

PRESS RELEASE

June 30, 2026

Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository
215 Mission Rd, Kodiak, AK 99615
(844)425-8844, alutiiqmuseum.org



CONTACT:

Alex Painter, Exhibits Manager
alex@alutiiqmuseum.org

Historic Three-Hatch Qayaq on Display in Kodiak Marketplace

KODIAK— In June, the Alutiiq Museum completed a new project to share information about Kodiak’s maritime heritage in a public exhibit on display at the Kodiak Marketplace downtown. The centerpiece of the exhibit is a historic wooden frame of a Alutiiq *paitaalek*—triple-hatched kayak. The kayak is displayed in an opening between the first and second floor of the building, allowing the vessel frame to be seen from both the top and the bottom.

In 2009, the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Alaska gave the Alutiiq Museum a large collection of artifacts. Among them was this wooden frame of a rare 19th-century, Alutiiq *paitaalek*—triple-hatched kayak. In the colonial era, Alutiiq paddlers used these large skin boats to transport a trader or clergy member seated in the center. The museum’s *paitaalek* frame was discovered near Dillingham, in the remains of the old Nushagak church. Nushagak was a 19th-century Bristol Bay village that was a cultural crossroad where Yup’ik, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, and Athabascan people lived and worked. Villagers used the boat to ferry priests to neighboring communities.

The distinct shape of the qayaq’s bow identifies it as an Alutiiq style kayak with a split and upturned design to help cut through the waves. Notably, this new exhibit is near Kodiak Harbor, and the display reinforces the antiquity of maritime harvesting in our region and celebrates the ingenuity of local mariners.

Exhibits Manager Alex Painter shares, “this piece represents one of seven boats in our care and is the largest example (26 feet) and the only three-person kayak. It is so long the museum does not have an appropriate place to display the boat in our own building. Now that the kayak is on display, it can be enjoyed by the public and used to support community education and goals for historic preservation.” This project was made possible with support from Kodiak Island Borough, Kodiak Area Native Association, and the State of Alaska: Office of History and Archaeology.

To learn more about exhibits at the museum, please contact Alex Painter (844-425-8844; alex@alutiiqmuseum.org).

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