

# Ahtna Kanas

SPRING 2016



NATIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS  
HELP YOUNG EXECs LIKE  
RHONDA OLIVER

ZACH MARTIN DRAWS ON  
HISTORY FOR NEW MURAL



10

Native leadership programs help young execs like Rhonda Oliver



14

Zach Martin draws on history for new mural



7

AFSI wins JBER contract



9

Perfect storm leaves big mess for Ahtna Construction to clean up



12

Traditional titles associated with land



18

Board treasurer excited by future potential of Ahtna

- 3 President's message
- 5 CEO's message
- 7 8(a) certification positions AKHI for success
- 8 AEI Irvine team wins EPA as a new long-term client
- 8 STAR awards
- 9 Hatchery project wraps up with landscaping

- 13 Staffing CB300 checkpoint
- 16 Graduation gifts
- 16 Annual meeting slated for June 4
- 17 Shareholder-owner creates culture club
- 17 Seattle office welcomes local shareholder-owners
- 18 Calendar of events

## Ahtna, Inc. and Ahtna Netiyé' senior management team



**Michelle Anderson**  
President, AI



**Tom Maloney**  
CEO, AN



**Roy J. Tansy Jr.**  
Executive VP, AN



**Kathryn Martin**  
Senior VP, AI



**William M. Tisher**  
CFO, AI



**Joe Bovee**  
VP of Land and Resources, AI



**Douglas Miller**  
VP of Human Resources, AI



**Matt Block**  
General Counsel

## Ahtna Subsidiary Presidents



**Craig O'Rourke**  
President, AGSC & ADB



**Brenda Rebne**  
President, AFSI & APSI



**Vicky Dunlap**  
President, ASTS & AL



**Susan Taylor**  
President, KEC, AKHI & ATSI



**Tim Finnigan**  
President, AES & AEI



**David O'Donnell**  
President, AC & PPC

If shareholder-owners would like to submit articles for the next issue of the Kanas, the submission deadline is June 10, 2016.

For questions or more information about the Kanas, please contact the Media and Communications office: Shannon Blue at (907) 230-7058 or [sblue@ahtna.net](mailto:sblue@ahtna.net)





# President's Message

## LISTENING TO SHAREHOLDER-OWNERS WHILE KEEPING CLOSE WATCH ON ECONOMY

Dear fellow shareholder-owners,

Ahtna continues to use a strategic-management framework called the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the Corporation, improve internal and external communications and monitor performance against strategic goals. The BSC was developed out of the Harvard School of Business and has transformed corporations worldwide and across a variety of industries. Ahtna has used the BSC to successfully link long-term strategy with short-term actions. This year we will have more to share on the strategic front as we develop our strategic assessments and the Ahtna corporate narrative.

### 2015 Ahtna shareholder-owner survey

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our 2015 Ahtna shareholder-owner survey for providing your valuable feedback. The results of the survey have been shared with Ahtna leadership and will be used to drive action plans to improve our shareholder-owners' satisfaction. One thing that we heard from the survey is that shareholder-owners appreciate the outreach events that Ahtna organizes and would like to see more of them. In 2015, we hosted open houses, candidate forums and receptions in Glennallen, Fairbanks and Anchorage, as well as at our subsidiary offices in Sacramento and Irvine, CA and most recently at our SeaTac office in Seattle, WA.

### Shareholder Development

Our Shareholder Development team has been hosting presentations in local schools to connect with the youth and talk to them about what courses they should be taking now to prepare for their future careers. Karen Linnell, an Ahtna Board Director and Director of the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, and staff from Ahtna Engineering Services (AES) recently spoke with Glennallen High School students about careers in their fields. AES provided some hands-on experience with drones that the students really enjoyed. Ahtna has also teamed up with the Kids2College program to help bring early college awareness and a college-going culture to our communities.

Ahtna staff had the opportunity to assist shareholder-owners with applying for jobs at recent job fair events in Glennallen and Anchorage and our Shareholder Development department is also leading an effort to partner with local unions on training and apprenticeship opportunities.

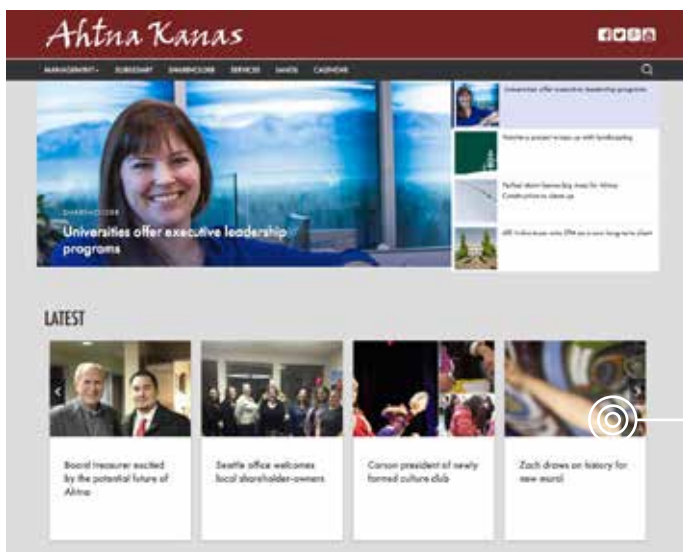
### E-version of Kanas

We are always looking for new ways to reach our shareholder-owners and provide timely and relevant information. The launch of the redesigned Ahtna website last year provided a valuable new communication channel and now, for the first time, an E-version of the Kanas is available, which offers the convenience of being able to read the latest Ahtna news on all your devices.

### Top 40 under 40

We are all very proud of Ahtna Board Treasurer Jason Hart and shareholder-owner Samuel Johns for being named two of Alaska's Top Forty Under 40 in recognition of their commitment to professional excellence and their community. The Top Forty Under 40 recipients will be honored during an awards reception held April 8 at Anchorage's Hotel Captain Cook.

*Continued on page 4*



Check out the new E-Kanas at  
[ahtna-inc.com/kanas](http://ahtna-inc.com/kanas)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - *Continued from page 3*

### **Ahtna history**

This issue of the Kanas includes the second installment in a series on Ahtna and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) history. Ahtna is also collaborating on an Ahtna history book that is planned to be published next year. It is important for us to document our heritage and make it available for present and future generations to help preserve our people's identity.

### **Make your voice heard - Vote**

Voting is a valuable right that we, as Americans, should never take for granted. With the presidential election taking place this year, I would like to encourage everyone to make sure they have the opportunity to have their voice heard by registering to vote. Many states offer the convenience of online registration and you can find out more details by visiting [www.usa.gov/register-to-vote](http://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote).

Voting is important at the local level, as well, and with Ahtna's 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of Shareholders taking place June 4 in Glennallen, you will soon have the opportunity to cast your vote for Ahtna's Board of Directors. Take the time to review the proxy statement that will be mailed to you in April and, if you can, attend one of the Candidate Forums to educate yourself on the candidates and make an informed vote. As in previous years, online voting will be available for your convenience and additional details on the meeting and important deadlines can be found on page 16.

### **Investing in Alaska**

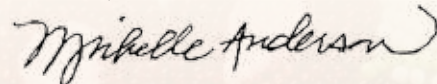
Alaska's fiscal crisis is something that has everyone's attention and, with the price of oil not expected to rebound anytime soon, it poses a real threat to the health of our state's economy and also directly impacts

Alaska Native corporations with a reduction in 2016 7(i) resource revenue payments. We are being proactive and taking steps to position ourselves to weather any downturns in the economy and to maintain the vitality of our operations and their profitability. While we are seeing cuts in certain areas of the state's budget, our recent acquisition of AAA Valley Gravel is just one example of our leadership making a strategic move to focus where increased spending is projected. You can read more about the AAA Valley Gravel acquisition in Ahtna Netiye's CEO message.

The Alaska LNG Project would be the single-largest infrastructure investment in Alaska's history, and Ahtna would be the largest private landowner for the pipeline route, with 33 miles of the proposed pipeline crossing Ahtna land. We continue to meet with key project stakeholders to put Ahtna in a favorable position to take advantage of contracting opportunities and gainful employment for our people. Ahtna is supporting the project's geotechnical and geophysical work this winter, and we expect to work with two other major contractors on cultural awareness and environmental-related items.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all of the 2015 Ahtna Employees of the Year and thank them for going above and beyond for the company, their fellow employees and our shareholder-owners. We are fortunate to have so many exceptional employees working together to achieve our mission.

Tsin'aen,



Michelle Anderson, President  
Ahtna, Incorporated



## CEO's Message

### 'SAFETY FIRST' WORK ENVIRONMENT PAYING BIG DIVIDENDS

Dear shareholder-owners,

Every day, the men and women of Ahtna are safely executing challenging projects in locations across the country. Something we should all be very proud of is Ahtna's Experience Modification Rating (EMR) of 0.63, which means that over the past three policy years we have experienced far fewer worker-compensation losses than other companies that are similar in size and operating within the same industry. A rating of 1.0 is the average rating in each industry, and we are well below 0.8, which is considered to be a "very good" rating. This rating not only means that we have been successful in minimizing losses, we have and will pay lower premiums than our competitors. The rating also shows that our commitment to a "Safety First" work environment is being achieved despite the fact that we often work in very challenging conditions.

Ahtna Government Services Corporation (AGSC) was recently recognized for its dedication to safety when it was honored with the distinguished Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Gold Shovel Standard Certification. AGSC not only received the client certification, but was also given the highest score of "A" by PG&E under ISNetwork Safety Program Metrics, which

gives us positive exposure to hundreds of hiring clients within ISNetwork.

All of our subsidiaries are focused on safely performing work and seeking out new work opportunities for the benefit of our Ahtna shareholder-owners. One example of successful project execution is the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s Sag River Project, highlighted in this issue of the Kanas. Ahtna has been performing excellent contract work for Alyeska for more than 40 years, and we are pleased to announce that we recently signed a new five-year contract, with two option years. Congratulations to Ahtna Construction for a job well done!

Ahtna Technical Services Inc. (ATSI) President Sue Taylor, along with her management and project team, recently attended a Customer Performance Review at the Beaufort, South Carolina, Marine Corps Air Station. The customer recognized the project team for their value-added work performance in multiple areas. Jason Hart, Ahtna Board treasurer, represented our Board of Directors at the site visit and was able to witness firsthand our outstanding performance.

#### Ahtna acquires new company

Ahtna continues to seek acquisitions that provide multiple benefits to our shareholder-owners, such as job-hiring opportunities, increased profitability and ultimately higher shareholder-owner dividends. We just closed on the acquisition of AAA Valley Gravel, which is strategically located to support planned transportation projects in the Matanuska-Susitna region. Federal highway monies are scheduled to increase in Alaska every year for the next five years, and Mat-Su is a prime area for increased highway spending due to its rapid growth. Ahtna performs an extensive due-diligence process with any acquisition, and the Ahtna Board of Directors ultimately has final approval.



Bill Fuger (left) and Terry Sudut (right) pose with Ahtna's David O'Donnell after signing paperwork for Ahtna to acquire AAA Valley Gravel.

*Continued on page 6*



## Tolsona oil and gas project update

The Tolsona gas prospect, which is approximately 10 miles outside of Glennallen, is a major investment area for Ahtna. The economic benefits, including potentially decreasing energy costs in the region and creating employment opportunities for shareholder-owners, are prime reasons for the Board of Directors' decision to move forward with the project. The engineering and permitting are all going very well, and Ahtna recently participated in a Copper River Basin Job Fair and hosted our own fair in Anchorage to explain the project to shareholder-owners and local communities. We're looking forward to having local high school students visit the project site to see firsthand some of the subject matter that is covered in their coursework being used.

To read more on this project, go to [www.adn.com/print/article/20160110/hunt-oil-alaska-native-corporations-become-states-new-wildcatters](http://www.adn.com/print/article/20160110/hunt-oil-alaska-native-corporations-become-states-new-wildcatters)

## Mentor-Protégé agreements

Ahtna continues to seek growth opportunities through mutually beneficial teaming agreements with other firms. For example, our engineering service company is working on a mentor-protégé agreement with the Potawatomi Tribe based in Milwaukee, WI. Ahtna would be the mentor for the first time and would focus on government contracting, particularly in the Midwest. Ahtna Professional Services is working

on a mentor-protégé agreement with Centerra and continues to pursue multiple government and commercial contracts. The mentor-protégé agreements are pending approval by the Small Business Administration (SBA). We are also teamed up with some of the largest engineering and construction firms in the country on prospects located throughout the United States.

## Survey shows strong Ahtna employment satisfaction

The 2015 corporate- and project-employee-satisfaction survey, coordinated by our Human Resources Department with an external vendor, showed remarkable results. Of the 323 eligible employees, 93 percent (300) participated in the survey, and the results reflected that 95 percent are satisfied with their employment at Ahtna. We are impressed with the number of survey responses and glad our employees feel so strongly about working for the Ahtna family of companies.

In summary, I am proud to be part of the Ahtna team, and there are some exciting times ahead that I am happy to be a part of.

Thank you,



Tom Maloney  
Chief Executive Officer

## Ahtna 2015 Employees of the Year



Jay Neal  
Operations Manager  
AhtnaSTS



Michelle Marshall  
Program Manager  
AES



Molly Grissom  
Environmental, Health and  
Safety Manager  
ATSI



Paula Vollmer  
Administrative Assistant  
AFSI



Archie Rabasto  
Project Manager  
AGSC



Goldie Jokela  
A/P Manager  
Ahtna, Inc.



Lance Fleury  
Operator  
AC&PPC

# SUBSIDIARY SPOTLIGHT

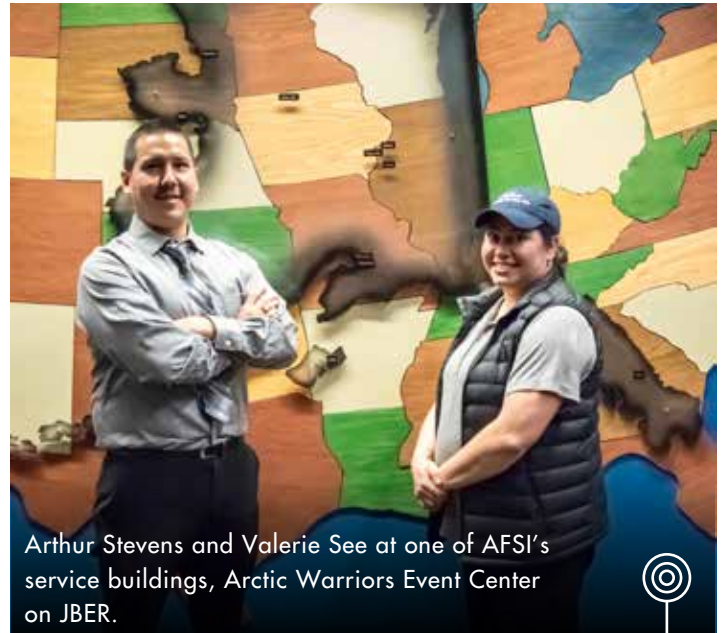
## AFSI WINS JBER CONTRACT

Ahtna Facility Services Inc. (AFSI) won a substantial contract last October to provide janitorial services on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), located outside of Anchorage. The contract involves providing service to over a hundred buildings, including a variety of child-development centers, event centers, fitness and intelligence facilities and command centers.

Ahtna shareholder-owners Arthur Stevens, Assistant Project Manager, and Valerie See, Day Supervisor, are part of a team that leads the janitors and floor technicians, all of whom had to pass thorough background checks and flight-line training to gain access to the military installation.

JBER is just one of many projects AFSI is currently managing. On track to graduate from the SBA 8(a) program in 2018, AFSI continues to grow, with more than 151 employees across the country and headquarters in Anchorage and West Sacramento, California. It boasts a high employee-retention rate and client satisfaction constantly in the 90th percentile.

AFSI was reestablished in 2006 to provide business services to both federal government and commercial customers in janitorial, facilities operations and maintenance, and security guard services.



Arthur Stevens and Valerie See at one of AFSI's service buildings, Arctic Warriors Event Center on JBER.

Check this story out on the new E-Kanas at [ahtna-inc.com/kanas](http://ahtna-inc.com/kanas)



## 8(A) CERTIFICATION POSITIONS AKHI FOR SUCCESS

AKHI first opened its doors in 2005 as a wholly owned subsidiary of Ahtna Inc. Its original name was Ahtna Contractors LLC (ACL). After operating as a non-union construction company for a few years, ACL was unable to find a solid client base and a choice was made to deactivate the company. In 2014, the Board of Directors decided to bring this company back into a fully functioning subsidiary in the Ahtna family of companies. A decision was made to change its name from Ahtna Contractors to AKHI. Originally, AKHI was intended to be a partnership between Ahtna and a company owned by a Hawaiian Native. The acronym stands for "Alaska and Hawaii," i.e. AK-HI. Although this proposed partnership never came to fruition, the name remained.

Susan Taylor, President of Ahtna Technical Services was asked to take on a second role as the President of AKHI and refocus its mission on facilities management rather than construction. Staff began the process of applying for certification to participate in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program. Certification was awarded to the company on December 18, 2015.

AKHI recently hired a proposal manager, John Moore, to help transition this small company into the government-contracting arena. ATSI employees Shawn Sanford, Rick Durham, Lon Trotter and Ron Cunningham are contracted under an agreement with AKHI to help develop strategy for pursuing prime contract opportunities and winning contracts to grow AKHI into a successful and competitive small business. Pamela Finnesand is Ahtna's small-business liaison. She assists AKHI in making the most of its new 8(a) status. We are excited about AKHI's future and wish this company and team much success in the years to come.





## AEI IRVINE TEAM WINS EPA AS A NEW LONG-TERM CLIENT

Ahtna Environmental Inc. received a \$70 million, 10-year, 8(a) competitive award from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract to perform campus-wide construction in accordance with the master plan for the Western Division Environmental Research Laboratory at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Research and Development in Corvallis, OR.

The contract was an attractive opportunity for the team to pursue due to recent success with other federal clients with similar scope, an outstanding safety record and an excellent site supervisor who lives within walking distance of the EPA campus.

Check this story out on the new E-Kanas at [ahtna-inc.com/kanas](http://ahtna-inc.com/kanas)

This project requires expertise in vertical construction, HVAC and energy systems, as well as phasing and swing space for an occupied technical campus, and consists of six phases at \$10–15 million per phase. The first task includes constructing a one-story, 4,900-square-foot addition, many HVAC and mechanical enhancements in the main building, creating an HVAC penthouse, constructing a 270-well thermal field for a geothermal ground source heat pump and various site work in support of providing a new vehicle entrance to the campus.

## STAR AWARDS



### Recent STAR Level 2 Award recipients:



**Tim Coppedge**, a field foreman for Clearwater Landscape Services and a valued and long-term subcontractor and teaming partner to Ahtna on multiple California project sites, received recognition for being injury- and incident-free for over two years. Tim and Clearwater have provided outstanding safety planning, implementation, leadership and follow-through on Ahtna projects.



**Steven Stetson**, AGSC/ADB environmental scientist, has shown outstanding incident- and injury-free initiatives in the field at various California locations.

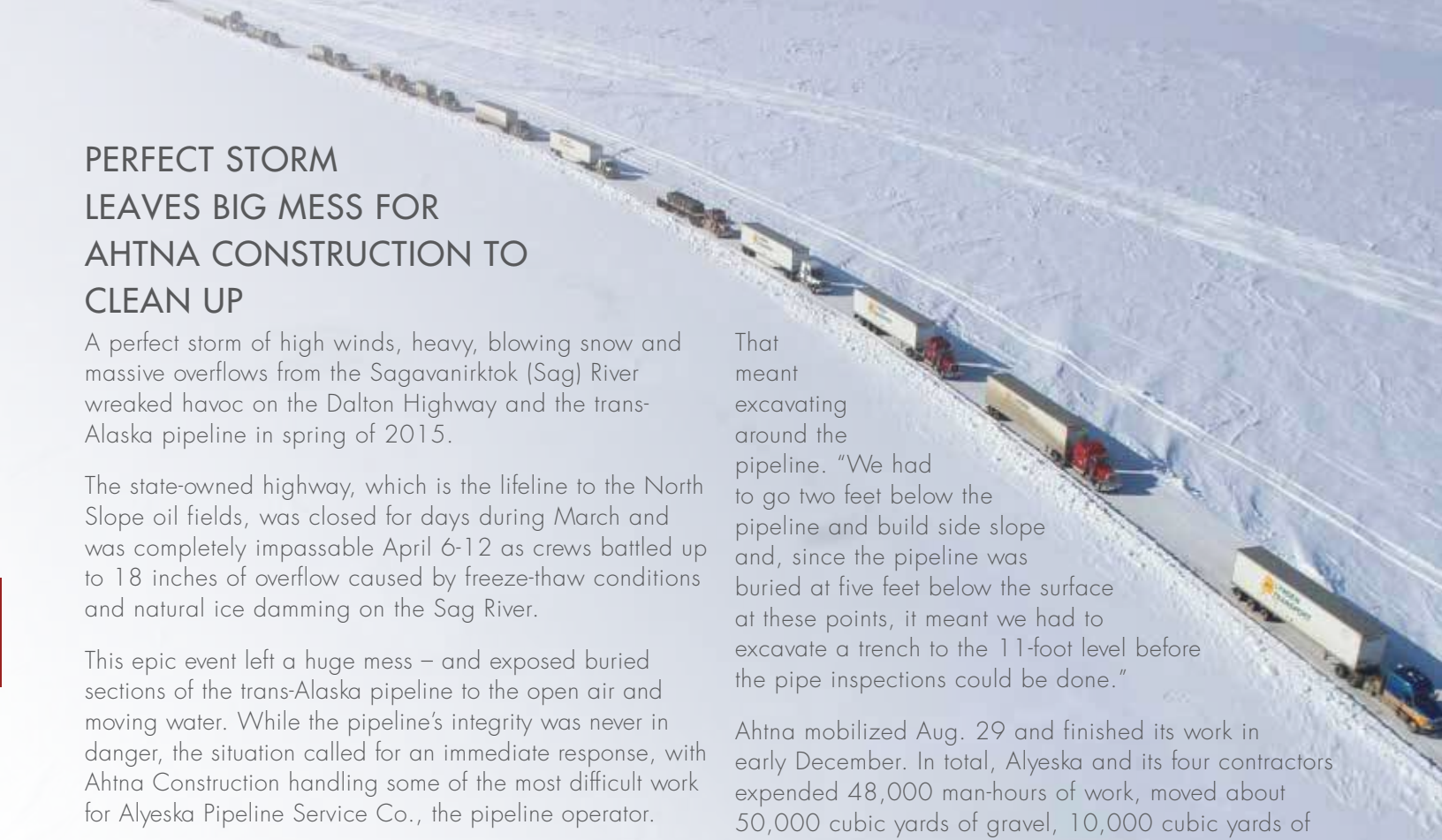


**Mark Lamberty**, representing ADB, received recognition for his safe and quick actions surrounding a mishap involving a fire during debris-clearance activities on a project in Nevada. The incident was quickly mitigated, reported and a control strategy implemented to prevent a reoccurrence



**Greg Wells**, AGSC/ADB site superintendent, received recognition for his outstanding safety, health, and environmental program (SHEP) initiatives at many projects over the last two years. Greg's SHEP leadership has resulted in more than 23,000 incident-free work hours.





## PERFECT STORM LEAVES BIG MESS FOR AHTNA CONSTRUCTION TO CLEAN UP

A perfect storm of high winds, heavy, blowing snow and massive overflows from the Sagavanirktok (Sag) River wreaked havoc on the Dalton Highway and the trans-Alaska pipeline in spring of 2015.

The state-owned highway, which is the lifeline to the North Slope oil fields, was closed for days during March and was completely impassable April 6-12 as crews battled up to 18 inches of overflow caused by freeze-thaw conditions and natural ice damming on the Sag River.

This epic event left a huge mess – and exposed buried sections of the trans-Alaska pipeline to the open air and moving water. While the pipeline's integrity was never in danger, the situation called for an immediate response, with Ahtna Construction handling some of the most difficult work for Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., the pipeline operator.

The pipeline is buried five-feet deep along this section and the flooding exposed it in six locations.

The repair was complicated, as Alyeska Project Manager Shaune O'Neil explained. "You can't just throw gravel on top of the pipeline. We had to do a careful assessment, checking to make sure the pipe coating and the pipe weren't damaged, along with the pipeline's cathodic protection."

That meant excavating around the pipeline. "We had to go two feet below the pipeline and build side slope and, since the pipeline was buried at five feet below the surface at these points, it meant we had to excavate a trench to the 11-foot level before the pipe inspections could be done."

Ahtna mobilized Aug. 29 and finished its work in early December. In total, Alyeska and its four contractors expended 48,000 man-hours of work, moved about 50,000 cubic yards of gravel, 10,000 cubic yards of large rock and 350 cubic yards of sand.

"Our crew performed extremely well in the harsh, winter conditions," Scott McIlroy, senior program manager at Ahtna Construction, said. Alyeska called on Ahtna Construction on short notice, but its team was eager to help. Fourteen Ahtna Construction team members were sent to help expose what damage had been done and to help prevent future damages from occurring. "The work environment was a little rough," McIlroy said, "but that's what we do."

## HATCHERY PROJECT WRAPS UP WITH LANDSCAPING

Ahtna Environmental Inc. (AEI) has been busy planting trees and plants for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at the Burley Creek Fish Hatchery in Idaho as part of the compensatory wetland enhancement required after the company built an earthen drainage channel in 2014.

The hatchery, which is mainly dedicated to restoring Redfish Lake sockeye salmon, has shifted from gene banking to stock rebuilding, resulting in an increase in fish production. To handle the additional fish, AEI built a shallow earthen channel that increased the capacity of the existing effluent removal system. NOAA was required to plant native trees and plants in two wetland areas around the channel to compensate environmentally for the disturbed wetlands during construction. This landscaping completes the work

associated with the construction of the earthen drainage channel.

Redfish Lake is a critical part of the Snake River Sockeye Salmon Captive Broodstock Program to rebuild the lost salmon runs in the Snake River.



# UNIVERSITIES OFFER EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Alaska Pacific University (APU) and the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) now offer executive leadership programs for Alaska Native,s like Ahtna shareholder-owner Rhonda Oliver.

Rhonda, who is the daughter of Maggie Oliver from Cantwell and the late Tom Oliver, is the controller at Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI). She earned a certification and nine credits that can be applied to a master's degree at APU's Alaska Native Executive Leadership Program (ANELP).

"The program is geared toward more than working for an Alaska Native corporation," Rhonda explains. "It's about growing leaders and it covered a variety of leadership topics that, as you develop professionally, you're going to need. I learned a lot of tangible, practical skills that I draw on daily."

ANELP emphasizes the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the formation and management of ANCSA corporations.

"As somebody looking back on ANCSA, working for a successful corporation 40 years after the fact, that's the only perspective I had," Oliver said. "Being in the course, hearing these speakers, it let me look at ANCSA through a different lens."

ANELP is similar to other master's programs at APU. Classes meet two days a month and in between, students work on assignments, homework and readings.

"What's great about the program is the relationships that are built with our classmates," Rhonda says. "These are other future leaders in the Native community that each offer different skill sets. We were able to talk about each other's work challenges and are able to get a wide variety of perspectives on solutions and ideas."

**"HAVING NATIVE MANAGEMENT CLASSES AND PROGRAMS AVAILABLE AT TWO OF ALASKA'S MAJOR UNIVERSITIES IS A GREAT STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION."**

**—GENEVIEVE JOHN**

Since the 2014 fall semester, UAA has offered a new minor in Alaska Native Business Management. The courses give students an in-depth look at how Alaska Native Corporations – including Ahtna – have diversified into successful state, national and global companies. The minor utilizes targeted education, hands-on training, research and technical assistance to grow the next generation of Alaska Native corporate and nonprofit leaders.

"With the increasing levels of sophistication and diversity in Alaska Native Corporation businesses, having Native management classes and programs available at two of Alaska's major universities is a great step in the right direction," notes Ahtna Board Member Genevieve John. "The more exposure our shareholders get to business education and best practices that can be blended with our culture and values to benefit the Ahtna Athabaskan people, the stronger our future shareholder leaders will be."

UAA has more than 2,000 Alaska Native and American Indian students, says Sharon Lind, term assistant professor for UAA's College of Business and Public Policy. "We have more Alaska Native students than any other university, so this program makes sense here."

The Alaska Native Business Management minor is comprised of five required courses totaling 13 credits and an additional five elective credits that are focused on Alaska Native topics. Concepts covered in the required courses include Alaska Native corporation business practices, leadership and business management.

For spring semester this year, classes include Alaska Native Organizations, Indigenous Leadership and Inside the Boardroom of an Alaska Native Organization. Oliver will be participating in this class on March 25th as a guest speaker covering a variety of topics including understanding financial statements as a board member.

"We have a strong interest in these classes by Alaska Native students," Sharon says. "Additionally, we are starting to see a very strong interest from our accounting students. Those majoring in accounting know they will probably start their careers in an auditing firm, and it is to their advantage to have knowledge in this area before joining that firm."





To learn more, go to [www.alaskapacific.edu/anelp/](http://www.alaskapacific.edu/anelp/) or contact Sharon Lind at 907-786-4166 or [sglind@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:sglind@uaa.alaska.edu).

## Oliver found APU program 'incredibly beneficial'

Rhonda Oliver credits her educational success to Ahtna.

"The Ahtna Heritage Foundation scholarship played a huge role in getting me through school," she says. Rhonda earned a Bachelor in Business Administration degree with an emphasis in accounting.

Following graduation, Ahtna's Margie Ewan connected Rhonda with the national public accounting firm Deloitte, where she worked her way up from an intern to a professional auditor in 6.5 years. She earned her Certified Public Accountant (CPA) license and had the opportunity to travel the state extensively. "I was so lucky to be able to experience Alaska off the beaten path," says Rhonda.

After her time at Deloitte, Oliver became Director of Accounting at CIRI. She served in that role for 10 years before being offered the position of CIRI's Corporate Controller. In 2013, CIRI asked Rhonda if she would be interested in attending the Alaska Native Executive Leadership Program (ANELP).



Grant Hall at Alaska Pacific University

"I was thrilled at the opportunity to expand my education," The program includes an extensive nine-month curriculum that consisted of a variety of topics ranging from government contracting to mentorship programs. "ANELP was incredibly beneficial," Oliver says.

Rhonda has two children, aged 11 and 13. She plans on finishing her master's degree when they get a little older.

She's been back to ANELP to speak to current students about effective accounting departments and about how to maximize Alaska Native corporations' economic and social wellbeing.

"The program has made me realize that I love teaching," she says. "The knowledge I've gained through this program is invaluable and I've been able to pass that knowledge down to young, future Native leaders – which is what it's all about."

# LANDS SPOTLIGHT

## TRADITIONAL AHTNA TITLES ASSOCIATED WITH PLACENAMES

NEXT IN SERIES ON LAND AND LAND CLAIMS IN THE AHTNA REGION

BY BILL SIMEONE

Traditionally, authority over Ahtna lands and resources rested with chiefs who held inherited titles. Each title was attached to a particular winter village and based on the name of that village and the term *denen*, or *ghaxen*. For example, the chief of Tyone Lake was known as *Sattigi Ghaxen*, or “Person of Sattigi’.”

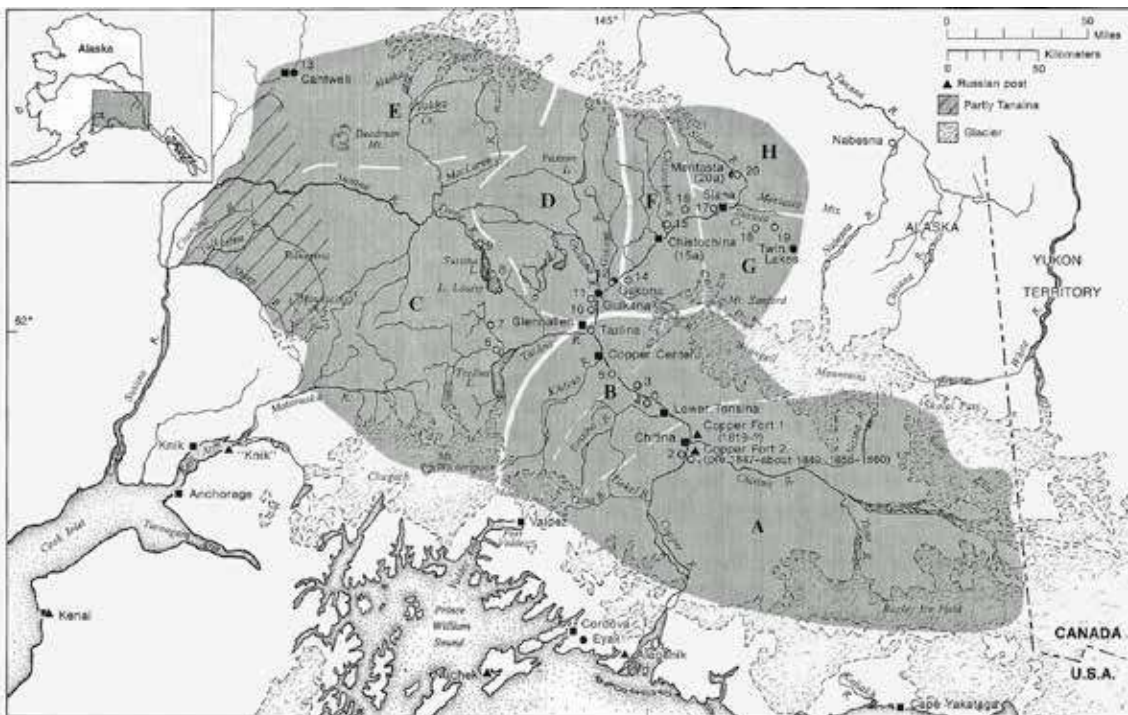
There were at least 17 inherited titles: eight in Lower Ahtna territory (Copper Center south to Chitina), six in Central Ahtna territory (Copper Center to Gakona-Chistochina), one in Western Ahtna territory (Tazlina Lake to Cantwell) and two in Upper Ahtna territory (Chistochina to Mentasta).

This arrangement suggests that the titles were associated with copper sources, salmon fishing sites, and major trails leading in and out of Ahtna territory. The point is that leaders with inherited titles were closely associated with the land and controlled the allocation of important resources within their various territories.

When the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, it acquired title to all land not owned by individuals. The treaty provided that tribes, such as the Ahtna, would be subject to laws and regulations that the U.S. might later adopt with respect to aboriginal land rights, but for the time being the question of whether the Ahtna had aboriginal title was left unanswered.

Under U.S. law, aboriginal title is based on “use and occupancy” and the government can either give Native people full title to land or extinguish aboriginal title with or without monetary compensation. U.S. government policy has been to grant title only to lands that tribes actually occupy (i.e. live on), and to extinguish the aboriginal title to the remainder of the lands by placing them in the public domain.

In 1884 Congress passed the Organic Act, one of several laws purported to protect Native land. It was based on the assumption that individual Native people were entitled



Four major subdivisions (in bold) of Ahtna based on language and geography. There are 8 different bands – labeled with capital letters.

### Lower Ahtna

- A) Chitina –Tatal Band
- B) Tonsina-Klutina Band

### Western Ahtna

- C) Tyone-Mendeltna Band
- E) Cantwell-Denali Band

### Middle Ahtna

- D) Gulkana-Gakona Band

### Upper Ahtna

- F) Sanford River-Chistochina Band
- G) Slana Batzulnetas Band
- H) Mentasta Band

Source: Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 6 Subarctic;  
Nineteenth century bands with 19th and 20th century villages (chief's quarters) and dates of occupation when known.



## STAFFING THE TOUGHEST CHECKPOINT IN THE TOUGHEST RACE

For the past several years, Glennallen Ahtna volunteers and employees have volunteered their time to help at the Sourdough checkpoint for the “toughest 300 miles in dog racing,” the Copper Basin 300. This year a special thanks goes out to Ahtna volunteers Starr Knighten, Dusty Knighten, Sarah Daszkiewicz, Heidi Lingenfelter, Albert Craig, Josette Johns, Joe Bovee, Bruce Cain and volunteers from the Glennallen Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. Thanks for your help at the checkpoint this year.



Heidi Lingenfelter (left) is joined by Tamara Lozana and Barbara Cellarius, National Park Service (NPS) volunteers at the Sourdough check point for the Copper Basin 300.



Musher Misha Wiljes gets a little help from Greg Parvin, Race Marshall (middle) with Albert Craig Jr. (left) and NPS team member Tim Gardner (right). NPS photo courtesy of Barbara Cellarius.



Left to right: Starr Knighten, Dusty Knighten, Taylor Vollman from the Bureau of Land Management team, and Sarah Daszkiewicz keeping warm by a barrel fire while helping at the Copper Basin 300 dog race.

to land they used or occupied but that Alaska Native tribes could not prove aboriginal claims to larger tracts of tribal property, such as tribes in the lower 48 states.

At the time of the Alaska purchase, traditional Ahtna territory encompassed the entire upper Copper and upper Susitna river basins. Lt. Henry Allen, the first non-Native to explore the Copper River, estimated Ahtna territory at 25,000 square miles. A recent map, published by the Smithsonian in 1981, showed the boundaries of the traditional land base extending from Cantwell in the west to the U.S./Canada boundary in the east, approximately 41,000 square miles.

Attachment to the homeland is expressed in Ahtna language and culture. There are over 2,000 Ahtna placenames. Important villages claim a prominent hill

or riverbank that represents the people's attachment to the land and the strength of their leaders. Certain men, referred to as *nen'k'e hwdenae'* – or “on the land person” – embodied this connection to the land.

Elder Annie Ewan described these men as “Big chief, like you call somebody live in a place for years. Like somebody born there and died in there in that place, is more important. A rich man.”

**You can reach Bill Simeone at [wesimeone2@gmail.com](mailto:wesimeone2@gmail.com) with comments and suggestions.**

# SHAREHOLDER-OWNER SPOTLIGHT



## ZACH DRAWS ON HISTORY FOR NEW MURAL

It took the whole summer, but Zachariah Martin's latest addition to EXIT Art at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) is finally complete.

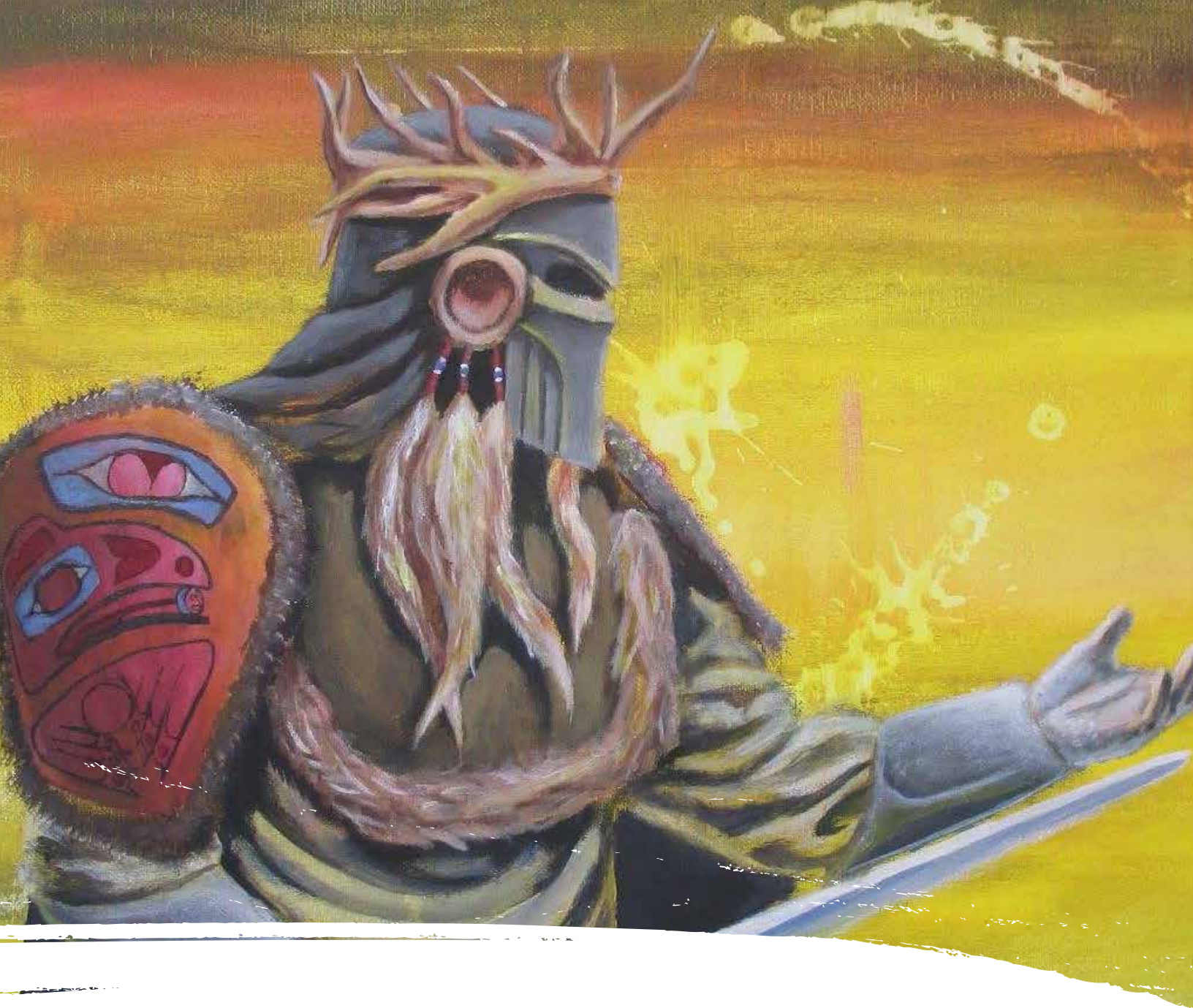
EXIT Art is a dedicated student art wall in the back staircase of UAA's Fine Arts Building. Zach's 8-foot, 5-inch by 8-foot, 2-inch panel is the first installed on a ceiling panel, angled at 45 degrees toward the staircase. At first, the art student found it hard to adjust to broad sweeping brush strokes but "the more I went on, the more detailed it got and the more ideas I got for it."

Zach originally hails from the Ahtna Region—Tanana Athabascan on father Karl Martin Jr.'s side and Ahtna Athabascan on mother Kathryn's side. During the school years, he would live with family in Anchorage, but return home in summers.

Zach used a chapter of Alaska Native history known as the "First Great Death" as the inspiration for his panel. That era arrived when the first Westerners ushered in diseases and assimilation and was followed by the Second Great Death, with the push for boarding schools and the influence of alcohol. "It was such a huge blow that it still affects things today," Zach said.

His piece depicts the aftermath of the First Great Death, a battlefield with blended indigenous warriors, a field of decaying totem poles and a bleeding raven skeleton. The circular frame represents the concept of time and renewal. One totem essentially serves as an artist signature, representing key aspects of Zach's life story (a moose for his Athabascan name, a raven and mask for his clan, a marten for his last name). The diverse army —





displaying elements from Africa to Asia to the Aleutians — represents the tug-of-war when races and cultures fuse. The mural's central figure dons a golden mask, a reactionary statement on the traditionally temporary nature of Alaska Native art.

Rather than focus on the past, Zach's art argues for a new Alaska Native awareness, one that abandons the double identity of two separate cultures. "We should mesh them together to create a new consciousness, a new identity and a new culture. And through that we would still be able to live on," he said.



# SHAREHOLDER-OWNER SERVICE UPDATE

## SUBMIT GRADUATE GIFT REQUESTS TO GET RECOGNIZED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Eligible shareholder-owners receive a congratulatory gift for graduation from high school or college. Check out the form below and submit the request before May 18 and get recognized at the annual meeting.

Go to: <http://ahtna-inc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Ahtna-Graduate-Form-Fillable-2016.pdf> and fill out the simple, one-page document.

To qualify, you must be a shareholder-owner, be receiving a high school diploma/certificate of attendance/certificate of completion/GED or an associate, bachelor, master or doctorate degree, and you must submit all documents within one year of graduation or receipt of degree, diploma or certificate. Required documents include graduate information form, W9 form and copy of diploma or degree. The gifts will be tendered upon

receipt of all necessary documents and at the discretion of management:

- High school certificate of attendance/completion \$150
- Diploma/GED \$200
- Associate degree \$250
- Bachelor degree \$350
- Master degree \$500
- Doctorate degree \$750

Contact Carlene Pete, Glennallen office manager, for questions. Send the form and required documents via fax at (907) 822-3495, by email at [cpete@ahtna.net](mailto:cpete@ahtna.net), or by U.S.P.S mail to:

Carlene Pete, Graduation Form  
PO Box 649, Glennallen, AK 99588

## ANNUAL MEETING SLATED FOR JUNE 4

The 2016 Annual Meeting of Shareholder-Owners will be held on Saturday, June 4, at Glennallen High School with registration beginning at 8 a.m. and call-to-order at 9 a.m.

Shareholder-owners will be mailed their annual report and proxy materials. As in previous years, shareholder-owners will be able to vote online, and instructions will be mailed in April.

Shareholder-owners who submit their proxies by the early bird proxy deadline of May 15 will be eligible for the early-bird prize drawing.

Candidate forums: Candidate forums are opportunities for shareholder-owners to get to know the board candidates. It is Ahtna's hope that shareholder-owners will use the information provided at these forums to help them make more-informed decisions regarding whom they want to elect.

This year, forums will be held in Gulkana, Anchorage and Fairbanks. Shareholder-owners are highly encouraged to attend, ask questions and voice their concerns. Please see calendar for dates, time and locations.

## Annual Meeting temporary hires: Want to be part of the team that makes the annual meeting happen?

Ahtna is accepting applications for:

- Greeter/Elder assistant
- Food servers
- Youth servers (must be 14-19 years of age). On-call youth servers will assist with the performance of any and all duties necessary to keep the facility in full operation and may perform other duties as assigned.
- Set-up/take-down crew members
- Custodian
- Runners
- Camera/video
- First-aid station
- Cooks/helpers

Please visit [www.ahtna-inc.com/employment](http://www.ahtna-inc.com/employment) to apply for any of the positions. Be sure to indicate your shareholder-owner status at the top of the application. If you are interested in several positions, indicate "Annual Meeting" where it asks what position you are applying for.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the Ahtna Human Resources Department at (907) 868-8250 or [ahtnajobs@ahtna.net](mailto:ahtnajobs@ahtna.net).

You can find more information about this year's and previous years' annual meetings at [www.ahtna-inc.com/shareholders/annual-meeting-of-shareholders](http://www.ahtna-inc.com/shareholders/annual-meeting-of-shareholders) or contact Shareholder Services Manager Eileen Ewan at (907) 822-3476.





## CARSON PRESIDENT OF NEWLY FORMED CULTURE CLUB



Shareholder-owner Kitlisa Clark Carson, a member of Chitina Village and daughter of Joyce and Gene Clark, serves as president and is a founding member of the Alaska Native Cultures Club of Mat-Su College, which was formed last February.

The club's mission is "To provide Alaska Native students a group-based avenue for camaraderie, facilitate leadership and a platform of common interests." The participating students appreciate the companionship the club brings and enjoy having a place that feels like home.

The club had a full day of activities on November 18 in celebration of Alaska Native Heritage Month. Traditional food was served and there were displays and demonstrations on cultural activities, like beading and yo-yo making. The Miracle Drummers and Dancers performed, and Pamyua capped off the evening with a

concert. A record number attended the event and the club is excited to build on its success with future events.

The University of Alaska Anchorage Diversity Action Council recently recognized Kitlisa for her work to cultivate a rich, inclusive and diverse community.

Kitlisa holds an associate's degree in accounting and is currently pursuing an Associate of Arts and taking advantage of the college's Veterinary Assistant Program. After graduation, she plans to use her knowledge and love for animals to work in a veterinary office.

People from the community are welcome to provide input to the Mat-Su Alaska Native Cultures Club, and anyone interested in learning more about Alaska Native cultures is welcome to join. For more information on the club, or if you would like to get involved, please email [MatSuANCC@gmail.com](mailto:MatSuANCC@gmail.com).



## SEATTLE OFFICE WELCOMES LOCAL SHAREHOLDER-OWNERS

With help from shareholder-owners Dana Sherman and Mercedes "Starr" Knighten, the Seattle office of Ahtna Environmental Inc. hosted a cordial open house in December to give Washington-area shareholder-owners the opportunity to see what the local Sea-Tac office has been doing for the company. Shareholder-owners came from as far away as Olympia. Pictured here from left to right: Jacqueline Cronin, Erica Cronin, Diane Cronin and Keith Crider (Back), Sandra Crider, Mercedes "Starr" Knighten, Dana Sherman and Michelle Ferris.

# MEET THE BOARD



## BOARD TREASURER EXCITED BY THE POTENTIAL FUTURE OF AHTNA

A tough childhood taught Jason Hart how to be resilient, resourceful and reliable. Jason was elected to the Ahtna

Board of Directors in 2013 and serves as treasurer. He was recently named a Top 40 Under 40 by the Alaska Journal of Commerce.

### Describe your family.

Ever since my mother passed away when I was 12, family has taken on a different meaning. I grew up without a father, but so many other kind people took a major role in my life that I consider them my family. In addition to my sister, Daisy Hart, I basically had two surrogate mothers growing up – Kathy Bendle and Marilyn Gallardo (“Aunt Tingie”). Their children, Amber Bendle and Jarrett Gallardo, are like my siblings, as well. My Aunt Brett Brown took on a major role at a defining time in my life, and I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention her. Now that I am a little older, my family also consists of Dawn, my significant other, Sophia and Antonio – who I’m helping to raise (and scold when necessary).

### What tribe are you with?

I am enrolled in the Native Village of Chitina. I am also a Descendant of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin – located about 45 minutes from Green Bay.

### What are some defining/influential moments in your life?

The most defining point of my life was the day my mother Donna Hart (Goodlataw) died – Oct. 16, 1997. I can recall one of my family members giving me a few dollars to get a drink from the hospital cafeteria. When I returned, my mom had passed already. Now that I am older, I assume they sent me away so I didn’t witness the exact moment my mom passed, but I’ve never confirmed my belief.

After the death of my mother, it was basically my sister and I fending for ourselves (largely her). She became emancipated, went to school and worked two jobs in an attempt to provide for us. At that point in our lives, no one else in our family could really take on the burden of two teenagers, financially or otherwise. The moment I realized that no one was going to look out for us was very eye-opening and incredibly defining. As a teenager, knowing you have no one to fall back on can be very influential – it’s what has instilled such a drive for success in me. I credit my graduate-level education, financial and career successes to these defining moments.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Event	Location & Time			
Mar 16	Oversight & Improvement Committee	Video - 9 a.m.	Apr 9	Cheesh’na SVO Tri-Annual	
Mar 17-18	Subsidiary Board Meetings		Apr 23	Candidate/ Informational Mtg	10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Gulkana Hall
Mar 18	AN Board Meeting	1:30 - 5 p.m.	May 10	Shareholder Committee	Video - 9 a.m.
Mar 25	AI Board Meeting	Anchorage, 9 a.m.	May 11	Land Committee	Video - 9 a.m.
Mar 25	Good Friday		May 14	Candidate/ Informational Mtg	10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Coast Intn’l Inn Anchorage, AK
Mar 26	Class L Deadline		May 14	Investment Committee	Video - 2:30 p.m.
Mar 27	Easter				
Apr 2	Gakona SVO Tri Annual				



### What excites you the most about the Board's work?

The future. I am incredibly excited about a future where Ahtna's involved in a wide-range of businesses in and outside of government contracting. I am excited and hopeful for a day when Ahtna is so successful that it must own major office buildings in large cities, such as New York and Chicago. I'm excited by the potential future of Ahtna.

### What do you want all shareholder-owners to know about the Board?

The Board is incredibly hard-working and dedicated. Since I've been on the Board, it has been eye-opening how long and late the Board will work to finish a packed agenda.

### What message would you like to share with the youth of today?

"Focused attention beats brains, brawn and technology every time." - Mark Sanborn

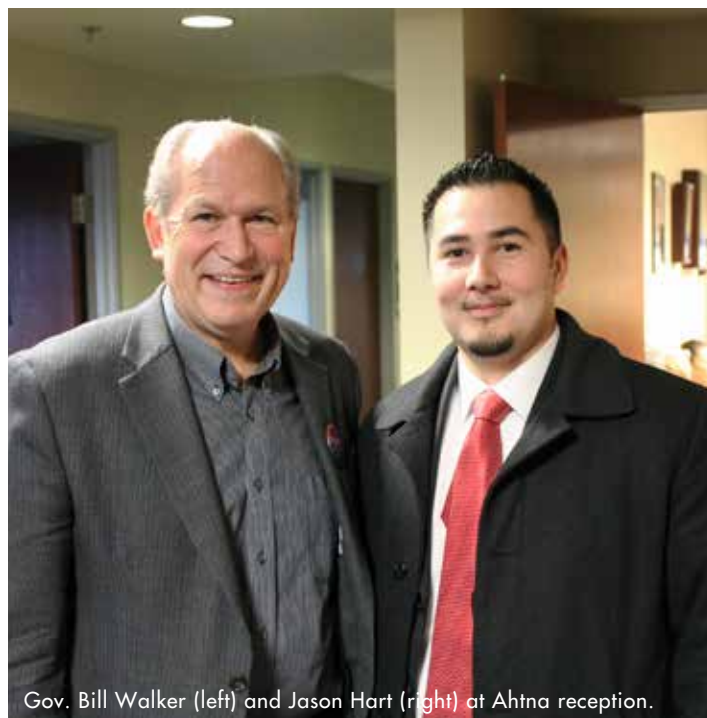
I like this quote because it reflects my way of thinking. You may not always be the smartest or the best at something, but if you're persistent and focused, you'll typically end up on top.

### Can you tell me more about your work history and community involvement?

I've worked at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium for the past eight years – first in Benefits, now in Administration. Prior to that, I was an exchange safety and security officer – in essence, I would catch people stealing at the BX on base.

In addition to my day-to-day job, I own a passive income real estate business. I currently have four rental properties – three in Anchorage and one in Phoenix.

I've attempted to become more involved in the community. In addition to the Ahtna and Chitina Native Corporation Boards I serve on, I also serve on the Food Bank of Alaska Board of Directors and the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. I also served on the Municipality of Anchorage Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals. Depending on how life goes, I may run for office someday.



Gov. Bill Walker (left) and Jason Hart (right) at Ahtna reception.

Date	Event	Location & Time
May 23	Candidate/ Informational Mtg	10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Westmark Hotel Fairbanks, AK
May 30	Memorial Day	
May 31	Katie John Day	
June 2	AI BOD	9 a.m. Glennallen, AK
June 3	Election & Rules Committee	9 a.m. Glennallen, AK
June 4	AI Annual Shareholder- owner meeting	9 a.m. Glennallen, AK
June 19	Father's Day	

June 20

Ahtna Day



PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ANCHORAGE, AK  
PERMIT NO. 358

**RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED**



### Ahtna, Inc. Board of Directors



Nicholas Jackson  
Chair



Eleanor Dementi  
Vice Chair



Jason Hart  
Treasurer



Linda Tyone  
Secretary



Roy J. Tansy Sr.



Roy S. Ewan



Lucille Lincoln



Dorothy Shinn



Karen Linnell



Franklin John



Angela Vermillion



Jessica Rock



Genevieve John

#### Corporate Headquarters

PO Box 649  
Glennallen, AK 99588  
Phone: (907) 822-3476 | Fax: (907) 822-3495  
Toll Free: 1-866-475-0420

#### Anchorage Office

110 W. 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 100  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
Phone: (907) 868-8250 | Fax: (907) 868-8285  
Toll Free: 1-888-562-5316

Don't forget to Like Ahtna, Inc. on Facebook [facebook.com/pages/Ahtna-Incorporated](https://facebook.com/pages/Ahtna-Incorporated)