

## Fostering Economic Opportunities for Coastal Communities



A student cleans Yup'ik artifacts unearthed at the 2009 archeology dig near Quinhagak.



Sunny Rice hosts West Coast Sea Grant Extension personnel on a tour of the new cold storage facility in Petersburg. Rice chaired the project planning subcommittee for the Petersburg Economic Development Committee. *Photo by Kurt Byers*

### Issue

Economic diversity is critical for rural Alaska to be resilient to change. Creative business development is key to expanding the economic base and supporting a higher quality of life. MAP agents and specialists working in rural communities are major contributors to local business generation activity.

### Response

#### **Kuskokwim Cultural Tourism – Archaeology Tourism**

Bethel-based MAP agent Terry Reeve took a leadership role in implementing, obtaining grants, and organizing an archaeology tourism project in Quinhagak, a village on the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.

#### **Kodiak Latina Business Development Program**

Kodiak-based MAP marketing specialist Quentin Fong conducted and organized several workshops including How to Start a Small Business with the Latina population. Fong participates in one-on-one consultations and regular meetings, working to match challenges with appropriate resources.

#### **Cordova Wild Foods Development Center**

Cordova-based MAP agent Torie Baker joined a local committee to conduct a community-needs survey and feasibility study, secure a long-term land lease, and receive a U.S. Department of Agriculture equipment grant.

#### **Petersburg Cold Storage**

As chair of the cold storage subcommittee of the Petersburg Economic Development Committee, Sunny Rice shepherded the process to develop a publicly owned cold storage and freezer facility. Rice also co-chaired a statewide conference titled *A Community Cold Storage and Seafood Processing Facility—Is It Right for Your Community?*

### Impacts

- ✧ In the summer of 2009, six archaeologists and assistants from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, paid to visit the Quinhagak dig sites. Over 2,000 artifacts, many of museum quality, were recovered. The effort is building a new tourism opportunity, bringing dollars to the community, gathering museum items that support more cultural tourism, and exciting the residents about local cultural history.
- ✧ Two members of the Alaska Latina Women's Association in Kodiak have new businesses and another is pursuing an associate's business degree.
- ✧ The Cordova center will open in 2010, and the 14,000 sq. ft. processing facility will launch in 2013. The facility will promote off-season value-added processing of local food products and income diversification.
- ✧ The Petersburg cold storage has operated profitably for three seasons. In 2009, 2.5 million pounds of salmon were frozen at the cold storage. Small processors are freezing and storing fish there for more value-added processing later, in the off-season.