

Editorial

Ninilchik tribal office torched by arsonist

We were saddened to learn of the fire that recently devastated the offices of the Ninilchik Traditional Council, and angered when investigators confirmed it was caused by arson. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but valuable records were damaged and precious artifacts completely destroyed. Owned by the village corporation, the fire represented a loss of important economic assets, as well.

In recent years, the Ninilchik community has become a flash point in conflicts between Natives and non-Natives over subsistence hunting and fishing issues. Despite these difficulties, the indigenous peoples of Ninilchik have never lost sight of the big picture. When fire gutted the public school just across the highway late last year, the Ninilchik council and corporation opened the doors of their building so that classes could continue for some students who otherwise would have had nowhere to go.

In a further tribute to their class act, Native leaders in Ninilchik have shown dignity and restraint when faced with their own blaze. Rather than jumping to conclusions about the cause of the fire, a very understandable temptation under the circumstances, they have gone about the business of cleaning up and restoring day-to-day operations.

Our deepest regrets to the Ninilchik council and corporation, and the people they serve, as well as our hopes for a speedy recovery from this terrible event.