

# CINA's 'Spirit Days' - Native Unity

by Marilyn Richards  
for the Tundra Times

To mark its twentieth anniversary, the Cook Inlet Native Association will be hosting Spirit Days this weekend in Anchorage.

One of the highlights of the opening ceremonies on Saturday morning will be the unveiling of a portrait of the late Nick Gray by artist Moses Wassillie. Gray was an early leader who helped form CINA, the Fairbanks Native Association and the Kuskokwim Native Association.

Doing the unveiling will be Emil Nottie, a founding member of CINA's board of directors,

that organization's second president and currently commissioner of the state Department of Community and Regional Affairs.

All activities begin June 9 and 10 at 10 a.m. at the Alaska Pacific University campus.

Spirit days is being called a 'rededication of CINA's mission of promoting pride in the heritage and traditions of the Alaska Native races, and preserving the customs, folklore and art of our peoples.'

One of the reasons 'is to acknowledge and strengthen ties between Alaska Natives and Outside Indians' says CINA executive director Frank Berry.

The two day celebration will have over 150 Native entertainers including from Alaska the Gei Sun Dancers from Haines, the Copper River Dancers, Tyonek dancers, Wainwright dancers, Gambell dancers, the Savoonga Comedy Team, and an Athabaskan dance group from Fairbanks.

Outside dancers will be the Southern Medicine Singers, Colorado; the Red Nations Dancers from Spokane; the White Clay Singers, Spokane; the White Horse Singers of Everett, Washington; and the Crossing Path Singers, also from the Fairbanks area.

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# Outside Indians to join Alaskans at Spirit Days

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Native arts and crafts, food and other souvenir stands will also be featured. Storytellers will be among the dance groups. Dog mushers and blanket toss performers are yet to be confirmed. The events on campus at the Atwood Center are free and information on free transportation can be obtained from Spirit Days coordinator Barbara Whitney at 278-4641.

Spirit Days and CINA, received proclamations from the Governor's and the Mayor's Offices, and a commendation from the Legislature, Aleen Smith, CINA planner, noted.

Other scheduled participants include Walter Riley, CINA president; Rev. Norman Nauska, Alaska Native Ecumenical Group; Paul Tiulana 1984 AFN citizen of the Year; Elder Tim Twitchell; Cliff Black; state

representative Mike Szymanski; Miss CINA Sheila Seetomona; Anchorage Mayor Tony Knowles; and Alan Neskahi, leader of the Southern Medicine Singers of the Ute tribe from Cortez, Colorado.

Though Spirit Days is — called a — gift to the community it will cost an estimated \$50,000. To help offset the price tag, a fund raising dance performance will be June 8 at the Egan Convention Center at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$8 each.

The Cook Inlet Native Association is one of the oldest and largest non-profit Native organizations in the state. Its annual membership meeting will be on June 11. Keynote speaker then will be Aleut leaders Flore Lekanof, CINA's first president and the first chairman of the Alaska Federation of Natives.