Museum, City to Break Ground on New Public Park

On June 1, the Alutiiq Museum and the City of Kodiak will launch construction of Ancestors’ Memorial Park, a new public park in downtown Kodiak. A groundbreaking ceremony will celebrate development of this outdoor space honoring Kodiak’s Alutiiq people and promoting awareness of local history. The event begins at 4:00 pm at the park site, located on the corner of Upper Mill Bay Road and Kashevaroff Street, adjacent to the museum.

Groundbreaking festivities will include a park blessing, a performance by the Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers, the Alaska Flag Song sung by the Alutiiq Language Club, brief remarks, and ceremonial shoveling. Afterwards, the public is invited to the Alutiiq Museum gallery for a community reception. All people of all heritages are welcomed to attend. This is a free event that coincides with Kodiak’s monthly First Friday celebration.

The Museum and the City of Kodiak have been planning Ancestors’ Memorial Park for more than a year. An agreement between the organizations establishes the .34-acre plot of city land as the memorial site to be developed by the Alutiiq Museum. The park lies along the route of the Kodiak Walking Tour and a team of community advisors helped to design its features. Construction of the park is being funded by grants, sponsorships, in-kind donations, and brick sales. To date the Alutiiq Museum has raised $170,000 to support park development.

Park facilities will include a circular planter filled with forget-me-nots and surrounded by benches. Interpretive signs will discuss Alutiiq history and the park project, which was inspired by efforts to locate, claim, and rebury the remains of hundreds of Alutiiq ancestors taken from Kodiak by researchers and collectors.

The park will also include a pathway filled with engraved bricks. Community members are adding personal messages to the bricks, to honor loved ones and show support for the project. Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Laktonen Counceller explains.
“The park is for everyone,” she said. “We are surrounding the memorial with blessings and remembrances to remind all of us to consider those who came before and of the history that connects us.”

People may add a message to the park walkway through June 1. Bricks are available for purchase on the project website (http://ancestorsmemorial.org/), at the Museum, and will be sold at the groundbreaking event.

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.

Image 1: Aerial view of the park location.

Image 2: View of the park site looking toward the Alutiiq Museum.

Image 3: Drawing of planned park features.

Image 4: Examples of engraved bricks.

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Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial – Ground Breaking Ceremony

Friday, June 1, 2018
Ancestors’ Memorial Park
210 Upper Mill Bay Road, Kodiak, Alaska

4:00 PM—Arrival & Visiting
Visit with other supporters, pick up a pin or sticker to commemorate this event. Limited seating will be available for Elders and others who request a chair. Please ask a Museum staff member for assistance.

4:15 PM—Call to Gather
Archpriest Innocent Dresdow will bless the memorial site. The Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers will perform a traditional dance. The Alutiiq Language Club will sing the Alaska Flag Song.

4:25 PM—Project Introduction & Acknowledgments
April Laktonen Counceller, Alutiiq Museum Executive Director, will introduce the park project and its supporters.

4:30 PM—Remarks
Community partners will share remarks about the project. Speakers will include
The Honorable Pat Branson, Mayor of Kodiak
Frank Peterson, Jr., Tribal Council President, Sun’aq Tribe of Kodiak
Rita Stevens, Board Member, Alutiiq Heritage Foundation

4:50 PM—Groundbreaking
The first shovel-fulls of dirt will be filled by project collaborators and sponsors, followed by a photo opportunity.

5:00 PM—First Friday Reception
The community is invited to the Alutiiq Museum to enjoy refreshments, exhibits, and conversation with park planners. Visitors will have a final opportunity to add their name to the park by sponsoring a brick for the walkway.

The Alutiiq Museum—Celebrating heritage through living culture.
Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial Donors

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In Loving memory of our ancestors

The Hegna Family