On October 19th, Governor Bill Walker signed a historic compact with Alaska Tribes and Tribal Organizations, including Tanana Chiefs Conference. The Alaska Child Welfare Compact establishes a framework for Tribes to provide child welfare services on behalf of the Alaska Office of Children’s Services, and recognizes Tribes’ inherent sovereign authority to serve their tribal members.

According to a press release from the Governor’s Office, Alaska Native children have been disproportionately represented in the state’s foster care system for decades. While only 19 percent of Alaska children are Native or American Indian, 55 percent of Alaska children in out-of-home foster care are of Native descent, and 61 percent of Alaska Native children in foster care will ultimately be placed in non-Native homes. The Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact establishes a system to better deliver child welfare services. The compact acknowledges the government-to-government relationship between the state and Tribes, and clearly identifies child welfare services for Tribes and Tribal Organizations to carry out within a defined jurisdiction or service area.

Alaska Attorney General recognizes Tribal Sovereignty

Last month, Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth released a legal opinion regarding the sovereignty of Alaska Native tribes. The opinion states that Tribes do exist in Alaska and that Alaska Tribes are governments with inherent sovereignty.

“The existence of a tribe or tribal government does not require a federal determination and tribal sovereignty does not originate with the federal government,” wrote Lindemuth.
Dear Tribes and Tribal Members,

October was a busy month, with several very important conferences and meetings, including our Special Full Board of Directors Meeting. It almost felt like March, with all of our staff here at TCC busy planning and preparing.

On October 15, I attended the Governor’s Tribal Advisory Council meeting as a member. Much of the dialogue dealt with public safety, particularly the difficulties we have recruiting and retaining Village Public Safety Officers. TCC is always looking to improve our public safety presence throughout our region.

In my last letter, I talked about the important elections that would be taking place at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) conferences. Chickasaw Nation Lt. Governor Jefferson Keel was elected as the President of NCAI and Rob Sanderson, Jr. of Ketchikan was elected as the new NCAI Alaska Area Vice-President. Ana Hoffman of Bethel was elected as co-chair at AFN. Congratulations and I look forward to working with them in the coming year.

At the end of October, we held our Special Full Board of Director’s Meeting, with the theme Building Workforce Opportunities, where we presented our historic financial trends and how funds are received by the subregions. We explained that 72% of what TCC does is health, but not all subregions receive their healthcare from TCC.

In addition, we talked about how the number of rural jobs has doubled in the past 3 and a half years (from 139 at the end of 2014 to 294 at the end of 2016) and the average rural salary has increased from a range of $34,000-$56,000 to $40,000-$62,000. TCC has also addressed cost of living in the villages by implementing a $1,500 annual rural relief payment and expanding Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increases to all part-time employees.

We presented on wildland fires, where tribes had the opportunity to have important discussions with Kent Slaughter, Alaska Fire Service Manager, on how we can be better prepared for future opportunities. Difficulties with the current system for managing village firefighting crews were discussed, as well as possibilities for improving the system moving forward.

Additionally, we presented background information on the Chena Bingo operation. We discussed how the joint venture was formed and possible options to increase unrestricted funds for tribal communities. However, recommendations for changes were tied to waiting for the economy to rebound.

In 2007, when we received authorization to build the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center in Fairbanks, I made a promise to remember our rural communities. Keeping true to that promise, we have paid out $8.2 million in unrestricted funds to our 37 federal recognized tribes, $650,000 in rural relief payment to our rural employees, and set aside $5 million for cultural camps. While doing that we assisted in the construction and financial support of 7 new clinics and we are assessing the remainder of the village based clinics to determine what renovations will be needed to meet code requirements for accreditation.

These are just a few things we have accomplished at TCC; however, we have accomplished tons more. As always, all of us here at TCC continue to work towards our vision of Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes.

Ana Bassee,
Victor Joseph
Chief/Chairman
On October 13th, three Community Health Aide’s (CHAs) became the first to complete levels 1-4 at TCC’s Community Health Aide training center in Fairbanks. Christina Copeland of Steven’s Village, Karma Ulvi of Eagle, and Rochelle Bifelt of Nenana received their certifications at a celebration ceremony at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC).

When TCC first opened the CHA Training Center in 2016, the hope was that it would provide the opportunity for our CHAs to complete the program at an accelerated rate. Previously, CHAs would have to travel to Anchorage, Nome or Bethel to complete their training, sometimes waiting up to two and a half years just to be accepted into the program. The fact that these CHAs were able to complete the training in less than two years is a significant achievement and proof that the CHA Training Center is making it possible for TCC to provide better healthcare to our tribes by having our CHAs trained to the highest level.

“They are able to provide a higher level of care back to the communities a lot faster than what it used to be,” said TCC’s Executive Director of Health Services, Jacoline Bergstrom, “It has improved our ability to serve our communities and people.”

The ceremony at CAIHC was filled with a lot of emotion, as family and friends gathered to congratulate the CHAs on their amazing accomplishment.

**CHRISTINA COPELAND** Stevens Village

What do you like/love about being a health aide?

What I love about being a health aide is to be able to provide health care to a rural community that doesn’t get most everyday services.

**KARMA ULVI** Eagle

What do you like/love about being a health aide?

I love being a Health Aide! This job is challenging and has taken me out of my comfort zone many times but made me grow as a person. It is rewarding knowing that I have helped people to feel better and may have saved some lives.

**ROCHELLE BIFELT** Nenana

What do you like/love about being a health aide?

One of the great things I love about being a health aide is being trusted, confided in and looked to for help with medical needs. First and foremost I value a patients willingness to put their trust in me. It is 100% optional for a patient to give me their trust and in turn it's 100% important to me to NEVER do anything to compromise that trust.

***VPSO Program Establishes Yukon River Patrol in response to arson and robberies***

Over the summer of 2017, a number of structures at camps along the Yukon River were burglarized, vandalized, and/or burned. Emotions were running strong in communities along the river. With the impending increase in river traffic related to the upcoming hunting season that might run across the suspect(s) and the Tanana Chiefs Conference VPSO’s desire to make visits to villages with no law enforcement presence, a river patrol from Tanana to Holy Cross was put into motion.

On September 8th, VPSOs launched the boat from the end of the Tanana Road west of Manley Hot Springs. Officers traveled the river during the day, stopping in villages along the way to visit and provide services as needed. Officers stayed overnight in many of the villages during this 11-day trip. There were many challenges Officers had to overcome on this extended operation including extremely poor weather and river conditions. Officers and their equipment returned to Fairbanks from this very successful trip on September 18th to include countless village patrols, six investigations, and one medical assist.

With so many villages within the TCC region spread across the interior of the State, only a few VPSO’s, and limited air travel options, it can be a challenge to get officers into more than a few villages in a short amount of time. However, this Yukon River Patrol allowed officers to overcome these things and provide services to other places along the river inaccessible when traveling by commercial airlines.
The 2017 Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention took place October 19th-21st in Anchorage with the theme *Strength in Unity: Leadership-Partnerships-Social Justice*.
Jody Potts makes Powerful Keynote Speech at AFN

Jody Potts of Eagle was selected as one of this year’s keynote speakers at the Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention. Potts works as the VPSO Coordinator for Tanana Chiefs Conference and was recently appointed to the Governor’s Tribal Advisory Council.

Potts was selected to speak about this year’s AFN theme ‘Strength in Unity: Leadership - Partnership - Social Justice’. She walked onto the stage in full traditional regalia. Potts, a Han Gwich’in from Eagle, said that she wanted to address the audience from her traditional values.

“It’s part of who I am, my identity as a Han Gwich’in Woman. It’s what gives me strength,” said Potts.

Potts spoke about the strength and resiliency she finds in practicing her traditional way of life. This past year, the father of her children died by suicide, which sent her family into a deep state of grief. She took time off of work to focus on her kids and helping them heal through traditional practices. They found their way out of the ‘fog’, as she phrased it, by staying grounded and rooted in their culture.

As TCC’s VPSO Coordinator, Potts talked about the importance of the VPSO program in our villages and the high crime rates seen in our rural communities, encouraging people to stand together with victims of violence.

“As a victim of violence and survivor myself, I say we need more people to support our victims,” said Potts.

“Stand up with me,” she asked, as the entire room rose to their feet, “We need to stand up in solidarity in support of the victims. There is not enough of that in our villages unfortunately.”

First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference

The 34th Annual First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference took place October 16th-18th in Anchorage with the theme Part Land, Part Water - Always Native. According to First Alaskans Institute the theme ‘speaks to how our identity as indigenous peoples is informed by our deep connection to our lands and waters, no matter where we live, and recognizes that Alaska always has been – and always will be – a Native place.’

The Conference aims to increase pride and knowledge-sharing through celebration of our Native peoples, communities, and cultures.
Preparing for your Colonoscopy

Colorectal Cancer is the third most common cancer amongst men and women, and is preventable and treatable if caught in its early stages. Getting screened for Colorectal Cancer is more prevalent among Alaska Native people, so it is recommended that screening begins at age 40, much earlier than the national recommendation of age 50.

One of the most important parts about getting screened, is making sure that you properly prepare for your colonoscopy. Following your provider’s instructions is important in ensuring that your test results come back accurate. It’s important to remember not to eat or drink after midnight the night before your colonoscopy. It’s also important to stick to a clear liquid diet, which means no solid foods whatsoever. Eating or drinking liquids that you can’t see through, could result in inaccurate test results, which means you will have to re-schedule your procedure. If, at any time, you are unsure about what you can and can not eat during your preparation, we encourage you to contact your provider to clarify any questions you may have.

Watch our Medical Minute video on Preparing For Your Colonoscopy featuring Darlene Huntington.

What You CAN Have:
- Water
- Gatorade, Powerade, Pedialyte
- Jell-o or Popsicles
- Clear Broth (Beef or Chicken)
- Coffee or Tea (No cream or sugar)
- 7-Up, Crystal Light, Ginger Ale
- Clear Fruit Juices

What You CAN’T Have:
- Red or orange liquids of any kind
- Cream, Milk or dairy products
- Liquid you can’t see through
- Noodles or vegetables in soups
- Alcohol
- Juice with Pulp

Getting the Most Out of Your Appointment

The providers at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) want to ensure that you get the most out of your medical appointment.

“It’s important to think of yourself as a member of your own healthcare team,” says CAIHC Nurse Manager, Jamie Roush, “In fact, you are the most important part of your healthcare team.”

Having clear communications with your provider is essential in ensuring that you receive the best possible care during your visit.

Here are a few things you can do to make sure that you get the most out of your next appointment;

• List out your medications. Tell your provider what medications you are currently taking, including what the doses are and how often you are taking them. This includes over-the-counter medication and nutritional supplements. If you have a lot of medications, it could be easier to bring those with you to your appointment.

• Know your family medical history. Make sure to inform your provider of any health issues or conditions that run in your family. These could change the way your provider could choose to manage your current health.

• Bring other medical records and information. If you have received care from another provider or clinic, it’s important to bring records of those visits. This gives your provider a full picture of your medical history, which will make it easier for them to assess the best way to manage your healthcare concerns.

• Set your intention for your appointment. Do you have a specific health concern? Do you want to change your medication? Are you asking about a test? Or about treatment options?

Bring those questions with you and go over them with your provider so that you can make sure that your questions and concerns were addressed.
NEW! **Cultural Program Workshops**

TCC has been hosting a variety of cultural workshops at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center in Fairbanks. These are a great opportunity for people to participate in learning more about cultural activities.

So far workshops have included Jam Making with Dixie Alexander, Willow Root Basket Weaving with Lina Demoski, Fry Bread Making with Dixie Alexander, and Fiddle Dancing lessons. TCC plans on continuing these workshops into 2018.

**Construction Begins on Circle Health Clinic**

Construction has begun on the new health clinic in Circle. The new clinic will replace the existing clinic, which does not provide CHAs the opportunity to provide adequate healthcare to the community.

The new clinic will include two exam rooms, one with multi-use functionality to incorporate dental care, an administrative office, a lab, a sterilization room, a behavioral health office, and more. The new clinic will also include telehealth capabilities and will be handicap accessible.

This clinic is important for the community, as the current clinic does not have access to running water, and the construction does not allow easy access for gurneys and other needs that would make it easy for providers and CHAs to give adequate healthcare to the community.
This summer the John Fredson Culture and Wellness Camp took place on Dachan Lee outside of Arctic Village.

The camp gave the opportunity for youth to learn about their culture, values, traditions and subsistence way of life and how those things can be used to promote health and wellness.

For the Wellness component of the camps youth heard presentations on the importance of making healthy choices, tobacco cessation, binge drinking, and more.

Arctic Village also brought in elders from throughout the Yukon Flats subregion to speak to the kids including; Trimble Gilbert, Gideon James, Paul Williams Sr., Irene Roberts, and Allen Tritt.

Tribes throughout the region continue to host Culture and Wellness Camps funded through Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Administration for Native Americans. Two camps will be hosted in each subregion for the next five years.

For more information on upcoming camps, visit our website at www.tananachiefs.org/culture-and-wellness-camps
2017 TCC Culture & Wellness Camps:

YUKON TANANA
- June 26th-July 2nd in Tanana
- July 23rd-28th in Minto

YUKON FLATS
- July 17th - 24th in Fort Yukon
- August 16th-20th in Arctic Village

LOWER YUKON
- August 27th-31st in Anvik
- September 12-14th in Holy Cross

YUKON KOYUKUK
- Nulato- Date TBD
- Kaltag- Date TBD

UPPER KUSKOKWIM
- Takotna - Date TBD
- Nikolai - Moved to 2018

UPPER TANANA
- Tanacross - Date TBD
- TBD
November is Diabetes Awareness Month and a good time to be reminded everyone should be screened for diabetes and prediabetes if at-risk!

No one is excused from diabetes. In Alaska, 5.2% of Alaska Natives (AN) in 2014 had diabetes and 5.6% of ANs in the TCC region had diabetes. Chances are you either have diabetes or know someone who has diabetes. The numbers are even higher for people with prediabetes.

A person with prediabetes has a blood sugar level higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. He or she is at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes and other serious health problems, including heart disease, and stroke. Without lifestyle changes to improve their health, 15% to 30% of people with prediabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within five years.

Risk factors for prediabetes include;

- Age, especially after 45 years of age
- Being overweight or obese
- A family history of diabetes
- Having the following ethnic backgrounds: American Indian/Alaska Native, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- History of diabetes while pregnant (gestational diabetes)
- Being physically active less than three times a week

The only way to know for sure if you have prediabetes is to have your blood sugar checked by an accredited lab such as the one at CAIHC. If you already have diabetes or prediabetes you may getting your blood checked regularly. Keep up the good work!

If you know someone who has one or more of the above risk factors and has not had their blood checked within the past few years; it might be time for a visit with their provider. Even younger folks can have prediabetes and not know it!

A risk assessment tool developed by the CDC is available online and can help you figure out your risk of developing prediabetes. The test can be found at www.DoIHavePrediabetes.org and completed in less than 2 minutes.

If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes or diabetes, make sure to have regular visits with your provider and meet with the Diabetes Program to learn what you can do to manage your health.

Visit WWW.DOIHAVEPREDIABETES.ORG to find out if you are at risk!

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**Elizabeth Fleagle, Alatna**

This month’s Legacy elder is Elizabeth Fleagle of Alatna, who was featured in Volume One of the Legacy of Our Elders series.

Elizabeth was born July 20th, 1935 at a camp outside of Alatna. Elizabeth and her family lived a subsistence lifestyle, working together as family and living off the land. Elizabeth’s mother died when she was seven years old while giving birth. After her mother’s death she lived with her sister Elma, helping with her children before eventually moving back with her dad, where she managed their household budget to ensure they had enough food.

Elizabeth attended school until the 8th grade, after which she moved to Tanana to work until she could save enough money to buy a ticket to Sitka to attend Mt. Edgecumbe High School. She studied nursing and became a licensed practical nurse. Elizabeth worked as a nurse in Sitka, Anchorage, and Fairbanks.

In the 50’s Elizabeth met and married her husband Richard. The two moved to Alatna to raise their family. However, alcohol and domestic violence crept its way into their lives. Elizabeth struggled even after leaving her husband in the 1980’s. The eventual suicide of her son Franklin hit her the hardest. Elizabeth once again turned to alcohol for comfort. She struggled for a long time before eventually entering into treatment. “With the Lord’s help I no longer felt the need to drink alcohol.”

Elizabeth’s emphasizes the importance of helping others heal through love and acceptance; “Treat them with respect and love; if they are struggling with alcohol, it is what they need to know: [...] You have family who loves you.”

To hear Elizabeth’s full story, visit www.tananachiefs.org

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TCC’s Legacy of our Elders series documents the lives and stories of Athabascan elders throughout the TCC region. Their interviews are compiled into volumes that include a DVD movie as well as an accompanying book. The books and DVDs highlight the elders and the stories that they wish to share. These videos are available online at www.tananachiefs.org.

Funding for Legacy Project made possible by TCC & The National Park Service.
One Family’s Commitment to Grow, Gather, Hunt, and Fish for their food and to help others do the same

By Heidi Rader, Tribes Extension Educator for Tanana Chiefs Conference

When some Alaskans retire, they head south for warmer, easier, sunnier lives. They take their stories and their adventures of Alaska life and that's enough. But Terry and Paul Reichardt are different. They’ve ramped up what they’ve done for decades — wresting nearly all of their food from the Alaska landscape. While it’s not unusual for Alaskans to hunt, gather, fish and grow their own food, it is unusual for a family to obtain most of their food this way, especially while working demanding jobs.

When the Reichardts settled in the hills above Goldstream Valley in 1973, they grew their own food, in part, to save money. And because it was something Terry had always done. Their garden adapted to the needs and demands of a growing family. Less time meant more weeds, but three kids meant a lot of extra helping hands.

Her commitment to health and eating local has led Terry to come up with her own recipes, which she freely shares with her gardening students. So-called gourmet recipes with hard to find, exotic ingredients, too much sugar and too much butter annoy her. "I suspect that if most people would stop worrying about all the special requirements, you could find that it’s delightful."

"But they produce, they’d be very healthy." Terry eschews the easier design of a walk-in type root cellar because that design lets out too much heat. The way they haul produce up and down the ladder is about as impressive as Santa squeezing through a chimney. Oh, and in the fall, you probably won’t find much unused space in the Reichardt house. Based on the ideal humidity and temperature storage requirements, you could find onions in the entryway, garlic in the closet, winter squash under a desk and herbs in a drawer.

While maintaining the garden and putting up food for the winter, they squeeze in their gathering, fishing and hunting activities. When fishing in Chitina, Terry doesn’t let much go to waste. She simmers fish bones and heads to make broth (to can or freeze) or composes them to provide a welcome source of nitrogen for her garden. She has been known to collect unwanted fish bones and heads from other fishermen as well. When the Reichardts found themselves with a particularly fat caribou, Terry lamented the waste of all that fat. After some contemplation, she found that she could make some decent candles with the fat, and even moisturizer.

It’s a stretch to say that anyone can do what the Reichardts do. But they show us that one dedicated, hardworking family can eat almost entirely local — and not just for one year. Terry asserts, "When you put a little effort into being a little more self-sufficient, you find that it’s delightful. You’re not giving up a lot.

For more information about the Tribes Extension Program at TCC or to request a workshop, go to: http://www.uaf.edu/ces/tcc or contact Heidi at Heidi.Rader@tananachiefs.org or (907) 452-8251 x 3477. To see Terry’s garden and root cellar, checkout the YouTube videos I filmed this summer: http://bit.ly/2y3uabV.
Letters to the Editor, other written contributions and photo submissions are welcome. However, space is limited and program-oriented news has priority. We reserve the right to edit or reject material. Letters and opinions are not necessarily the opinions of Tanana Chiefs Conference. Material submitted anonymously will not be printed.

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www.tananachiefs.org

Village Vacancies
- Behavioral Health Aide (Tetlin)
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner (Alatna, Chalkyitsik, Circle, Helay Lake, Manley Hot Springs, Rampart, Ruby, Stevens Village)
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner – Itinerant (Tetlin)
- Community Health Representative (Allakaket)
- Elder Nutrition Cook (Allakaket, Ruby)
- Family Visitor (McGrath)
- Itinerant Clinician – SOC (Galena)
- Mid-level Practitioner (PA or NP) (Tok)
- Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook (Chalkyitsik, Kaltag, McGrath, Nikolai, Rampart, Ruby)
- Tribal Administrator (Alatna, Koyukuk, Venetie)
- Tribal Family Youth Specialist (Alatna, Koyukuk)
- Village Public Safety Officer (Allakaket, Circle, Eagle, Fort Yukon, Grayling, Holy Cross, Huslia, Nulato, Ruby, Tanana, Venetie)

Fairbanks Vacancies
- Acupuncturist
- Behavioral Health Assessment Clinician
- Certified Medical Assistant II
- Coordinator/Instructor Mid-Level Practitioner
- Instructor-CHAP Training Center
- Lab Director
- Medical Laboratory Technician
- Nurse Practitioner - Primary Care
- Physician Assistant - Primary Care
- Rural Clinical Supervisor
- Tribal Government Specialist I

Region-Wide Vacancies
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

TCC CLOSED
November 23rd-24th, 2017

Alaska Tribal Unity Gathering
November 27th, 2017
Egan Center - Anchorage, AK

TCC CLOSED
December 25th-26th, 2017

TRIBAL UNITY GATHERING

What: 2nd Annual Alaska Tribal Unity Gathering
Where: Egan Center, Anchorage, AK

Join us on November 27th to approve documents for forming an entity that will develop a unified tribal voice in Alaska. We are in times where the voice of 229 tribes in Alaska can influence state, federal, and international arenas and policy by showing strength and purpose. All tribal leaders are welcome to attend this free event. Lunch is provided.