

Da Kų

Cultural Centre



The Da Kų Cultural Centre in the final stages of completion - January 2012.

CAFN Communications

Vision: Our Cultural Centre is a gathering place that recognizes and celebrates the cultural contributions and way of life of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations peoples - the places we come from, the traditions and languages we carry, and the arts we practice and perform. It is an environment creating lasting memories, where young people will learn the wisdom of our Elders, know our stories and *kwandur* (legends), and assume responsibility to carry our values.



Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) Da Kų Cultural Centre in Haines Junction, Yukon is nearly complete.

Construction has moved rapidly since ground-work began in the fall of 2010, and CAFN's \$16-million facility will be finished by the end of January 2012, on-time and on-budget.

CAFN Language and Heritage programs staff move into their offices in Da Kų in February 2012. Tenants, Parks Canada and Yukon Government, move into their visitor information spaces in the months to follow, and the 27,000 square-foot facility opens to visitors during the summer of 2012.

Special events for CAFN Citizens and the community are planned for the coming months. Please watch for more details.

Da Kų means "Our House" in Southern Tutchone.

Da Kų Cultural Centre

The Da Kų Cultural Centre is first and foremost a resource for CAFN people. It belongs to CAFN people and is a place for our First Nations to continue to learn, preserve and share our story.

CAFN Spaces

- A cultural and heritage resource centre;
- A large assembly hall with kitchen;
- Classroom and meeting spaces;
- A Southern Tutchone language lab and resource centre;
- A workshop space for CAFN cultural programming;
- A community cultural centre with displays and exhibits, and space for learning and training opportunities; and
- A display venue and repository for artefacts, archeological materials, archives and contemporary art.

Visitor Spaces:

Da Kų will also provide space for public visitor information services. Agreements are in place with Parks Canada and the Yukon Government to lease space for their visitor information services.

The space is shared as follows:

- **CAFN - 65%** (17,621 square feet)
- **Parks Canada - 22%** (6,120 square feet)
- **Yukon - 13%** (3,500 square feet)

CAFN is the landlord and owns the building. Da Kų is built on CAFN Settlement Land.

On the Cover:

A Southern Tutchone *bibia the* (baby belt) with a traditional beaded floral pattern. The baby belt was sewn by Vivian Smith, who replicated the pattern and belt from a 1960s Catharine McClellan photo of her mother, the late Elsie Smith, who was the original artist.



S. Greer, CAFN Heritage

The new Da Kų assembly hall features wide-open spaces, a fully-equipped kitchen, and a beautiful view of the mountains to the south.

Funding

Kwānaschis to the governments of Canada and the Yukon for their contributions toward funding the construction of the building.

The governments of CAFN, Yukon and Canada are funding the project, with each contributing to the \$16 million in project costs. Funding arrangements are through the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) and through tenant lease agreements with Parks Canada and Yukon. MRIF is a federal program that supports new infrastructure in First Nations and smaller Canadian communities.



R Girouard, CAFN

The skylights above the central gathering area and Traditional Territory floor map are one of the first features guests will see when entering the cultural centre.

Exhibits & Programs

Exhibit Design Development

By Frances Oles

Our community is our primary audience. In 2009, Heritage staff consulted with the CAFN people through workshops and individual questionnaires that asked people to contribute their ideas for cultural centre exhibits. These helped establish the community's priorities for exhibit content and programs. Themes were broken down from those priorities and are:

- *Dän* - Our People
- *Dän Kéyi* - Our Land/Our Places
- *Dän Ke* - Our Ways
- Travel and Trade
- Change
- Our Languages

These broad themes are a way of grouping stories, information, and ideas (the who, what, when, where and why). Together with the Heritage Resources, which includes the Heritage Collection, photographs, oral recordings and research documentation, the content for exhibits was established.

Hilderman, Thomas, Frank, Cram (HTFC), professional museum and cultural exhibit designers, were hired in late 2009 to design the exhibits based on the content, cultural centre vision, and building design.

Then the real work began. An Exhibit Design Advisory Committee was appointed (see page 4). These CAFN members have a range of expertise and, as a community resource, they help keep the design team on track, identify priorities, best means of portraying stories and ideas, and help determine if anything has been missed along the way. They also provide valuable feedback on exhibit design as it evolves.

Hallmark features of the Da Kų Cultural Centre will be the two high caches at the entry (to be constructed this summer), two Tinha coppers on the front entry doors, a "grove" of fire-killed trees and trailmarker exhibit in the inside entry, a large floor map of the CAFN Traditional Territory in the Central Gathering Space, and a large collection of photographs of our people and Elders in the Assembly Hall.

Exhibits include numerous photographs, artwork and quotes from Elders past, present and future. There will also be three major artworks installed in different areas of the centre to help tell our story. They personalize the exhibits by transmitting information in the words and images of our people. A request for proposals from artists has been placed in the newspapers and this newsletter, for the three major art commissions (see page 8).



L. Gorecki, Parks Canada

Kyra Chambers and Paul Birckel demonstrate part of the moose hide tanning process.

One of the challenges faced by the Design Team is to work with a great deal of information and stories and break it into simpler ways of telling them. There are more stories and ideas than can be fit into the space. It is envisioned that the Changing Exhibit Gallery will fill in the gaps by having feature exhibitions about various topics. The photographic display in the Assembly Hall will also be changed from time to time to include as many people as possible. The first exhibit in the Changing Gallery will feature **the beadwork of CAFN people.**

The Orientation Gallery exhibits are in the final stages of development. A floor map has been developed to include our Traditional Territory and surrounding lands, major rivers, lakes and creeks, CAFN villages and communities, traditional trail networks and features such as mountain ranges. Throughout the exhibits Southern Tutchone language will be used for places and stories. This will be balanced to the effect that visitors can still understand the exhibits, but will indicate the importance of our languages and dialects.

This is our cultural centre and it is our hope to include many voices in the exhibits: young, old, past and present. We want our community to come often, participate in programming and to feel the centre belongs to them. We want to feature our artists, whether they are visual artists, carvers, craftspeople, storytellers or performance artists. We look forward to sharing the contributions of CAFN people through the exhibits, in programming and in the changing exhibits over time.

Programming

Several ideas for programming in the new cultural centre are taking shape. One project is building a traditional high cache and smokehouse outside Da Kų during the summer of 2012. This winter, staff are gathering special logs from forests in our Traditional Territory to build these projects.

Your ideas for future cultural programs and workshops to hold at Da Kų are invited!



S. Greer, CAFN Heritage

Did you know?

- Da Kų is the first climate controlled artefact storage facility outside of Whitehorse.
- Da Kų is designed to receive sensitive visiting exhibits that require isolation or quarantine, and is equipped to care for traveling exhibits.
- Da Kų is built to a high energy efficiency standard.
- Da Kų's exhibit area windows have special glazing to cut UV transmission and light spectrums that harm exhibits. You will notice the reflection from the windows on the ground outside has a green shade to it.
- Kilrich Industries and Northerm Windows were utilized during construction (Dakwakada Development Corp owns shares in both) .
- At 27,000 square feet, Da Kų is one of the largest buildings in the Yukon outside Whitehorse.

The Da Kų Exhibit Design Advisory Committee (EDAC) met and toured the new building in January 2012 to continue work to finalize exhibit design for Da Kų. The EDAC is (left to right): Fred Stick Jr., Ron Chambers, Monic Primozic, and Melina Hougen (not pictured Sharon Shadow).

The Da Kų Teams:



It takes MANY people to build a cultural centre. The following are some of the teams currently hard at work behind the scenes to open the doors of Da Kų. *Kwānischis* to the many hard-working individuals committed to this project, who include representatives of CAFN, Parks Canada, Yukon Government, private contractors and businesses, and members of our community.

- Tri-Partite Team
- CAFN Cultural Centre Team
- Heritage Design Committee
- Exhibit Design Advisory Committee
- Exhibit Design Team
- Building Design Team
- Parks Canada Project Team
- Opening Day Team
- Marketing Team
- Construction Team

Cultural Centre Timeline



1991
Elijah Smith
"We should have a museum of our own."



2010
Site Blessing Ceremony & construction begins



January 2012
Da Kų construction complete

Opening Events:

Blessing of the Building - Spring 2012

The first special event at Da Kų is for CAFN members only. It will include a blessing led by Elders and/or clan leaders, a full tour of the building, and our first community meal at Da Kų. The date will be set for this spring (March/April 2012).

Community Welcoming - June 21, 2012

On Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2012, we will welcome CAFN and Haines Junction community members into the building for tours and other special events celebrating Aboriginal Day.

Grand Opening - Date to be announced

The biggest opening event will be a grand opening to include all Yukoners, funders, political leaders, and other special guests. Though this date was originally set for June 21, 2012, it has been postponed.

Special performances, presentations and more will be planned for the grand opening with guidance from community members. With the later grand opening date, we look forward to including more CAFN people as ambassadors and mini-interpreters during the event. Workshops to sew regalia, practice singing, dancing and more are planned in the months to come. Please let us know if you would like to be a part of the grand opening celebration.

R. Smith, CAFN Heritage



The Ákhjìyis doll pictured above will be one of the items proudly displayed at Da Kų. It was handcrafted by Elder Marge Jackson using authentic traditional materials. The coat and pants are made from sheep skin with the hair inside for warmth, the hood is trimmed with muskrat fur, and the mitts are made from home-tanned moose hide with gopher skin lining and trimmed with muskrat fur. The backpack has both shoulder and head straps for carrying heavy loads over long distances. Ákhjìyis' bedding is made with a sheep skin mattress and gopher skin blanket, and his bow and arrows were made by Paddy Jim. The story of Ákhjìyis also comes with the doll as part of the set. CAFN is proud to add this special doll to our Heritage collection.

Invitation to Corporate Sponsors:

CAFN invites corporations and businesses to sponsor permanent amenities to be housed in the Da Kų Cultural Centre. Organizations sponsoring furniture, fixtures, etc. will be permanently recognized in the building for their contribution. This is an excellent opportunity to promote your organization in a high-profile venue. Please contact Da Kų Manager Diane Strand for more details at (867) 634-4248 or dstrand@cafn.ca.



March/April 2012
CAFN Blessing of the
Building ceremony

June 21, 2012
Aboriginal Day
Community Welcoming

Grand Opening
To be announced

Yukon Tourism & Culture Visitor Information Centre



Government of Yukon

Doug Smarch Jr's maquette illustrates how the full-sized piece of art, Ice and Flowers, will fit into the new Haines Junction Visitor Information Centre space. Smarch is a Teslin Tlingit Council artist whose work is also featured in the National Gallery of Canada.

Authenticity Begins with a Strong Partnership

Nothing compares to an authentic experience. Remember those wonderful vacations when something grabbed you? You took that memory home and shared the beauty of the moment with all of your friends, neighbours and relatives. This year, when the new Da Kų Cultural Centre in Haines Junction is complete, visitors and Yukoners will have more opportunities to explore and experience something beautiful and truly authentic!

Yukon Government is proud to be a part of that experience, offering visitor services through its Visitor Information Centre (VIC). The VIC's theme is a celebration of Yukon visual arts and crafts. The Department of Tourism and Culture is developing a space to showcase the artistic diversity found throughout the territory. Visitors will be able to access information about the region and the rest of Yukon in an environment enriched by original arts and crafts.

The centrepiece of Yukon Government's VIC space is Doug Smarch Jr's *Ice and Flowers*. *Ice and Flowers* reflects the beauty and history of the area, and its relationship with the people of the region. Haines Junction artist Libby Dulac has been commissioned to create a large landscape painting featuring a Kluane winter scene to give summer visitors a sense of the unique beauty of the winter light in Yukon. Local writer Patricia Halladay is developing interpretive panels for the artwork and displays.

The Da Kų facility will serve as a venue for sharing traditional knowledge and bringing people together. We applaud the work accomplished jointly by Yukon and Canada through the Canada-Yukon Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. We look forward to this year when visitors, residents and CAFN citizens proudly come together for the centre's grand opening.

*Frank Wilps
Manager, Visitor Services
Department of Tourism and Culture
Yukon Government*



Government of Yukon

The Yukon Government and Parks Canada wings of Da Kų during the early stages of construction last winter.



Parks Canada



Parks Canada

A close-up look and overview of the brand new topographic model of Kluane National Park and Reserve to be displayed in the Park's new visitor centre in Da Ku.

satellite images of the area onto the model's surface. The result is a very accurate and realistic representation of Kluane National Park and Reserve. Soon you will be able to see for yourselves when the new topographical model will be on display at the new visitor centre in the summer of 2012!

For more information, please contact:

Laura Gorecki

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Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Kluane National Park & Reserve's New Visitor Centre



A Brand-New Topographic Relief Model of Kluane National Park And Reserve

By: **Emma Hansen**

Kluane National Park & Reserve

With the opening of the new Kluane National Park and Reserve Visitor Centre at Da Ku comes a new topographical model! Its production was quite the process. First, a series of satellite images were taken from 700km above the earth's surface (that is 70 times higher than most commercial airliners will fly!). The company World Sat International Inc. put the series of satellite images together and "fine tuned" some of the colours, enhancing or correcting them as needed. Then, World Sat prepared a "Digital Elevation Model", a three-dimensional representation of a terrain's surface – in this case, Kluane National Park. All of this was done on the computer.

The next step was to send all this digital information to Solid Terrain Modeling Inc. in Filmore, California. Solid Terrain's computer-controlled milling machines transferred the data onto high density polyurethane foam (the material the model is made out of) and cut the model out. Finally, custom ink jet printing machines printed the

PREMIERE

of Kluane National Park and Reserve's
New High Definition Video



Tuesday, January 24, 7:00pm
St. Elias Convention Centre

Join us for a 25 minute presentation,
plus some additional video shorts
for the new Visitor Centre exhibits.

Refreshments will be served.

Free admission!

LOGO CONTEST

Da Kų Cultural Centre Help Us Create Our Logo!

Da Kų Cultural Centre, opening this summer, needs a graphic logo. We invite CAFN's visual artists to submit concepts for a logo design to be used to represent our people, our traditional ways, and what Da Kų Cultural Centre means to CAFN people.

Deadline for submission: February 10, 2012.

For a copy of the full contest guidelines, or to submit your design, please contact: Paula Banks at (867) 456-6876 or pbanks@cafn.ca or Diane Strand at (867) 634-4248 or dstrand@cafn.ca.

* If you are not a graphic artist, but have a good idea for a logo, your ideas are welcomed.

Art Commissions

Call for Art Commission Proposals

Two large themed acrylic paintings and one 3-dimensional piece (carving) for the new Da Kų Cultural Centre in Haines Junction.

The commissioned artwork will be for permanent display and must be completed and ready for installation by May 12, 2012. Proposals will be accepted from eligible artists of Southern Tutchone ancestry and Champagne and Aishihik Citizens. Eligible artists shall be those artists who can demonstrate their ability through Artist Biographies, photographs of earlier completed work, or relevant letters of reference. Eligible Artists shall receive a fee to enable them purchase supplies and assist with their submission of detailed colour sketches or drafts based on criteria outlined in the Proposal Documents.

Deadline for proposals: postmarked by January 20, 2012

Proposal Documents with submission guidelines and detailed descriptions of the subject, theme and technical specifications for each of the three proposed art pieces can be picked up from the Champagne and Aishihik offices in Whitehorse and Haines Junction or by contacting:

Diane Strand, Manager, Da Kų at (867) 634-4248, Paula Banks, Heritage Planner at (867) 456-6876 or Frances Oles at (867) 634-2816

For more information

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations



Da Kų Cultural Centre Manager

Diane Strand
(867) 634-4248
dstrand@cafn.ca

www.cafn.ca

Photos Wanted!

"Honouring Our People" will be a key exhibit area in the Cultural Centre.

CAFN Heritage staff members are compiling photos of our people for this exhibit, so please consider sharing your old family photos with us so we can honour all of our Citizens.

We can make a copy of your image while you wait, so you don't have to let your important photos out of your hands for long.

Potlatch pamphlet photos are an especially good way of honouring CAFN members who have passed on. We hope to share more about our history and individuals by using some potlatch pamphlet photos already in CAFN Heritage photo archives.

For more information on this project and to book an appointment to have your photos scanned, please contact:

Haines Junction:

John Finland
Heritage Researcher
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Whitehorse:

Sheila Quock
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