



**ANCHORAGE
MUSEUM**

DENA'INAQ' HUCH'ULYESHI

The Dena'ina Way of Living

On view Sept. 15, 2013 – Jan. 12, 2014



PRESS KIT



EXHIBIT AT A GLANCE

TITLE	"Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living"
DATES	Sept. 15, 2013 through Jan. 12, 2014
BRIEF OVERVIEW	Invisible in their own homeland. About half of Alaska's residents live in traditional Dena'ina territory, but there is little awareness of the indigenous people who have called Southcentral Alaska home for more than 1,000 years. The Anchorage Museum will change that with the first major exhibition ever presented about the Dena'ina Athabascan people. Meet the Dena'ina through film, life-size re-creations, images, hands-on learning stations, audio and more than 160 artifacts on loan from museums across Europe and North America.
SOURCE	Curated by the Anchorage Museum
ADMISSION	Included in Anchorage Museum general admission: \$15 adult, \$12 Alaska resident adult \$10 student/senior/military, \$7 child Free ages 2 and younger Purchase at anchoragemuseum.org
ADDRESS	Anchorage Museum 625 C St Anchorage AK 99501 On the corner of Sixth Avenue and C Street
PUBLIC CONTACT	www.anchoragemuseum.org (907) 929-9200

###

MEDIA CONTACTS

Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchoragemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchoragemuseum.org



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 16, 2013

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchagemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchagemuseum.org

Download high-res jpegs at www.anchagemuseum.org/media.

'We are still here.'
Anchorage Museum debuts first exhibition about Alaska's "invisible people"

About half of Alaska's residents live in traditional Dena'ina territory but have little general knowledge about the indigenous people who have called Southcentral Alaska home for more than 1,000 years.

The Anchorage Museum has set out to change that with the first major exhibition ever presented about the Dena'ina Athabascan people. "Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living" debuts Sept. 15 and is on view through Jan. 12, 2014, at the Anchorage Museum.

"We are still here," said Aaron Leggett, Anchorage Museum special exhibits curator. "This is how we live. This is what we value."

Meet the Dena'ina through film, life-size re-creations, archival images and more than 160 artifacts on loan from museums across Europe and North America. Rare and evocative objects include a caribou antler war club, waterproof bear gut parka, and dall sheep horn bowl collected by Captain Cook's 1778 expedition.

The exhibition includes about a dozen hands-on activities for families such as a re-creation of a storytelling house with audio recordings of traditional tales.

(MORE)



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

DENA'INA, PAGE 2 OF 2

Since the late 19th century, the Dena'ina homeland has been subject to the greatest settlement, urbanization and population growth of any Alaska region. Government policies forced Alaska Native children to attend English-speaking boarding schools. Dena'ina have become largely invisible as a people and a culture, their history unknown.

"No one was allowed to speak the language — the Dena'ina language," said Dena'ina elder Clare Swan. "So, we became invisible in the community. Invisible to each other. And then, because we couldn't speak the language — what happens when you can't speak your own language is you have to think with someone else's words, and that's a dreadful kind of isolation."

The Anchorage Museum worked with Swan and other Dena'ina advisors for seven years to develop "Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi." In it, visitors gain an understanding of Dena'ina culture and history, and learn what it means to be Dena'ina in the 21st century. The exhibition explains how Dena'ina were affected by the spread of foreign diseases, the founding of Anchorage, the introduction of hunting and fishing regulations, and more. Visitors also learn why Alaska Native corporations exist and about current efforts to protect subsistence hunting and fishing rights.

At its core, this exhibition demonstrates that, although Dena'ina have experienced life-altering changes during the past 200 years, many core values and traditions survive.

This exhibition is included with Anchorage Museum general admission. Purchase tickets and learn more at anchoragemuseum.org/denaina.

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum is the largest museum in Alaska and one of the top 10 most visited attractions in the state. Learn more at anchoragemuseum.org.

###



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

DENA'INA FAQs

Why haven't I ever heard of the Dena'ina

Lands were seized during the rapid urbanization of Southcentral Alaska, harming the Dena'ina's traditional subsistence lifestyle. Epidemic diseases decimated the population in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and Dena'ina language and culture were suppressed in schools. Today Dena'ina make up less than 1 percent of Southcentral Alaska's population.

What is traditional Dena'ina territory?

Dena'ina people have lived in Dena'ina Elnena, the Dena'ina homeland, for more than 1,000 years. The homeland encompasses more than 41,000 square miles of Southcentral Alaska. According to oral tradition, the Dena'ina have lived in Cook Inlet since "the time when animals could talk." Traditional Dena'ina villages include Eklutna, Knik, Tyonek, Kenai, Nondalton, Pedro Bay and Lime Village. Many Dena'ina live in Anchorage.

Was Anchorage a Dena'ina village?

There was no permanent Dena'ina village in the area that became Anchorage in 1915. However, Dena'ina people had established fish camps and hunted and gathered plants in the area. The traditional Dena'ina village Eklutna does lie within the present boundaries of the Municipality of Anchorage.

When did Dena'ina people make first contact with European explorers?

The Dena'ina called the first explorers The Underwater People. In 1778 when Captain James Cook's crew arrived, Dena'ina were probably the most numerous of Athabascan peoples, with an aboriginal population of up to 5,000.

How many Dena'ina people live in Alaska today?

Less than 2,000 Dena'ina are registered with Alaska Native Regional Corporations.

Do people still speak the Dena'ina language?

Like many of Alaska's Native languages, Dena'ina is endangered. There are many reasons for this linguistic decline, including government policies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that forcibly removed Alaska Native children from their homes to attend English-speaking boarding schools. Today there are only a small number of active speakers, and children no longer grow up speaking Dena'ina. However, several projects are underway to help reverse the trend and bring spoken Dena'ina back into daily life.

Which Alaska Native Regional Corporation includes Dena'ina shareholders?

The Dena'ina are unique because they belong to three different Alaska Native Regional Corporations: CIRI, Bristol Bay Native Corporation and Calista Corporation.

###

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchagemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchagemuseum.org



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

"Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living" is highly interactive. Examples of hands-on stations within the exhibition include:

- **Moose language:** In front of a taxidermied moose, visitors can push buttons on an audio panel to hear the Dena'ina terms for different parts of the moose and related phrases, including "I see a moose!"
- **Storytelling:** Inside a re-created *nichil* (traditional log house) visitors can listen to *sukdu* (Dena'ina stories) through headsets. The stories include "The Stupid Boy," "The Wolverine Story," and "Sunshine Man." Visitors can listen to Dena'ina language recordings and English translations.
- **Counting cords:** Traditionally Dena'ina used counting cords as a type of calendar, tying knots or adding beads to count days or record special events. At an activity table, visitors can create their own counting cords noting special events in their own lives.
- **Before Anchorage:** A large, aerial photo of modern-day Anchorage will be surrounded by iPads. Visitors can select spots around town and see how that place fits into Dena'ina history, whether it be a major Dena'ina battle or a sacred site.

###

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchagemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchagemuseum.org



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'M AN INDIAN?

Essay excerpt from "This Is My Story: 'Tanaina' No More" by Aaron Leggett

I was born October 4, 1981, in Anchorage, Alaska, at the old Alaska Native Service Hospital on Third Avenue. My grandmother, Marie (Ondola) Rosenberg, was a full-blooded Dena'ina from Idlughet (Eklutna).

When my grandmother was born, in 1933, the Anchorage area had a population of about 3,000 people. When I was born, the population was about 180,000; today, it is close to 300,000.

The world my grandmother grew up in no longer exists. She grew up fishing with the family at Fire Island and hunting Dall sheep in the Eklutna Mountains. She spoke Dena'ina with her mom, Olga (Alex) Ondola, and her maternal grandfather, Beł K'ighil'ishen (Eklutna Alex). Today Eklutna Lake is a state park, and although the fish camp still exists at Fire Island, the regulations are such that it is no longer feasible for us to fish there. Today, I am the only person in the village who is learning the language, a task made all the more difficult because I never got the chance to speak it with my grandma.

I remember the day I learned that I was Dena'ina as if it were yesterday. It was November 22, 1984, a day or two after half my preschool class dressed up as Indians and the other half dressed up as Pilgrims. We knew we would then make cranberry sauce and put it in little Gerber baby jars. I remember being excited to give my grandma my Gerber jar for the Thanksgiving dinner.

I remember giving it to her and saying, "Grandma, we dressed up as Indians in school." She replied, in her husky voice, "Aaron, you are Indian."

That one sentence would completely redefine who I was. What do you mean, I'm an Indian? Indians were something I only saw in Disney's Goofy cartoons or that existed here long before "civilization." They lived in teepees and wore feather bonnets.

I gradually came to understand what she meant when she said that we were "Indians." She meant, of course, that we were Dena'ina.

As I grew older, I began to struggle with my Native identity. The most obvious reason was the negative stereotype held by some in the dominant culture that all Natives were drunks living on the street. Of course, this is rather mild when compared to the experience of people of my grandmother's and great-grandmother's generation, who would come into Anchorage and see signs hanging in the restaurants, signs like those in the Anchorage Grill that said "No Natives, dogs or Filipinos."

(MORE)



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

LEGGETT ESSAY, PAGE 2 OF 2

Another reason why I struggled with my identity as an Alaska Native is that I didn't grow up in a rural village. My village was, in fact, Anchorage, my ancestors' homeland. Therefore, I never really had the option of going back to a village to see what life was like.

In addition, there was virtually nowhere in Anchorage I could learn about the "Tanaina Athapaskans." Outside anthropologists, Europeans, referred to us as "Tanaina Athapaskans," and as a kid it was a bit unsettling because I always knew myself to be Dena'ina Athabascan.

It is hard for me to imagine what the future holds for us as Dena'ina people. Many of the things I could only have dreamed of a few years ago — such as interpretive signage, proper recognition, and a museum exhibition and catalog — are already happening.

Nevertheless, there is still much work to be done to reinvigorate naqenaga (our language). I dream that one day we will have our own museum so that we can continue to tell our story. I'm sure that one day a young Dena'ina person will read this and be amazed that there was a time when we were "invisible people."

###

Read Leggett's complete essay in the "Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living" exhibition catalog.

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) shenning@anchoragemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchoragemuseum.org



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Suzi Jones, Anchorage Museum, deputy director

An Alaska Native art specialist, Jones has served as the Anchorage Museum's deputy director since 1997. Prior to this, she worked for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Alaska State Council on the Arts. Jones has more than 30 years' experience curating museum exhibitions, managing international loans, producing exhibition catalogs, and developing Alaska Native art and culture programs. Jones also has conducted field research for the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress. She earned her doctorate from the University of Oregon.

James A. Fall, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, statewide program manager

Fall is an expert on Dena'ina social organization and leadership patterns. As an anthropologist he has worked with Dena'ina people for more than 30 years, and he has taught Dena'ina-related courses at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Fall is co-author of "Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina" and author of "The Upper Inlet Tanaina: Patterns of Leadership Among an Alaskan Athabaskan People, 1741-1918." He earned his doctorate in anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Aaron Leggett, Anchorage Museum, special exhibitions curator

Prior to joining the Anchorage Museum in 2011, Leggett was the Dena'ina cultural historian at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. He is the co-author of "Dena'ina Heritage and Representation in Anchorage, AK" and "Nat'uh: Our Special Place." He has served as treasurer for the Native village of Eklutna since 2007. He earned his bachelor's degree in anthropology from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

###

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchagemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchagemuseum.org

DENA'INAQ' HUCH'ULYESHI

ON VIEW
SEPT. 15 – JAN. 12, 2014

The Dena'ina Way of Living



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



DOWNLOAD THESE IMAGES AND MORE
AT WWW.ANCHORAGEMUSEUM.COM

Contact: Sarah Henning, public relations manager
907-929-9231, shenning@anchoragemuseum.org

DENA'INAQ' HUCH'ULYESHI

ON VIEW
SEPT. 15 – JAN. 12, 2014

The Dena'ina Way of Living



10



11



12



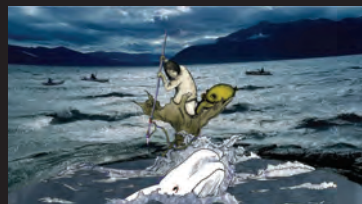
13



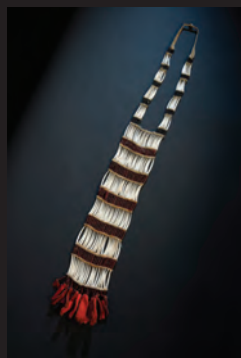
14



15



16



17



18



DOWNLOAD THESE IMAGES AND MORE
AT WWW.ANCHORAGEMUSEUM.COM

Contact: Sarah Henning, public relations manager
907-929-9231, shenning@anchoragemuseum.org

IMAGE CAPTIONS

1. Nancy Delkittie and Jessica Hay process salmon at a fish camp near Nondalton, Alaska, in 2008. Layering grass on the cutting table is a traditional method to prevent fish from sliding around. Image credit: Robin La Vine/Alaska Department of Fish and Game

2. Dena'ina historian Shem Pete dancing with puffin beak rattles at the Anchorage Museum in 1985. Image credit: Cook Inlet Region Inc.

3. Bear gut raincoat made by Helen Dick of Lime Village. Dick made this parka in 2009 from the intestines of four different bears. The darker strips of intestine are from bears taken during berry season. Image credit: Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum

4. War club, Kenai, Alaska, 1853, caribou antler and hide, stone. Dena'ina war parties were led by warriors who wielded caribou antler clubs. Image credit: Arnold Mikkelsen/National Museum of Denmark

5. Chief Nikaly and his family, Knik, Alaska, 1918. Image credit: H. G. Kaiser/University of Alaska Fairbanks Archives

6. Fire bags, Tyonek and Knik River, Alaska, 1883, caribou hide, sinew, dentalium shells, quills, beads, ocher, black velvet, cotton, Ethnological Museum of Berlin. Fire bags were used to carry fire drills and live embers wrapped in green willows. Image credit: Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum

7. Beaded woman's belt, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, 1883, coins, moose hide, dentalium shells, glass beads, sinew, Ethnological Museum of Berlin. This belt featuring Chinese coins reflects Dena'ina trading with other cultures during the 19th century. Image credit: Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum

8. Chief Stephan wearing dentalium bandolier and ground squirrel parka, Knik, Alaska, c. 1907. Image credit: Anchorage Museum (Editor's note: His name is misspelled on the photograph. Stephan with an 'a' is correct.)

9. Helen Dick cleans and splits spruce root lashings. In 2009, the Anchorage Museum commissioned Helen and Alan Dick to construct a Dena'ina whitefish trap using traditional Dena'ina methods. Image credit: Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum

10. Historically, salmon was the most important staple for Dena'ina. Fish camp continues to be an important tradition. "We are coming together as family and community and sharing the gratitude of putting up fish — fulfilling our spirits, minds, emotions, and bodies from the same source and practices as our ancestors did. It's hard to put into words the feeling — the connection — that ignites the spirit when it comes time for fish camp," said Karen Evanoff. Image credit: Aaron Leggett/Anchorage Museum

(MORE)

IMAGE CAPTIONS, PAGE 2 OF 2

11. Quiver, Alaska, 1850s, caribou hide, eagle feathers, porcupine quills, sinew, ochre.
Image credit: Marcus Lepola/Hameenlinna High School, Finland

12. Drinking tube with beaded strap, Iliamna, Alaska, 1931-32, bone, dentalium shells, glass beads, Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University. Drinking tubes were straws for drinking water used during traveling. Image credit: Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum

13. Chief Billy Ezi was the last chief of the Niteh band of Dena'ina. In 1951 he filed a claim with the U.S. Indian Claims Commission to try to gain land for his people. Image credit: Courtesy of Alberta Stephan

14. Counting cord, Kenai, Alaska, prior to 1907, gut, glass beads, feathers, hair, Alaska State Museum. Traditionally, Dena'ina used counting cords as a type of calendar, tying knots or beads to count days or record special events. Image credit: Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum

15. Woven porcupine quillwork on a man's summer tunic, prior to 1846, caribou hide, porcupine quills, fur, silverberry seeds, feathers, National Museum of Finland. Image credit: Istvan Bolgar/Finland's National Board of Antiquities

16. The exhibition includes a dramatic, full-scale re-creation of a Dena'ina man harpooning a beluga whale from a spearing tree. This hunting method is unique to the Dena'ina people. The hunter would cut down a tree with a large root structure. In Cook Inlet when the tide went out, the hunter would dig a hole and place the tree in the wet clay, root side up. When the tide came in, the hunter would paddle out to the tree, climb onto the roots and use them as a spearing platform, waiting for belugas to swim by. Graphic credit: Anchorage Museum (Editor's note: This is a mock-up for a life-size display that will be built in the exhibition.)

17. Chief Big Chilligan's dentalium necklace, Susitna Station, Alaska, c. 1902, dentalium shells, sinew, beads, wool cloth. Dentalium (mollusk shell) necklaces were part of a Dena'ina chief's ceremonial clothing. Image credit: Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum

18. Dena'ina Elnena, the Dena'ina homeland, encompasses more than 41,000 square miles of Southcentral Alaska. Graphic credit: Anchorage Museum

###

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchagemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchagemuseum.org



Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living
On view Sept. 15 – Jan. 12, 2014

CHIN'AN (THANK YOU)

Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi includes loan objects from the following organizations:

Alaska Native Heritage Center
Alaska State Museum
American Museum of Natural History
British Museum
Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture
Cook Inlet Tribal Council
Ethnological Museum Berlin
Haanmeenlinna High School
Kenai Visitors Center
Lake Clark National Park
Museum of Cultures, National Museum of Finland
National Museum of Denmark
Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian
Seward Community Museum and Library
Tebughna Foundation
University of Alaska, Museum of the North and The Herbarium
Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History
Private Collections

Support for Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi is provided by these generous sponsors:

GHULIY (Potlatch Gifts and Wealth)
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Rasmuson Foundation
Cook Inlet Tribal Council Inc.

K'ENQ'ENA (Dentalium Shells)
Atwood Foundation
ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc.
Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI)
The CIRI Foundation
William Randolph Hearst Foundation

DINGI GHELI (Real Money)
National Endowment for the Arts
Tyonek Native Corporation

NICHUDIN'UYI (Pile of Furs)
Cook Inlet Historical Society
BP
Eklutna Inc.

CHUCHUNA (Copper Nuggets)
Alaska Humanities Forum
Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.
Bristol Bay Native Corporation
Suzi Jones



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 11, 2012

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchagemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchagemuseum.org

Download high-res jpegs at www.anchagemuseum.org/media.

Anchorage photographer captures Mt. McKinley's toll on climbers
"After: Portraits from Denali" on view Feb. 3 through April

For his new exhibition, Anchorage artist Tim Remick photographed emotionally and physically ravaged mountain climbers mere moments after they stumbled into Mt. McKinley's base camp.

The large-format portraits are nearly 5 feet tall, heightening the drama of every hard-won blister and wrinkle, every haunted eye and guarded grimace. Remick's solo exhibition, "After: Portraits from Denali," will be on view Feb. 3 through April 15 at the Anchorage Museum.

"I really wanted to have a single frame at the end of the experience that caught the exhaustion, the adrenaline, the emotion," Remick said. "The goal was to summarize the whole climb with a single image."

A climber himself, Remick's own 2002 McKinley summit attempt was thwarted by stormy weather. But knowing the mountain firsthand, he believed the moment he wanted to capture would be lost by the time the climbers flew to Talkeetna. So he set up at base camp with a large format 4x5 camera for several weeks during the 2008 and 2010 climbing seasons, capturing climbers while they were still raw from the grueling experience.

(MORE)



REMICK, 2 of 2

The resulting 20 photographs in “After: Portraits from Denali” offer startling physical evidence of the journey’s toll. Through these images Remick reflects on the passage of time and mortality, while also celebrating the human capacity to endure.

“The photos are direct, detailed and instantly descriptive, providing a compelling narrative for a place and an activity that few experience,” said Chief Curator Julie Decker.

A former middle school science teacher, Remick earned a master’s degree in photography from Savannah (Ga.) College of Art and Design in 2009. He is an adjunct photography professor at the University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific University.

This exhibition is presented as part of the Patricia B. Wolf Solo Exhibition Series, one of many ways the Anchorage Museum supports Alaska artists and encourages the creation of new art. The museum’s solo artist exhibition program is highly competitive. Remick was one of eight artists chosen from more than 70 applicants to present solo exhibitions in 2012-15.

SPONSORS

The Anchorage Museum is grateful to the Alaska State Council on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Municipality of Anchorage; and the Anchorage Museum Foundation’s Alaska Airlines Silver Anniversary Fund.

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum is the largest museum in Alaska and one of the top 10 most visited attractions in the state. The museum’s mission is to share and connect Alaska with the world through art, history and science. Learn more at www.anchagemuseum.org.

###



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, Jan. 3, 2013

Contact: Sarah Henning (907) 929-9231 (w) (907) 250-3352 (c) shenning@anchagemuseum.org
Janet Asaro (907) 929-9229 (w) (907) 351-5053 (c) jasaro@anchagemuseum.org

Images are available for download at www.anchagemuseum.org

Goodbye sled dogs, hello airplanes:
New exhibition tells remarkable Alaska aviation story
"Arctic Flight: A Century of Alaska Aviation"
Feb. 9 through Aug. 11 at the Anchorage Museum

In 1913, a group of Fairbanks merchants shipped an airplane from Seattle to Fairbanks via steamboat. A pair of Lower 48 barnstormers flew the biplane 200 feet above Weeks Field, putting along at 45 miles per hour. The merchants sold tickets to the show: The flight was considered nothing more than a spectacle.

Those Alaskans had no concept of how the technology of air would completely alter life on the ground. Today Alaskans fly 30 times more per capita than other U.S. citizens, partially because about 80 percent of Alaska is not accessible by road. In the Alaska Bush, people still greet airplanes, anxiously awaiting mail, fresh food and a glimpse of the pilot. Air traffic is at the center of the state's economy and lifestyle, whether it's a commercial airline delivering cargo, the U.S. Air Force moving a family to Anchorage, or a flightseeing service offering tours of Mount McKinley.

On the 100th anniversary of that historic 1913 flight, the Anchorage Museum opens "Arctic Flight: A Century of Alaska Aviation." This exhibition, on view Feb. 9 through Aug. 11, tells compelling stories of survival, adventure and ingenuity. The exhibition is co-curated by the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum and features objects from the Smithsonian and several Alaska museums, including the Alaska Aviation Museum and Pioneer Air Museum.

(MORE)



ARCTIC FLIGHT, PAGE 2 OF 2

Historical artifacts, video and photographs reveal the state's remarkable aviation history, with special focus on the pioneer bush pilot era. From their open-air cockpits, Alaska's first pilots faced some of the planet's most inhospitable weather and challenging terrain without maps or accurate weather information. Their airplanes broke the isolation of communities previously accessible only by boat in summer or by dog team in winter. Bush pilots became conquerors in the air and heroes on the ground.

"Arctic Flight" artifacts include wreckage from the Will Rogers/Wiley Post crash of 1935, a military-issued electric flight jacket from World War II, and the exhibition's centerpiece, a Stearman C2B biplane brought to Alaska in 1928. This plane, on loan from the Alaska Aviation Museum, was flown by several legendary Alaska bush pilots including Joe Crosson, the first pilot to land on Mount McKinley, and Noel Wien, founder of the state's first airline. Film footage includes a 1927 clip from the first airplane to fly over the North Pole, as well as newsreels from the World War II campaign in the Aleutian Islands.

This exhibition also looks at the modern aviation industry and what it's like to be an Alaskan bush pilot today. Children can play pilot in a replica antique cockpit and conduct experiments that explain the physics of flight. "Arctic Flight" demonstrates how, in just 100 years, airplanes have evolved from frivolous spectacle to crucial part of the Alaska way of life.

Tickets are included with general admission: \$12 adult, \$9 student/senior/military, \$7 child, free age 2 and younger. Learn more and buy tickets at anchoragemuseum.org.

This exhibition is presented by Alaska Airlines and sponsored by Alaska Airlines Foundation, First National Bank Alaska, Lynden and Northern Air Cargo.

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum is the largest museum in Alaska and one of the top 10 most visited attractions in the state. Learn more at anchoragemuseum.org.

###