



CENTRAL COUNCIL  
*Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

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Central Council is closely examining every reasonable path towards economic development in order to earn tribal government enterprise revenues necessary to close the gap created by insufficient and decreased funding for Indian programs. The recent 20% decrease in current year federal funding for the Central Council's Welfare Assistance Program highlights this need.

In June the Central Council announced its acquisition through its federally chartered and tribally owned Tlingit Haida Tribal Business Corporation (THTBC) of KIRA, Inc. based in Boulder, CO. KIRA is a successful and highly regarded facilities services small business firm, and we expect KIRA will prove even more successful under tribal ownership through Section 8(a), small business and open competition contracting and procurement opportunities.

In May the Central Council, like other tribal governments in Alaska and elsewhere, adopted a tribal gaming ordinance consistent with federal law. While Central Council has long been interested in resuming its bingo operations, its overall focus is on developing a diverse retail, cultural and entertainment project. That project predated and is not affected by the Akiachak litigation over tribal trust land acquisition and would not involve class III Indian gaming. It is but one of many new opportunities Central Council is pursuing. Because any economic development presents a long list of legal requirements that must be met, Central Council is moving ahead deliberately, and in collaboration with other jurisdictions once a project is fully reviewed and approved.

A good example of this is our Tlingit and Haida Immersion Park project. Central Council is assessing the scope of a cultural center proposed for the leased premises at Thane. Central Council has obtained approvals from the existing lessors, including the CBJ, for agreements that would secure a site for the cultural immersion park, and is working now to execute definitive lease agreements. This process will continue for some years while the project scope and plans are considered and approved within Central Council and collaboratively with other jurisdictions.

Tribal economic development is essential if Central Council is to hope to meet the needs of its tribal citizens. We must start up our engines of economic activity just like other Indian and Native communities throughout the United States. Tribal economic development brings jobs to many families, directly and indirectly, in local communities. Both tribal citizens and their neighbors benefit. In both the construction and operational stages of a tribal economic project, the local economy benefits from the employment of workers and the purchase of services and supplies. Tribal economic development is even more critical for Alaska tribes who do not have the resources and assets of ANCSA corporations but have the responsibility to serve the interests and maintain the welfare of our tribal citizens.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Peterson  
President