



BIRCH CREEK TRIBAL COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Denduu Gwich'in Tribe | www.birchcreektribe.org

Winter 2018

News in the new year!

The Birch Creek Tribal Council office has a new 1-800 number, so that you can call the office toll free!

1-800-335-2282 (BCTC)

Electric payments has been a success with the new system in place, To Continue Page 2

Current news on the oil spill, To Continue Page 2

It's that time of the year to think about your summer garden, To Continue Page 2



Hope that your family had a wonderful Christmas this year filled with joy and happiness!



Have a lovely new year with family, friends, travel, and maybe some 2018 resolutions!

Photos for Newsletter

BCTC would like to encourage tribal members to submit pictures via email regarding accomplishments. They can be pictures of certificates, winter activities, sports, or encouraging wellness. Please submit to:

victoria@birchcreektribe.org

UPCOMING PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

- **February**
 - Early Feb. - Clinic Maintenance Training, Birch Creek – William & Vince
 - **12-16th** – Alaska Forum on the Environment, Anchorage – Yessie
 - **15-16th** – New Clinic Inspection/Set up, Birch Creek – Nadine, Paula C.
- **March**
 - **12-16th** – TCC Annual Convention, Fairbanks
- **April**
 - **10th -12th** –AEA Rural Energy Conference- Fairbanks- Nadine, Council member
 - **16th ? TENTATIVE-** Clinic Grand Opening, Birch Creek – CATG, TCC
- **May**
 - **Week of 21 or 28** – Rural Basic fire training, Birch Creek – All community members
 - **TENTATIVE-** Start Streetlight Project, Birch Creek
 - Begin road maintenance, Birch Creek

Birch Creek Electric Utility

First of all, I would like to thank the residential customers who are all caught up on your bills and those that have submitted payments since Oct. 2017. Let's not forget that bills must be paid monthly, or we will start having to issue warnings. However, so far I am proud of how far the Electric Utility has come. We are on month five of being in the PCE program, and from just two months of PCE reports, we are expecting \$4,850.68 with other reports in the process. The utility still has a long way to go, but I believe we are on a good start. Goals for the long run on the utility include upgrading transformers and power lines, installing a power card system with prepaid meters, and establishing a small office with a utility clerk in Birch Creek. Right now everything is dependant on available funding, and since the utility does not generate revenue on its own, we will be looking in to possible grants that can fund some of these projects.

Someways you can pay your bill is by cash payment to the office or to Victoria Baalam and Birch Creek, calling the office's toll free number [1-888-355-2282](tel:1-888-355-2282), or if you are a council employee, you can choose to deduct a certain amount of of your paycheck towards your electric bill.

Electric Billing Statistics:

- **Number of customers paid up to date on their bills: 3**
- **Number of customers who paid atleast two bills: 1**
- **Number of customers who paid atleast 1 bill: 5**
- **Number of customers who have not paid any bills: 4**
- **Total residential customers: 13**

Let's continue to work on improving these numbers. Mahsi choo.

Basic Rural Firefighting/Code Red Training in Birch Creek

There is going to be a basic rural firefighting course in Birch Creek during the week of May 21st or 28th. All community members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Sign up with a council member or call the office.

Burn Barrel Restriction Ordinance Resolution passed October 27

- Restrict burning in town
- Restrict time to burn
- Restrict burning in the summer season

Health Effects of Burning Trash

Urban waste incinerators burn very hot and destroy many of the dangerous waste chemicals. Most of the remaining toxins are captured in the smokestack using high technology. What is left over is discharged high into the atmosphere where it can be diluted before it is breathed. In our rural burnboxes and burnbarrels, emissions are not treated and the smoke stays low in the atmosphere where it does not get diluted.

Just 2 to 40 household burn barrels emit many of the most dangerous toxins at the same level as emitted from a 200-ton per day incinerator facility that serves 20,000 households.

A healthy person may suffer non-specific reactions from burnboxes or barrels including burning eyes, headaches, nausea, fatigue, dizziness and other symptoms. Some may develop an allergic hypersensitivity if the dose is high enough.

People in four Alaska Native Villages who burned their trash near home were twice as likely to have a cough, from 5 to 17 times more likely to suffer faintness, and 5 to 10 times more likely to experience numbness, than people who didn't burn. The more people burned the more likely they were to get the symptoms.

Acids and other chemicals emitted by trash fires can cause severe bronchio-constriction in asthmatics and can increase the breathing difficulty of those with emphysema. The irritation of the lungs can reduce the amount of oxygen available to the heart and lungs and can be dangerous for elders and those with heart disease.

Acute effects from burning some wastes can be very serious. It takes only five ounces of burning PVC to give off enough hydrogen chloride gas to kill someone in an average-size room in just ten minutes.

Clinic Update

The month of November, the Margaret Martin Clinic was completed after the water connections were finished. There will be an open house to present the brand new clinic! The Grand opening is scheduled for April 2018 and we will have food and prizes. The next project is working with CATG to purchase an ambulance vehicle for emergencies when a patient needs to be transported to the airport, especially in the cold winter months.

Birch Creek needs a health aide and a behavioral health aide. If you are interested, please contact CATG or the office about these positions.



Photos of the new clinic features, taken in November 2017

Current Tribal Grants

- Indian Community Block Grant (IRHA) 2017
- IGAP 2015-2020
- Tribal Hazardous Waste Grant 2017
- Tribal Transportation Safety Planning Grant 2017
- State of Alaska Fire Safety Grant 2017
- Doyon Daaga Grant 2017 – Completed

Ongoing Tribal Programs

- Employment/Education (TCC)-JPT, Scholarships, Adult Education
- Health – Clinic, Emergency Medical, Eyeglass, and Dental Assistance
- Housing (IRHA)- New homes, rehab
- Tribal Transportation Program- Road maintenance
- Birch Creek Electric Utility- Provide electricity for Birch Creek, PCE Program

“It's been an accomplishment for Birch Creek to celebrate success for its people, projects, and the future plans. Its a way for everyone to be proud of themselves. I remember my dad, Randall Baalam, would say, ‘When you have a job, don't think of it like you know everything, you always have to sweep with a broom and dustpan first before you are at the top of the ladder, but you will never be at the top of the ladder without sweeping up everybody's mess first.’ He always had a way of saying things that means something, to really soak it in and think about it.

Jacqueline Baalam, 1st Chief

