develop a new public humanities project or chart a new interpretive direction of an existing program. They support the costs of conferring with a team of advisors to help identify key humanities themes and questions during the early stages of a project's development.</p>					
<p><i>NEH: Interpreting America's Historic Places</i></p> <p>http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/historicplanning.html</p>	<p>Planning grants may be used by organizations to develop in detail the content and interpretive approach of projects prior to implementation. The "place" to be interpreted might be a single historic site, a series of sites, an entire neighborhood, a community or town, or a larger geographical region. The place taken as a whole must be significant to American history and the project must convey its historic importance to visitors. Applicants should already</p>					

FUNDING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES						
ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
	have defined the appropriate humanities content and themes in consultation with scholars and programming advisors.					
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) http://www.nea.gov/	Offers grants in the following departments: arts & education, museums, dance, music, musical theater, design, opera, folk and traditional arts, presenting, literature, state and regional, local arts agencies, media arts, visual arts, and multidisciplinary.		1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20506	(202) 682-5400		webmgr@arts.endow.gov
Institute of Library and Museum Studies (ILMS) http://www.ims.gov/	The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent Federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities.		1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor Washington, DC 20036-5802	(202)653-ILMS		imsinfo@ims.gov
National Park Service Tribal Preservation Program http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tribal/	Grants are authorized to Indian tribes for cultural and historic preservation projects. These grants assist Indian Tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian	Bob Ruff	1201 Eye Street, NW 2255 Washington, DC 20005	(202) 354-2068		bob_ruff@nps.gov

Funding & Technical Assistance Resources

ORGANIZATION	SERVICE	CONTACT	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL
	Organizations in protecting and promoting their unique cultural heritage and traditions.					
Alaska State Museum: Grants-in-Aid http://www.museums.state.ak.us	Alaska museums or museum-related organizations, such as historical societies, historic site, museum support groups, cultural centers, and science centers may apply. The grants may be used to purchase materials, equipment, personal services, or other items necessary to support and improve museum services and operations.	Kenneth DeRoux	395 Whittier Street Juneau, AK 99801	(907) 465-2396	(907)465-2976	Ken_deroux@eed.state.ak.us



Alaska Native Heritage Center

Anchorage

www.alaskanative.net

HEADLINES:

- The process of opening the Center started in 1987 with a vote of support from the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). The AFN passed a resolution calling for a cultural center where all of Alaska's eleven indigenous cultures could be represented. Fundraising for the Center, however, did not really gain true momentum until the 1990's. Two principal entities were formed to move this project through the capital campaign. The first was the Alaska Native Cultural Center Corporation. After a grant from the State was received in 1990 for site planning, this group expanded and incorporated and became the Alaska Native Heritage Park, which eventually became the Alaska Native Heritage Center.
- Although specific information on who provided funding for capital construction was not available, the following breakdown shows general information on capital funding:
 - Federal and Municipal: 45%
 - Private Corporations (for profit and non-profit): 21%
 - Foundations: 13.5%
 - Regional Corporations: 13%
 - Individuals: 6%
 - Native Village Corporations: .5%
 - Other: 1.5%
- The full capital cost for this facility was \$15 million. The Center was completed in 1999.
- The yearly operating budget for this facility is around \$6 million.
- The Center has not yet achieved sustainability, but is aggressively pursuing this goal. They have just managed to set up a \$500,000 operating endowment through grant funding, however, a Center representative reported that this endowment will need be in the neighborhood of \$12 million before it will adequately provide the operating support needed. In 2000, the Center established a \$400,000 educational endowment through corporate gifts. Additionally, the Center has managed to raise \$600,000 through a Rasmuson Foundation Challenge grant. The Center estimates that approximately half of their operating budget is paid through tours, admission to the center, proceeds from the gift shop, events and facility rental.
- The Center maintains contact with Native groups from around Alaska by sending representatives to various events around the state; from the Cama'i festival in Bethel, to the Annual AFN conference. Input is collected where and whenever possible.

- The Heritage Center's Theme for 2004-2006 is *Living From the Land and Sea*, which celebrates the ability of Alaska's first people to sustain themselves on the resources available within the diverse regions of the state.
- The center provides programs in both academic and informal settings, including workshops, demonstrations, and guided tours of indoor exhibits and outdoor village sites.
- The Heritage Center is located on a 26-acre parcel of private land. The Center's main building, The Welcome House, is 26,000 square feet.
- The Heritage Center is more than a museum, it is a "living" cultural center. At the Center, one can meet artists, dancers, storytellers and staff, who are communicating their culture. The Center provides more than just artifact display. It gives the visitor the experience of interacting with people and learning about culture directly. DVD's, exhibits, programs and other learning experiences are also available.

MISSION

Sharing, perpetuating and preserving the unique Alaska Native cultures, languages, traditions and values through celebration and education.

GOALS:

- Alive Alaska Languages, Traditions and Values
- Native Pride and Respect
- Honoring Diverse Alaska Native Cultures
- Connected Communities and Generations

PROGRAM & FACILITIES:

- The Heritage Center is located on a 26-acre parcel of private land.
- The Center's main building, The Welcome House, is 26,000 square feet and includes exhibit and demonstration areas, a theater, cafe, gift shop, a large open circular hall for gatherings and performances, and a rural travel information kiosk. A village circle, five traditional village exhibits and a talking circle are located on the trail that circles the two acre lake.
- The Center offers many educational opportunities. These include: youth programs and school visits; adult education classes and workshops; partnerships with other agencies to further understanding of native cultures; an artist's registry, which features information about native artists, samples of their work, and contact information.
- Summer programs: During the summer, the Center gears itself towards increased summer visitation and to visitors from outside the state (international and national). More of the outdoor exhibits are open during the summer and each outdoor exhibit is staffed by a cultural host, who explains the structure's design and purpose and about the people of the region from which it comes. Summer season: May – October. Summer hours of operation are: Monday – Sunday, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM.
- Winter programs: During the winter, the Center is open to the public on Saturdays from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. The rest of the week they host school visits for K-12 students from the Anchorage School District; offer a school outreach program, cultural awareness

workshops for individuals, non-profit organizations and businesses; as well as EMMA artist classes; and an after school program for Alaska Native and American Indian High school students who can choose to focus in art, dance, technology and/or leadership.

Saturday programs during the winter have a different theme each week including: multi-cultural drumming and dance; Native Film Festival; contemporary Native Art; traditional mushing.

- Insert information on special events hosted: how many special events/year, conferences, and private events.
- The Heritage Center opened in 1999.

MARKET & USERS

- Attendance, which includes ALL programs, is between 110,000 – 120,000 people per year.
- The Center has two very different seasons. Each attracts two very different types of users. In the summer, visitors come from all over Alaska, the U.S. and from abroad. Though not all summer visitors are less knowledgeable about Alaska Native peoples and history, many come to the center with a less informed understanding of what is being presented (and so, information and programs must address their levels of understanding). In the winter time, the audience is the Alaska Native community and the Anchorage population in general, an audience with a more sophisticated understanding and a higher knowledge base of peoples and history. Programmatically, the Center must try to address these two seasons to tailor the experience to a changing audience (See above, Programs & Facilities).

GOVERNANCE & PERSONNEL

- The Center is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors, whose membership is drawn from Alaska Native corporations and civic and business groups; the majority of whom are Alaska Natives. A 30-member Academy comprised of Elders and Tradition Bearers was formed to help guide the Heritage Center staff in program and building design. Departments include:

- Executive Office
- Cultural & Education Services
- Community Relations & Development
- Operations & Administration

- Due to seasonal increase in patronage, the Heritage Center doubles its staff during the summer months.

FINANCE

General Admission

Adults - \$20.95

Seniors/Military - \$18.95

Children - \$15.95 (Ages 7-16)

Free for children six and younger

Family - \$63.95 (2 adults, 2 children)
Each additional adult family member is \$15.95
Each additional child is \$13.95
Group - \$16.75 for groups of 20 or more

Special Pass \$20.75

Anchorage Museum of History and Art and the Alaska Native Heritage Center are offering a special joint-admission ticket for both facilities for only \$20.75. There is a complimentary shuttle between the two facilities. See ANHC Courtesy Shuttle Schedule below.

Alaska Resident Admission Rates

\$9.00 Adult
\$9.00 Senior (62+) and Military
\$6.00 Child (ages 7 to 16)
Free for children six and younger

All Members including ANCSA Shareholder and Descendent Members

Admission is free

Event Rental

The Heritage Center offers a number of rental space options with a variety of capacities. There are also several entertainment options. Events can be held in the theater, the Gathering Place or in the Hall of Cultures. A dance floor and wedding archway are available. Costs range between \$600 for a half-day rental to \$1,600 for the entire Center for an evening. Capacity ranges from 90 people (in the Hall of Cultures) to approximately 350 for the entire facility.

ALUTIIQ MUSEUM AND ARCHEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY

KODIAK

HEADLINES:

- Modest-sized facility constructed using funds from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill; shares building with village corporation offices. Facility is owned by regional non-profit organization.
- Focuses on artifact collection and storage and village-based programs – large collection, 100,000 artifacts.
- Operations financing comes largely from contributions from local Native organizations (regional corporation; regional non-profit and village corporations).
- School-based programs make up a large part of annual visitation.

GOALS

- To preserve traditions and promote awareness of cultural legacy of indigenous people of Gulf of Alaska region.
- To carry out research, and share ongoing results through exhibits, events, publications, and educational outreach.

PROGRAM & FACILITIES

4600 SF Facilities include:

- 1500 SF Museum with gift shop
- 1600 SF Climate-controlled artifact repository
- 1000 SF Artifact laboratory
- 500 SF Administrative offices and support space

The museum holds over 100,000 artifacts in over 400 collections.

Museum occupies the middle floor of a three-floor building; upper floor houses the Koniag, Inc. offices and the basement is currently unoccupied. The whole building may ultimately be used for museum functions.

Programs Include:

- Extensive community outreach programs for village-based research & education
- Newsletter
- Archeological research services
- Volunteer programs

The museum opened in May 1995.

ALUTIIQ MUSEUM AND ARCHEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY

KODIAK

MARKET & USERS

Average annual visitation: 9,000 people

The museum is open to visitors, however most use derives from interest by locals, particularly schools (1500 students per year). The City of Kodiak and the surrounding areas have a resident population of approximately 8,000. The Island as a whole has a population of approximately 13,000. This provides a strong support base for the Museum.

Regular use of facility by conferences, such as recent Youth/Elders Conference.

The museum works with outlying villages, providing lectures, support for artists, traveling exhibits, and other services.

It also sponsors a very popular, archeological dig project each year, located on the road system, staffed by a combination of volunteers and professionals.

GOVERNANCE & PERSONNEL

The museum is governed by an 10-person Alutiiq Heritage Foundation Board. The board has representatives from the Native regional for-profit and non-profit corporations plus six village corporations. KANA – the regional non-profit organization - is the umbrella organization for museum, and owns museum building.

Personnel includes:

- Executive Director
- Deputy Director
- Museum Manager
- Curator
- Laboratory Manager
- Collections Assistant
- Alutiiq Language Manager
- Education Coordinator
- Receptionist
- The museum also employs several interns during the summer months

FINANCE

Capital costs: Museum portion of the building, including furnishings cost \$1.5 million. Funding provided by Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.

ALUTIIQ MUSEUM AND ARCHEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY

KODIAK

In 2000, the museum's operating budget was reported at approximately \$300,000 per year. In 2005, the operating budget had grown to approximately \$900,000 per year. The Executive Director reported that the operating costs continue to rise each year, and that it is difficult to find funders who are willing to fund operating costs. Although he did not provide an exact accounting of funding that the museum brings in, he did share that a very small amount of income is derived from visitation. He estimated that the museum might draw around 4,000 visitors over the summer months (peak visitation season) at \$3.00 per person. Additional sources of operating funds include: corporate support (approximately \$100,000 per year), research grants (approximately \$30,000 for this fiscal year, though this number is usually closer to \$5,000 per year), an ongoing corporate endowment, museum membership program (approximately \$12,000 per year). Additionally, the Museum's Language Program is currently being funded through a grant that will end in two years' time (\$150,000 per year).

INUPIAT HERITAGE CENTER

BARROW

HEADLINES

- The North Slope Borough owns this very large facility, which is a heritage center combined with a library.
- Operations funding was anticipated to come from local fundraising and grants. This was greatly overestimated: \$1.5 million anticipated, \$450,000 secured.
- Current annual operating costs are estimated at \$600,000.
- Governance & personnel involves two supervising entities: Ilisagvik College & the North Slope Borough. This has somewhat hampered collaboration and made lines of command unclear.
- Partners with a number of national research entities and Museums.
- Focuses on community activities and involvement, not so much on out-of-area visitation.

GOALS

- To provide a place where the language and knowledge of the Inupiat people can be passed on to North Slope residents.
- The philosophical foundation is based on the ancient qargi, or community house, where activities took place.

PROGRAM & FACILITIES

This facility occupies 30,000 total square feet, in two sections: the community library and the museum.

Facility includes:

- Multipurpose room: seating for 128 people with tables, 150 without tables.
- Small conference rooms: 10 small conference sessions at one time.
- Huge garage: large projects such as repairing the skin boats and large carvings.
- Large gathering/meeting space including a big screen and a "middle place" which is set up for audio and visual taping.
- Tradition room for teaching dances, skin sewing, and filming elders.

Museum and heritage center together house over 24,000 items.

Exhibits focus on whaling and cover a time span of 3,800 years. There are fourteen different exhibits located throughout the facility. The main hall has art from the North Slope area. The Main Lobby houses "Village Profiles." The main exhibit room takes a visitor back in time to the

INUPIAT HERITAGE CENTER

BARROW

Ice Age with bones of the animals living in that era and information about the development of the whaling culture. A very popular exhibit is "Arctic Leaders", a photo essay of village leaders.

Programs are designed to "fit the season." February and March are popular because work is done on the skin boats (umiaqs). Boats are brought in to the "Traditional Room" for replacement of old skins or repair, in preparation for the whaling season.

The facility opened in February 1999.

MARKET & USERS

Average visitation: First year of operation: 20,000 visitors: 8,000 tourists 12,000 local users.

Hours of operation: 8:30 am-5:00 weekdays, year round

User groups include:

School children - scheduled visits to learn the traditional sewing of waterproof skins.

Community groups, dancers, church groups hold meetings at the facility. Community outreach includes "visioning" with the outlying villages to help their residents identify existing resources, how to deal with things like language barriers, or with big city issues when they travel.

Museum staff works with all schools on topics that affect the Inuit way of life, also field research on climate change.

Partners include UAF Museum, Sandia National Laboratories (New Mexico), Univ. of San Diego. & the Barrow Arctic Science Consortium

There is a daily craft sale at the facility.

Tundra Tours operate a daily cultural program from noon-1:30 every day from May 15th to September 15th.

GOVERNANCE & PERSONNEL

The Center is governed by the Ilisagvik College Board of Trustees, under the direction of the President and Vice-President. The operations are guided by the Ilisagvik College and under contract with the North Slope Borough.

The Commission on Inupiat History, Language and Culture staff are authorized space only as tenants and report directly to the NSB Planning Director. There have been efforts to coordinate Heritage Center activities with the Commission, but there is a reluctance to do so on the part of the Commission. The NSB Planning Director is responsible for the overall facility operations

The two organizations report to different entities. Heritage Center staff report to the College and the Commission staff report to the NSB Planning Department under the Mayor's administration.

INUPIAT HERITAGE CENTER

BARROW

Staff include:

- Facility Director
- Collections Management
- Education Management
- Receptionist

Custodial work and maintenance is done by the North Slope School District.

FINANCE

The museum is still working towards sustainability. The first year budget called for \$1.5 million, the actual operating budget was \$480,000.

Admission Prices:

Adults: \$5.00; High School & College Students: \$2.00; Children (6-14) \$1.00; Children, Elders: Free

Room Rentals:

Multipurpose Room \$250/day or \$37.50 / hour; Classrooms \$100/day or \$75.00/ ½ day;
Traditional Room - open to public, local schools at no charge.

No memberships reported at this time.

The Center works with and coordinates with the UAF Museum, the Anchorage Museum and the Smithsonian to house loaned materials. Each month, a science and cultural lecture is scheduled related to the Arctic environment, cultural finds, Inuit culture and present day events that impact the Inupiat way of life.

HEADLINES

- Run by the local Native Corporation (Northwest Arctic Native Association, NANA), the summer-only museum is conveniently located across the road from the airport. Collections and programs focus on the Inupiat culture, including demonstrations of blanket toss, drumming, dances, and storytelling. An outdoor Cultural Camp concentrates on traditional clothing, foods, harvesting, and Arctic survival techniques.
- Research revealed that the museum is not operating for summer 2005.

HEADLINES:

- Facility focuses on archeological research and artifact storage & display.
- Museum is operated by a non-profit organization with representation from local tribes and corporations, as well as city government.
- Finding volunteers to act as docents and to assist with staffing has been challenging.
- City owns the facility and assists with operations; Native corporations also assist.
- Winter hours are limited.
- The facility receives some tourist visitors, through cruise ships and State ferry. This is very limited.

PROGRAM & FACILITIES

This 9,400 square foot museum is the only archaeological research, museum storage facility for the Aleutian Region. The Museum houses 400,000 objects; 90% are archeological, 10% are historic/ethnographic.

Facility Includes:

- Three galleries: permanent, special collections, and a gallery for changing exhibits.
- Lab space easily converted into classroom or public presentation space.
- Storage area with space-saver moveable shelves - where "digging" gear and office equipment are stored.
- Huge cargo-bay door for receiving large items
- Air exchange system, which continuously filters the air (requires own room)
- Gift shop and offices for the Director, curator, and one other person.
- Dark room
- Restrooms for staff and public use.

Extensive community outreach programs including an archaeological field school, a museum in the school program, University classes, bi-monthly public lecture series, summer internship program for Unalaska High School students (which is sponsored by a grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum), Annual Community Art Show, public field trips to local archeological sites, display at the Subsistence Forum, and ongoing efforts to encourage community involvement and volunteerism at the facility.

MUSEUM OF THE ALEUTIANS

UNALASKA

Interactive displays, such as the recent dory exhibit where children can climb, play and learn to paddle the boat.

Off-season activities include "winter projects" like cleaning and cataloging artifacts. During school sessions, local teachers work with staff to do classroom projects at the facility.

Upcoming events that are planned for the Museum include:

- August 2005: will participate in the Aleutian Life Forum
- December 2005: in cooperation with the local Senior Center, will sponsor an open round table on the living tradition and history of the Aleut gut working.
- January 2006: "My Museum" will open at the museum's Changing Gallery. This exhibit will be designed by Unalaska High School students.
- May 2006: The Filipino Community Fair will be shown at the museum in conjunction with a temporary exhibit.

The Museum of the Aleutians opened in August 1999 and is located on the shore of Margaret Bay.

MARKET & USERS

Average 10 visitors a day. Annual estimate 3-4000 visitors per year.

Summer hours:

June 1-September 30

Tuesday-Saturday: 9 am-5 pm

Sunday: noon-5 pm

Winter hours:

October 1-May 31

Tuesday-Saturday: 11 am-5 pm

Sunday: 11 am-4 pm

User groups include school children, community members, seniors, tourists, large transient population during fishing season.

Unalaska is a final destination for a few cruise ships - some days in summer, as many as 200 passengers from a ship will visit.

The State Ferry from Kodiak also brings visitors once a month. On days when the ferry comes in at 6:30 am, they open the museum early to accommodate the visitors.

Student interns and visiting professors from all over the world spend time here to take part in the archaeological digs and field schools, sponsored by the museum.

Museum staff works with other communities to provide slide presentations, traveling exhibits and interactive displays.

GOVERNANCE & PERSONNEL

Museum is a private, non-profit corporation, governed by a 7- member Board of Directors, representing the public at large, the Qawalangin Tribe, Aleut Corporation, City of Unalaska, Ounalashka Corporation.

Personnel:

- Director
- Collections Manager
- Bookkeeper
- Front Desk Assistant

The City and the Board made an agreement when the facility was planned: the city would support with help for personnel costs for five years. The Board had agreed to ask the City for 10% less each year for 5 years and eventually become self sufficient, but has not yet been able to secure enough outside support to enable self-sufficiency.

They are having a difficult time finding people to volunteer as docents, and to sit at the front desk for full shifts. They attempted to form "friends of the Museum" twice with little success.

Volunteers from the community and students are recruited to help clean, and catalog the artifacts in the off-season and they assist with "digs." Student interns also assist with fieldwork.

FINANCE

Estimated annual operating budget: \$687,817.

Current membership: 240

Admission Price: \$5.00

Yearly attendance (individuals paying admission price) is around 4,000 people. The museum's collections manager reported that sustainability has been a tricky issue. The museum's goal has always been to become self sufficient, however, they have not yet reached that goal. The major portion of financing for the museum comes through the City of Unalaska, who pays all operations and maintenance costs. The facility's rent is paid by the Ounalaska Corporation, which is the

MUSEUM OF THE ALEUTIANS

UNALASKA

native corporation for the Unalaska region of the Western Aleutian Islands. Additionally, the museum has received approximately \$12,000 in grant funding in FY 2005 and approximately \$20,000 in memberships. For the past two years, they have been the recipients of a Rasmuson Arts Acquisition Grant.

The collections manager reported that she believes that the museum's top challenges are associated with their geographical location. Unalaska is remote and also a fishing community. They have a fairly small permanent population, and high operating costs.

The community is also quite ethnically diverse. Another challenge has been to offer events and exhibits that are attractive to people of differing ages and cultural backgrounds, with limited staff and financing. They believe that there are two basic solutions: celebrating the uniqueness of each social group via special events such as festivals, lectures and exhibits; and offering each group a particular way of being involved with museum events. They hope that their summer internship that is offered through the local high school will make a difference in the lives of the students who volunteer. They are also focusing on creating a series of events to bring in the community's elder population, and establishing traveling exhibits and events to other Aleutian communities.

Membership Levels:

Sponsor-\$5000; Life-\$1,000; Corporate-\$1,000; Family- \$75; Individual- \$25; Student/Senior-\$5

This is a \$4 million dollar facility. Capital funding was secured through the City of Unalaska.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Facility address:

Museum of the Aleutians P.O. Box 648 Unalaska, Alaska 99685-0648

phone: (907) 581-5150 fax: (907) 581-6682 www.aleutians@arctic.net

ALASKA SEALIFE CENTER

SEWARD

Information on the Alaska SeaLife Center is provided for comparison only. The Center's focus is on biological and environmental research and on providing information and education on local animals and ecology; many live animals are housed within this facility. Its research focus is quite different from a traditional museum or heritage center and it qualifies for vastly different funding opportunities.

HEADLINES:

- The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Settlement Fund provided \$26 million to help build the \$56 million facility. Other funding was provided through grants, revenue bonds, and corporate and private donations. The city of Seward donated the seven-acre waterfront site.
- This facility measures 110,000 square feet.
- Annual visitation for the Alaska SeaLife Center is 140,000 – 150,000 people.
- Visitation has never matched original projections made in a 1993 feasibility study. It was estimated that the Center would have a visitation of 237,000 in Year 1 which would increase to 288,000 in Year 2. Now in Year 7, visitation was quoted at 140,945. It was reported that the over-projection was related to a reliance on cruise ship traffic, which has been diverted to alternate ports of call.
- Annual operating budget is \$16.5 million. \$2.8 million in revenue is drawn from visitor revenue which includes ticket sales and gift shop sales.
- Bulk of operating budget comes from research and from federal appropriations.
- The Center opened in 1998.

GOALS

- The Alaska SeaLife Center is a non-profit marine science facility dedicated to understanding and maintaining the integrity of the marine ecosystem of Alaska through research, rehabilitation and public education. The Center's research facilities and naturalist exhibits immerse visitors in the dynamic marine ecosystems of Alaska.
- The SeaLife Center carries out its mission through:
 - Research on animals and the environment
 - Rehabilitation of sick and injured marine animals
 - Education of young and old
 - Exhibitory

PROGRAM & FACILITIES

110,000 SF facility includes:

- 2 wet laboratories
- 7 dry laboratories
- 4 pools of varying dimensions, 4 tanks, 8 raceways and a fish pass
- Five environment-controlled quarantine/isolation rooms with pools
- 10 animal habitats
- A gift shop
- A dark room
- Various storage and support rooms

Programs Include:

- Various educational programs for kids include: an evening nocturne program that includes educational instruction and a sleepover at the center (between the seabird, stellar sea lion and harbor seal exhibits); programs for home-schooled students, educational tours for visiting school groups.
- Distance delivered classes on a variety of subjects.
- Interpretive guide training and certification.
- Courses on satellite telemetry.

MARKET & USERS

Average annual visitation is between 140,000 – 150,000 people annually. Additional users include school groups of all ages, from pre-school to university level and job training.

GOVERNANCE & PERSONNEL

The Center is a private, non-profit organization, governed by a Board of Directors, made up primarily of business people and scientists.

The Center has a staff of 34. Positions include:

- Development Director
- Corporate Affairs
- Research Education Manager
- Educational Director

ALASKA SEALIFE CENTER

SEWARD

- General Manager
- PR and Marketing Manager
- Retail and Ticketing Manager
- Various animal curators
- Head of Security

FINANCE

Capital costs: Center cost \$56 million to construct.

Annual visitation for the SeaLife Center is 140,000 – 150,000 people per year. Visitor operations are subsidized by the research side of the operation and by federal appropriations.

The yearly budget is \$16.5 million. \$2.8 million in revenue is drawn from visitor revenue which includes ticket sales and gift shop sales.

At present, the Center has about 650 contributing members; they are working to expand this number.

ADMISSION

Adults - \$14

Youth (13 and under) - \$11

Children (six and under) – free

Average ticket price is lower than what is quoted above because of discounts given to the travel industry (from 5-20% - 25-30% if tickets are sold in bulk or prepaid such as with cruise ship visitors). Last year, the Center made an increase in revenue with a decrease in visitation due to giving up crew discounts to Princess Cruises and the Princess coupon book.

HEADLINES

- Construction of this facility was completed in 1995, funded through a State appropriation of federal funds. Total cost for construction was \$6.15 million.
- The Cultural Center building is owned by the University of Alaska, which oversees facility operations and maintenance and provides building security. The University is also in charge of renting out the facility's conference space. The Museum and Gift Shop are operated by the Association of Village Council Presidents. This facility also houses the Bethel Consortium Library. The City makes twice yearly contributions to the purchase of periodicals, books and other library materials.
- The Association of Village Council Presidents is interested in increasing the connections between this facility and the surrounding villages. At a strategic planning session, held last year in Wasilla, AVCP determined the need for this facility to better represent, serve and perpetuate the language and culture of the region. They have resolved to work on ways that this can be accomplished.
- Presently, the Museum and Gift Shop employs one Curator (part-time). The Curator reports that volunteers who do everything from organizing and maintain artifacts, to setting up shows and staffing events, provide a significant amount of support.
- Total annual facility costs for the entire facility is \$106,000, for water, sewer and heating. Personnel costs are borne individually by three different local organizations. In 2004, \$80,000 was generated by rental of the conference space in the facility.
- The University presently has a three-year grant from US Housing and Urban Development to increase the sustainability of this facility. They are applying for a three year continuation of this grant. The City contributes to library operations, AVCP controls museum space and gift shop and pays a lease of \$20,000 per year.

PROGRAM & FACILITIES

This museum is located within an 18,000 square foot cultural center and houses approximately 500 pieces of art, pictures and artifacts. The areas related to the museum including storage, a gift shop, and offices total 3,800 square feet.

Facility includes:

- 1500 SF Main room
- 1200 SF Galleries – three separate spaces

Yupit Piciryarit Cultural Center and Museum

BETHEL

- 800 SF Gift shop
- 300 SF Two offices
- Restrooms
- Three storage areas, room for supplies, one is set up for items needing special lighting and air circulation. The curator reports that storage space is not adequate and that the facility would benefit from an expansion of storage space.
- Large conference space that can be divided into three smaller spaces with a small kitchen off to the side. A grant has been submitted to HUD for a kitchen upgrade, which will convert the present kitchen facility to a commercial quality kitchen.
- Consortium library and computer lab

Two galleries display the permanent exhibits of Ahtabascan, Cup'ik and Yup'ik people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in ancient and contemporary times. The third gallery is reserved for short-term exhibits that include some Native collections.

The most popular exhibits with local and regional visitors are school district art shows, Life and Time of St. Innocent, Photos of Region, and art shows. The tourists gravitate toward the permanent exhibits such as clothing, implements and objects of transport of the region.

Other events held at this facility include: weekly Saturday Markets, Cultural/Ethnic Night, Summer Arts Camp (for local youth), art classes (held during the regular school year), dance night (in which local dance groups perform for the public), fiddle dances. A University representative reported that they try to schedule activities that are tied to arts and culture.

Museum opened: March 1995

Gift Shop open: October 1995

MARKET & USERS

Average annual visitation: approximately 20,000

Majority of visitors are from the region. Outside visitors account for about 2,000 each year.

Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday, noon-4:30 pm year round.

Elders and other community members often come in to give presentations on various Native arts and crafts and talk about the history of the artifacts.

Students from the school sometimes come on field trips.

Health care organizations often sponsor conferences and lease the conference facilities in the cultural center.

Yupit Piciryarit Cultural Center and Museum

BETHEL

University students do some research.

Community groups use the facility for meetings about 1-2 times per week.

Museum sponsors traveling exhibits such as the current collection of photographs from the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

GOVERNANCE & PERSONNEL

The Board of Directors for the Museum and Gift Shop is the Association of Village Council Presidents. The entire facility is owned and managed by the University of Alaska, Kuskokwim Campus.

Staffing for the museum and gift shop includes:

- One curator (employed part time).
- The curator reports that there is a significant amount of staffing support provided by volunteers.

FINANCE

There is no admission fee however donations are accepted. The curator estimates approximately \$500 per year are collected in donations.

It is estimated that the Gift Shop brings in about \$30,000 per year in revenue. The Gift Shop accepts the work of local craftspeople and sells these items on consignment.

Operating costs are paid by the University with rental contributions from AVCP and the City of Bethel.

Additional revenue is generated by facility rental of the conference space. This space can be split into three sections. Cost for renting each section is \$350 per day, per section. All three sections can be rented together for \$1000 per day.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Yupit Piciryarit Cultural Center and Museum

P.O. Box 219

Bethel Alaska 99559

(907) 543-1819 Fax: (907) 543-1885

Located at 420 Chief Eddie Hoffman (State) Highway

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, P.O. Box 1467, Bethel, AK 99559-1467, 907-543-1677, 907-543-2021 (fax)

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Division, P.O. Box 1467, Bethel, AK 99559-1467, (907) 543-2979, (907) 543-2021 (fax)

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Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. (907)543-3151, 800-877-8339, yukondelta@fws.gov, <http://yukondelta.fws.gov/>

FAA, Office of Airport Planning and Programming, FAA Airport Division, Anchorage Federal Office Building, 907-271-5438.

<http://www.faa.gov/arp/planning/stats/index.cfm?ARNav=stats#cy03data>

Interviews with Lodge operators: Longhouse B&B (907-543-4612); Pacifica Guesthouse (907-543-4305); Bentley's Porterhouse B&B(907-543 3552)

Interview with Sara Scott, an AmeriCorps VISTA member. Sara also works with the Bethel Visitor Industry Panel (VIP), and the City of Bethel. 543-1387, sscott@cityofbethel.net

Interview with Andy Stemp, Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP).

Interview with Joan Hamilton, Yupiit Piciyarait Cultural Center.

Interview with Renee Athanas, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Interview with Diana Martin, Inupiat Heritage Center.

Interview with Sven Haakanson Jr. Ph.D, Alutiiq Museum and Archeological Repository

Interview with Evgenia Anichtchenko, Museum of the Aleutians

Interview with Kaye Ashton, Alaska Native Heritage Center

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AVCP 2004 Strategic Planning Session

AVCP Leadership Work Session I, July 19, 2005

AVCP Leadership Work Session II, July 27, 2005



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