



# *The Sealaska* **SHAREHOLDER**

**MARCH 2026**

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*Creating a Space to Honor & Remember Our Loved Ones on Mysealaska.com*

February 27, 2026 drone image shows major progress across the site, including the nearly finished bus barn, three staff housing units, new concrete school footings, the gym slab and holding ponds in the upper right.

## *Building From the Ground Up:* **A NEW CHAPTER FOR TONALEA DAY SCHOOL**

On a windy ridge above Pasture Canyon, Sealaska Constructors (SCL) is building a new school in Tonalea, Arizona, a Navajo community whose name comes from the phrase “where the water gathers.” The Tonalea Day School replacement project began nearly three years ago and now stands as one of our largest federal construction efforts. For a community that has not seen a new building in more than a decade, the work feels both overdue and transformative.



*Sealaska Shareholder and previous intern Jay Brendible, working on site as a Project Engineer for Sealaska Constructors.*

Project Engineer Jay Brendible, who began with Sealaska as a construction intern in 2018, says the experience has become one of the most significant of his career.

“We started with dirt,” he says. “Seeing it come together from the ground up has been incredible.”

The team is constructing an entire school campus that includes classrooms, a full gym, athletic fields, playgrounds, roads, sidewalks, six employee housing units and a new bus barn. Three housing units are now sided and painted, interior work continues in the bus barn and crews recently poured the gym slab.

The site carries a long history. The original school began as a one-room building and later served as Red Lake Boarding School before transitioning into the Tonalea Day School that operates today. Students still walk into that aging structure each morning while the new campus rises around them.

“The current design feels like puzzle pieces,” says Tierra Dodson, the on-site project administrator and the first person visitors meet when they arrive. “Spaces are cut off. Students are spread between old classrooms and modular trailers.” She says the new design will bring everyone under one roof and finally provide a modern and safe environment that supports learning.

Community members continue to visit with emotion and hope. Tierra shared that one elder in his mid-eighties toured the site with his grandson, who came to apply for a job. The elder explained that he once attended the original one-room school and later helped construct its first additions. Tierra says he looked at the new buildings with pride and told her he would want to work on this project too if he still could. “He was excited that his grandkids and great grandkids will have a new school,” she says.

Close collaboration keeps the project moving forward. Under the leadership of Federal Construction Superintendent Chad Jackson and Senior Project Manager Heath Barger—who is a Sealaska Shareholder—the project team operates with shared responsibility for daily progress. They rely on detailed planning, consistent tracking and a unified work ethic to stay on schedule through snow, sandstorms and winds that can sometimes reach sixty miles per hour.

“We work like a well-oiled machine,” Tierra says. “On the tough days, you remind yourself this is for the kids.”

The team plans to complete the Tonalea project in 2028, and progress continues at a steady pace.

As this work advances in Arizona, SCL’s sibling 8(a) company Sealaska Secure Construction Solutions (SSCS) is also moving forward with a new, separate project much closer to home. Work is now underway on a flood-mitigation effort in Juneau under a direct award from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who specifically sought out SSCS for the job. Senior Project Manager Heath Barger is leading the project, with shareholder Kevin Mann serving as Quality Control Manager. The effort supports the community as it prepares for annual glacier-melt runoff and will wrap up in July. We are seeking shareholders with relevant experience, so keep an eye out for job postings as we continue our commitment to building safe, lasting infrastructure across the region.

## *Malia Towne:* **ADDRESSING THE GREEN CRAB INVASION**

Sealaska Natural Resources Technician Malia Towne is helping lead the response to European green crab, one of the world’s most invasive species and a growing threat to Southeast Alaska’s shellfish and coastal habitats. This spring, she’ll launch trapping efforts and help expand access through a regional trap-loan program so communities can join in monitoring and response. “We’re really close to getting out there and trapping,” Towne said. Read more about her work and her journey from Sealaska Intern to Technician in our upcoming annual report.



Sealaska Shareholder  
and Natural Resources  
Technician Malia Towne

# Sealaska Heritage Institute

## PREPARING FOR CELEBRATION

***“Lu naat da na ts’agn – breathe in through your nose.”***

As Celebration 2026 approaches, dance group leader Seiga Liimii Asicksik and her dancers from the Lepquim Gumilgit Gagoadim Tsimshian Dancers (Our Own Dance in Our Hearts) are deep in preparation. For this year’s gathering, their group has the honor of leading Celebration, which means months of dance practice, song composition and travel logistics.

Preparation starts with songs. The dancers are refreshing old Sm’algyax songs they haven’t sung in years while creating their new entrance and exit song.

“I think Celebration is exactly what it means. We’re getting time together to celebrate one another, be ourselves. Our young people get to learn more each time we gather—a time to bring out the songs and really celebrate who we are.”

The honor is given to one dance group every two years. The lead dance group is responsible for leading the Grand Entrance and Grand Exit songs, during which every participating dance group dances across the stage to mark the beginning and end of Celebration. That requires the lead group to drum and sing for up to three hours straight during both processions.

Asicksik and her group were surprised to be chosen to lead Celebration. This immediately set preparations in motion, starting right as Celebration 2024 concluded. Being the leader of her dance group comes with added responsibilities, but Seiga Liimii Asicksik feels ready for the challenge. She remembers the moment Sissy Stands looked to her to step into a leadership role in 2005 just as her dance group started to take shape. When asked who should lead the group, Asicksik recalls Sissy Stands’ response:

“Well, we’re all looking at you. I think we all know who’s going to lead us.”

Being a dance group leader requires not only organization but care for each member, ensuring



*Photo from SHI featuring Theo Bayou (right) and Kininnook Baines (left)*

they are ready both physically and mentally for the performance. Based in Anchorage, far from their traditional community of Metlakatla in Southeast Alaska, singing and dancing their traditional songs is not only good for the body but also medicine for the soul. That’s why every practice ends with reflection and mindfulness, emphasizing the importance of breathing together to center the group before dispersing.

“I always close our practices with having everybody breathe. Breathe in through your nose (Lu naat da na ts’agn). Breathe out through your mouth (Ksi naat da na aagn).”

Having first attended Celebration in 1994, she performed with the dance group 4th Generation Dancers and loved seeing the pride it brought to the Elders watching. That early experience planted the seeds for her lifelong love of dance and the Sm’algyax language. Whereas as a language teacher, she is proud to pass on her knowledge to others trying to reconnect with their traditions.

“They want me to lead them. Like, can you believe this?” and then Wayne Hewson said, “You know what? You know too much to sit down and say nothing.”

By the time the drums sound start echoing through Centennial Hall in June, Asicksik’s months of practice and preparation will pay off as her group honors tradition, community and maybe inspires another generation of performers.

***“Ksi naat da na aagn – breathe out through your mouth.”***



*Protect Our Way of Life:*  
**YOUR VOICE MATTERS**

In Southeast Alaska, knowledge moves through generations lesson by lesson. Grandparents teach through story and practice, and those teachings take hold on shorelines, in forests and in the daily routines that keep families connected. Subsistence is not just how people gather food. It is the backbone of community life and the practice that ties identity to place.

That way of life now sits at the center of a federal proposal drawing intense regional attention.

The proposed change to rule DOI-2025-0170 may appear administrative, yet families across the region see real consequences. When subsistence access weakens, food security falters. Costs rise. Rural communities take on new strain. The impact reaches Native and non-Native households alike. Protecting subsistence protects cultural continuity, community stability and the generations who will inherit these lands and waters.

In recent weeks, residents across Southeast and supporters across the country have responded with force. Hundreds of comments have already flooded in, each one a voice added to the official record. Those comments now stand before federal decision makers who must review them before taking their next steps.

As the comment period comes to an end, shareholders should understand what the process looks like from here. Federal agencies will evaluate the full public record and determine how the proposal should proceed. We will continue to follow the review closely.

What remains unchanged is the vision carried through our Elders. We want our children and their children to learn as we did. To gather food from the land and sea, to listen to those who came before them and to grow up grounded in who they are. The strength of the public response shows how deeply this future is valued.

Gunalchéesh to everyone who raised their voice and helped carry this way of life forward.



*Scan to read more about the*  
**SUBSISTENCE RULE  
PROCESS & HOW TO  
GET INVOLVED**

# A Letter from **LEADERSHIP**



Dear Shareholders,

As I reach my six-month milestone as President of Sealaska I feel grateful for the chance to share an update. These first months have reminded me of a fishing captain preparing for the season opener. Before heading to the grounds, you check the vessel, understand the conditions, prepare your crew and listen to those who know the waters well. I approached this early chapter the same way. I spent time listening to shareholders, staff, directors and community leaders. I focused on building trust, strengthening shared understanding and clarifying our long-term direction. Sealaska's mission values and responsibility to shareholders guide every decision.

We strengthened our leadership team to support this work. We welcomed Madeline Soboleff Levy as Vice President of Policy and Corporate Affairs. She brings strong policy experience and a deep understanding of our region. We also welcomed Heather Gurko as Director of Communications. She is already expanding engagement and building a stronger communications team. These leaders support our goal to create an organization where shareholders want to work and grow. We will continue building alignment across departments so we can better serve shareholders.

Expanding shareholder engagement remains a top priority as we prepare for the coming election season. We secured meeting locations and are planning in person opportunities that support open conversation and meaningful connection. This includes time with management before the annual meeting. We strive



*Heather Joy Gurko  
Director of Shareholder  
Communications*



*Madeline Soboleff Levy  
Vice President of Policy  
and Corporate Affairs*

to communicate clearly and strengthen every shareholder's relationship to our homelands.

We remain committed to cultural strength and Indigenous language revitalization. We continue to support our investments with partners including programs like Codefy. We want these efforts to create lasting positive impact and support Indigenous identity for future generations.

Advocacy work shaped much of these first six months. A Sealaska delegation traveled to Washington DC to support Alaska Natives Without Land legislation and build congressional awareness. We submitted testimony in support and are monitoring progress closely. We provided public comment on proposed rural subsistence rule changes and supported community driven priorities such as the Ketchikan Indian Community effort to create a wellness center for Southeast. Protecting our way of life needs all of us. I encourage shareholders to register to vote, submit public comments, write letters and call lawmakers. Our collective voice matters.

Our shareholder development programs continue to grow. This year we received over 80 internship applications for our 35 internship and six international fellowship roles. In 2027, the Legislative Fellowship Program will create new pathways for shareholders and descendants to gain experience in governance and policy, while working directly with Alaska Native and Southeast legislators.

These first six months created a strong foundation built on listening and clear intention. I feel grateful for the partnership with our Board, our staff and for shareholders who share their insight and trust. As we move forward, our focus stays steady. We will build a future shaped by opportunity, cultural strength and care for our homelands.

Gunalcheesh Haw'aa T'oyaxsut nüün for your trust and partnership.

**Sarah Dybdahl**  
Sealaska President

## IMPORTANT DATES

### *Community Meetings*

#### MAY

**6** — Juneau

**7** — Hydaburg

**9** — Ketchikan

**12** — Klukwan

Haines

**14** — Yakutat

**16** — Seattle South

**17** — Seattle North

**20** — Anchorage

**22** — Hoonah

#### JUNE

**27** — Angoon | Annual Meeting

## ENSURING YOUR SEALASKA LEGACY

### *for the Next Generation*

Completing a Shareholder Stock Will is one of the most meaningful steps shareholders can take to ensure their Sealaska legacy continues in the hands of the people they trust most. A completed stock will lets you choose who will carry your shares forward, keeping them connected to family, culture and community for years to come.

To support shareholders in completing this important document, Sealaska is holding multiple drawings throughout the year with cash prizes, including chances to win \$1,000. The spring drawing ends on March 30, and winners will be announced on March 31. To enter, all you need is a completed stock will on file with Sealaska. If you've already submitted one, you're automatically entered, regardless of when it was completed. If you miss the spring drawing, keep an eye on our social channels for announcements about the next one later this year.

One shareholder who recently finalized her stock will is DelLila James. Originally from Ketchikan and living in Juneau since 1982, DelLila is the granddaughter of Jones and Elizabeth Yeltatzie of Hydaburg and Metlakatla, who lived in Ketchikan. She is the daughter of Lila Yeltatzie from Ketchikan and Dan McCullough of Wrangell. She chose to update her stock will using Sealaska's new online notary service, making the process simple and accessible.

DelLila knows she wants her shares to go to designated members of her family. To begin, she called the Shareholder Relations Department at (907) 586-1512 and left a message. Sealaska employee Shannon Bible returned her call shortly after. "Shannon made it very simple," DelLila said. "I felt comfortable doing it. All of my questions got answered, and she gave me a lot of information I wasn't sure about."

DelLila's motivation came in part from a difficult experience after her auntie-mama passed away. Although her auntie had written down her wishes, the document wasn't notarized, which meant it wasn't legally valid. When no stock will is on file, Sealaska must distribute shares according to Alaska's laws of intestacy, which may not reflect a shareholder's wishes.

After completing her stock will, DelLila described feeling a deep sense of relief. "You know when you're fishing? A whole lot of lead line just left me," she said. "All that pressure was gone. Now I just have to teach my grandchildren about this, Sealaska." At ages six and eight, they are already learning to bead under her guidance.

Complete your stock will by March 30 to be included in the spring drawing, and watch for future drawings later this year.

*Complete your Stock Will for*  
**A CHANCE TO WIN \$1,000**

## *Creating a Space to Honor and Remember Our Loved Ones*



Sealaska created a new Obituary page on the MySealaska portal that gives families a direct way to honor our shareholders who have passed on. The page invites people to submit stories, photographs and details that capture a loved one's life in their own words.

Shareholders and families can upload a photo and the information they want to share by using the Obituary tab on [mysealaska.com](http://mysealaska.com). Sealaska reviews each submission, publishes it on the site and sends a confirmation email once it appears online.

If you have questions or need help with the process, our Shareholder Relations team is gladly here to support you at [records@sealaska.com](mailto:records@sealaska.com).

By opening this space, Sealaska recognizes the importance of preserving the lives and legacies of our people. Each tribute adds to a growing record of the individuals who shaped the communities Sealaska serves and continues to serve today.

*Stay Connected!* [Sealaska.com](http://Sealaska.com) [MySealaska.com](http://MySealaska.com)  [@sealaska](https://www.facebook.com/sealaska)  [@sealaska](https://www.instagram.com/sealaska)  [@sealaska](https://www.tiktok.com/sealaska)  [@sealaska-corporation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sealaska-corporation)



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