

Nome elders have new senior center

By Dan Bloom

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Growing old is getting easier along the Bering Sea.

Nome's new Senior Citizen Center opened up last month and for the Elders of Nome it was a festive and long-awaited occasion. The million-dollar structure was modelled after the old Eagle Hall Annex, a popular gathering place for Nome's Elders before it was destroyed in the 1934 fire.

The new center was designed with the new residents in mind.

Besides a large kitchen and dining area for the daily free lunch program, the Senior Center features an ivory carving room, a woodworking room, a skin sewing room, steam saunas and baths for women and

men, card tables, a pool table, an ultra-large television screen, a laundry room and a first aid room.

Two walk-in freezers have been especially reserved for storage of subsistence items by individual Elders.

"Gee, I guess it's not so bad getting older now," Said one happy Nome senior citizen, who appeared delighted to see the new building finally completed and ready for occupancy.

A gift shop, complete with a glass display case, has been installed on the first floor of the two-story building. Items produced by the Elders there will be on sale to the visiting public and the local community.

"The new center will be a

place for the Elders to gather for their noon-hour meals, and for social activities," explained Bertha Adsuna, one of the center's staff. "And they can work on Native crafts as well, right here."

Many of the special features of the new Senior Center in Nome were designed after a detailed questionnaire was

filled out by area Elders during the planning stages of the construction. Funded by a 1978 legislative appropriation, the new center is a welcome addition to Nome's rebirthing cityscape and is just the first in a number of innovative Elder-oriented programs being planned by the city.