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Icy Strait Point Adds New Activities, Logo for 2011 Season

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As the Alaska cruise season begins in May, Icy Strait Point is offering new activities and a new logo representing the Native-owned and -operated cruise ship destination's Tlingit heritage. The company logo is a Tlingit-inspired design featuring a carved paddle in the shape of a salmon, commemorating the site's canning and fishing history. Canoes and paddles were a primary means of transportation in the Tlingit culture. Visitors were traditionally given a paddle when departing, indicating that they were welcome to paddle back to visit again.

The new logo reflects traditional Tlingit carvings, which travelers will be able to see when they arrive at the wilderness port, near the Native village of Hoonah, Alaska. Local carvers will be working on a set of wood panels to be placed on a traditional long house being built in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, about 22 miles north of Icy Strait Point. Visitors also will be able to watch local artisans at work and purchase items in a new Native craft market this season.

Icy Strait Point offers 21 excursions, ranging from whale-watching to a tribal theater performance, that teach guests about the area's history and Tlingit heritage.

The cruise ship port is owned and operated by the Huna Totem Corp., which represents over 1,200 Alaska Native shareholders with aboriginal ties to Hoonah and Glacier Bay. Hoonah, located 1½ miles from Icy Strait Point, has a population of about 760; Icy Strait Point is the largest employer in town.

"From the beginning, we believed that our people would be the best guides," said Johan Dybdahl, Icy Strait Point's director of administration and special projects. "There is no one better to tell the stories of our culture and living out here. We do it with a great deal of pride."

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Since it opened in 2004, Icy Strait Point has brought more than 130 seasonal and annual jobs to Hoonah and maintained about a 90 percent local hire rate. Icy Strait Point has brought in approximately half of the city's total sales tax revenues each year since 2006. It also contributed about \$3 million directly to the city annually in wages, taxes and other sources.

"I see a lot of people working," said Hoonah Mayor Windy Skaflestad. "Our economy looks good when they're working and people are happy."

Icy Strait Point's profits also help fund the Huna Heritage Foundation, a non-profit affiliate of Huna Totem Corp. that helps perpetuate the local culture and promote education within the community. Each year, the foundation awards thousands of dollars in college scholarship funds to local teens.

"Icy Strait Point is not only benefiting the people who work here, but benefiting the local community," said Julie Jackson, Icy Strait Point's director of shore excursions. Jackson, who was born and raised in Hoonah, began working with Icy Strait Point in 2003 as the site was being developed.

Located 50 miles west of Juneau, Icy Strait Point is a privately owned destination for cruise ship passengers and independent travelers. Icy Strait Point was originally a salmon cannery, and the 1912 buildings have been restored to house the destination's shops and restaurants. Icy Strait Point is owned by Huna Totem Corporation, the Native village corporation for Hoonah. For more information, visit www.icystraitpoint.com.

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