

Tlingit & Haida Community buys tour bus business in Juneau

The Juneau Tlingit & Haida Community Council will make an entry into the tourism industry this summer following its recent purchase of a Juneau based bus tour company.

The Council purchased Ptarmigan Ptransports and Ptours April 7 following a decision by council members. The acquisition includes five buses with a maximum seating capacity of 166.

The now Native-owned company, Alaska Native Tours, will offer visitors a complete tour of Juneau, the Mendenhall Glacier and surrounding areas, but with a twist - history through the eyes of an Alaskan Native. The Native perspective tour is expected to last about two and a half hours and will be made available through tour brokers.

"The Council views the pur-

chase as an opportunity to provide employment and training for tribal members, while educating visitors of the traditional values Natives hold for their land and Heritage," said council president, Alberta Aspen. Aspen emphasized that organized cultural heritage tourism can provide opportunities for the younger generation to learn more about themselves, their history and increase

a sense of pride in their culture.

Aspen also said the Council wanted to diversify its funding to involve its Council members in an industry that is projected to steadily increase during the coming decade. Some 500,000 visitors are expected to meander their way through Juneau, many taking advantage of sightseeing highlights. "This is a major step," Aspen said. "We are excited to offer visitors

our background of our pride and ownership and share our hospitality."

The Juneau Community Council is one of 26 councils served by the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska headquarters in Juneau. The Community Council has 23 delegates representing thousands of members in Juneau.