

***HERITAGE***

Monthly news update from the Office of History and Archaeology

State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

April 2026

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**Office of History and Archaeology News**

**Staff Updates:** The State of Alaska currently has a hiring freeze in place and as of December 31, 2025, OHA has five vacancies. Until hiring waivers are approved and positions are backfilled, current OHA staff are in acting status: Sarah Meitl, Acting Chief, and Amy Hellmich, Acting Review and Compliance Coordinator.

**Save the Date! OHA Workshop:** OHA will be holding our annual workshop on **Friday, April 24, 2026**. You can register for the workshop [here](#). We have both a virtual attendance option and an in-person attendance option. The Workshop Agenda and a Flyer will also be attached as PDFs to this newsletter for your information. We look forward to seeing you all soon!

**Alaska Historic Commission:** There will be an Alaska Historic Commission meeting on May 14, 2026. The agenda includes State Historic Preservation updates, a briefing on America250–Alaska, and review of Certified Local Government grant applications. To register to attend the meeting or to provide public comment, please email [dnr.oha@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.oha@alaska.gov) Individuals or groups wishing to speak on historic preservation issues are invited to participate in the public comment session beginning at 10:00 a.m. To sign up, please email OHA at [dnr.oha@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.oha@alaska.gov).

**Contact Information:** OHA encourages sending inquiries and requests to the email addresses listed below.

To send by email:

Section 106: [oha.revcomp@alaska.gov](mailto:oha.revcomp@alaska.gov)

State Permits: [oha.permits@alaska.gov](mailto:oha.permits@alaska.gov)

AHRS: [oha.ibs@alaska.gov](mailto:oha.ibs@alaska.gov)

Grants: [ohagrants@alaska.gov](mailto:ohagrants@alaska.gov)

Surveys and Research: [adam.brinkman@alaska.gov](mailto:adam.brinkman@alaska.gov)

General Inquiries: [dnr.oha@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.oha@alaska.gov)

To send by USPS or other courier:

Alaska State Historic Preservation Office

c/o Office of History and Archaeology  
550 W 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite 1310  
Anchorage, AK 99501

**America250 Program:** The America250-Alaska planning team has accomplished the following tasks to encourage broad, statewide participation:

- Launched Website: <https://america250.alaska.gov/>, from which all Alaskans can submit organization activities to the [online calendar](#);
- Spotlight state and national activities via Facebook: [America250Alaska](#); Instagram: [alaskaamerica250](#); and YouTube: (coming soon);
- Set up Email: [america250@alaska.gov](mailto:america250@alaska.gov)

**America250 Traveling Exhibit:** The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology has created a traveling exhibit, *Alaska's Fields of Dreams: America's Pastime in the 49<sup>th</sup> State*, for the America250 Alaska project. The exhibit consists of nine free-standing, 80" x 33.5" banners. The banners tell the history of Alaska Baseball, from the Indigenous version of the game to the Alaska Baseball League. Reserving the exhibit is free, except for shipping. To learn more, contact OHA's exhibit coordinator, Katie Ringsmuth, at [katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov](mailto:katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov)

New Publications! Alaska's Field of Dreamers: America's Pastime in the Far North. To inquire about copies or learn more about America250-Alaska, please contact Katie Ringsmuth at [katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov](mailto:katie.ringsmuth@alaska.gov).

## **Alaska Legislation**

### **State funding for OHA**

On April 14, the Alaska House of Representatives advanced a draft budget (HB 263) for the state's operations next year with a \$1,500 Permanent Fund dividend. This budget also includes a nearly \$158 million one-time funding boost for public schools and tens of millions for disaster relief, transportation, and public assistance programs. The draft budget now moves to the Senate for consideration, where it will likely be further revised. More information on this bill can be found here: [Alaska State Legislature](#). This bill would allocate \$6,656,800 for OHA in the *operating* budget.

On April 2, Governor Dunleavy signed the nearly \$450 million supplemental budget (SB 231) for additional state spending this year. This budget bill covers additional costs incurred by the state this fiscal year, ending in June, including funds for disaster relief, education, corrections, and transportation. This bill allocates \$1,325,500 for OHA.

## **Federal Legislation**

### **2027 Federal Funding**

*Excerpt from NCSHPO (04/17/26)*

On April 3, 2026, the President's FY27 Budget Request was released, with clear prioritization of defense spending and cutting of non-defense spending by over 160 billion dollars. For preservation related funding, the FY27 proposed budget, much like the FY26 proposed budget, currently preserves \$11 million in grant funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) while proposing to eliminate all other funding intended for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). However, it does still authorize deposits to HPF thru FY27, essentially proposing to set aside funds, but not allocate them for their intended purpose. The text of the budget request can be found here: [BUDGET-2027-APP-2-13.pdf \(SECURED\)](#)

The FY27 budget process is heating up and several hearings are on the congressional calendar already.

- On Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 4pm ET, there is a House Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Hearing with Interior Secretary Doug Burgum concerning the President's FY27 budget request: [Budget Hearing – Department of the Interior | House Committee on Appropriations - Republicans](#)
- On Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 am ET, there is a Senate hearing with Interior Secretary Doug Burgum concerning the President's FY27 budget request: [Hearing | Hearings | United States Senate Committee on Appropriations](#)

After these, we can expect Interior appropriations legislation from the house which is typically made available prior to their subcommittee markup and will have detailed proposed funding levels for the HPF.

- House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee Markup, FY27 Interior Bill – scheduled for May 21, 8 am ET: [Subcommittee Markup of FY27 Interior and Environment and THUD Bills](#)
- House Appropriations Full Committee Markup, FY27 Interior Bill – Scheduled for June 3, 10 am ET: [Full Committee Markup of Fiscal Year 2027 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Bill | House Committee on Appropriations - Republicans](#)

### **May is Historic Preservation Month!**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has compiled a digital marketing kit for use in outreach. It can be found here: [Preservation Month 2026: All People Are Created Equal | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

### **White House Ballroom Project Update**

During their meeting on April 2, 2026, the National Capital Planning Commission deliberated and voted to approve preliminary and final site and building plans for the East Wing Modernization Project. This occurs during the ongoing lawsuit challenging the construction of the East Wing proposed ballroom, and on April 16, U.S. District Judge Richard Leon issued a new ruling in response to an appeals court’s instruction to clarify an earlier decision on the 90,000-square-foot ballroom planned for the East Wing. The new ruling continues to block the above-ground construction of the ballroom, allowing only below-ground work on a bunker and other “national security facilities” at the site.

### **Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**

#### **ACHP Budget Justification**

The ACHP released its FY27 budget justification, outlining its FY27 request of \$5,151,00. This request mirrors their FY26 request but proposes a reduction in money from the FY26 enacted level of approx. \$8 million.

The text of the budget justification can be found here: [ACHPFY27BudgetJustification.pdf](#)

### **ACHP Members Approve Program Comment on Army Warfighting Readiness and Associated Infrastructure**

ACHP members voted on April 3 to issue a program comment that provides the Department of the Army with an alternate way to comply with certain responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This program comment applies to warfighting readiness activities and associated infrastructure and goes into effect immediately. A notice of approval is set to be published in the Federal Register soon. More information can be found here: [ACHP Members Approve Program Comment on Army Warfighting Readiness and Associated Infrastructure | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#).

## **eLearning**

ACHP announces that three of their eLearning courses are now back online! These include “What is Section 106?”; “What Now? Protecting Historic Properties During Disaster Response”; and “Section 304 and Confidentiality”. Visit the eLearning course webpage ([e-Learning Courses | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)) to check out these updated courses.

## **Preserve the Past, Build for the Future Webinar Series**

The ACHP is offering four free webinars this year as part of their “Preserve the Past, Build for the Future 2026” Webinar Series. More information and registration links can be found here: [Preserve the Past, Build For the Future Webinar Series | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)

## **National Trust for Historic Preservation**

**Grant Opportunity:** The National Trust for Historic Preservation is now accepting applications for the **Hart Family Fund for Small Towns**. These grants are intended to encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money for preservation projects in small towns (10,000 people or less). Grants from the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns generally range from \$2,500 to \$15,000. The next deadline for the **Hart Family Fund for Small Towns** is on **May 1, 2026**.

More information can be found here: [Hart Family Fund for Small Towns: Guidelines & Eligibility | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

## **Public Project Alerts**

Section 106 large project consultation in progress:

- Graphite One Mine near Nome, USACE
- Safer Seward Highway, MP 98.5-118, DOT&PF
- Seward to Glenn Connection PEL, DOT&PF
- Chilkoot National Historic Trail Comprehensive Trail Plan, NPS
- Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Trail Plan Revision, BLM
- Cook Inlet LNG, FERC
- AK LNG, FERC
- Ambler Mining District Access Road, AIDEA
- West Susitna Access Road, USACE
- Nikolai Nickel, USACE
- Cold Bay – King Cove Road, USACE

Review and compliance agreement development for large projects in progress:

- West Susitna Access Road, DOT&PF
  - Programmatic Agreement
- USFS Heritage Program
  - Programmatic Agreement Amendment
- USFS Sustainable Cabins
  - Programmatic Agreement
- NPS Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail
  - Programmatic Agreement

For information on how to participate in the process, or on how to review and comment on the above projects, contact Amy Hellmich, [amy.hellmich@alaska.gov](mailto:amy.hellmich@alaska.gov).

### **Heritage subscription information**

*Heritage* is produced by the Office of History and Archaeology, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Please send your comments, suggestions, and information by e-mail to [dnr.oha.@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.oha.@alaska.gov), mail to 550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565, or telephone 907.269.8700.

All issues are posted to our web site at [dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/](http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/) and distributed to subscribers by e-mail. A paper copy can be sent to individuals and organizations that specifically request it.

To be added to the subscription list, please send an e-mail to [dnr.oha@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.oha@alaska.gov) with “Heritage, subscribe” in the subject line.

If you do not wish to continue to subscribe to *Heritage*, please send an e-mail to [dnr.oha@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.oha@alaska.gov) with “Heritage, unsubscribe” in the subject line.

Much like the OHA office, the Heritage Newsletter is entering a stage of transition. We are working on updating our mailing list and delivery system. We will have more information on the future of the newsletter and its delivery soon.

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### **Preservation calendar**

**2026**

**April 24** – OHA’s Annual Workshop, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Online and In-Person at BP Energy Center, Anchorage, AK: [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

**April 28** – ACHP Webinar: Preserving America’s Revolutionary-Era Sites at 2pm EST: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

**May is Historic Preservation Month!** - The National Trust for Historic Preservation has compiled a digital marketing kit for use in outreach. It can be found here: [Preservation Month 2026: All People Are Created Equal | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

**May 1** – Hart Family Fund for Small Towns grant deadline: [Hart Family Fund for Small Towns: Guidelines & Eligibility | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

**May 14** – Alaska Historic Commission Meeting. To register to attend or provide public comment, email OHA at [dnr.oha@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.oha@alaska.gov).

**May 27** – ACHP Webinar: Preserving America for the Next Generation: Involving Younger People in Preservation at 2pm EST: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

**June 27 – July 4** – Alaska’s Week of Dreams. For a complete schedule of events and other America250-Alaska programs, visit: [Home - America250-Alaska](#).

**September TBD** – Alaska Historical Society Conference

**October 7-10** – Museums Alaska Annual Conference

**2027**

**March 3- 7** – Sharing Our Knowledge conference, Ketchikan. For more information and volunteer opportunities, contact Joaqlin Estus at [jmestus50@gmail.com](mailto:jmestus50@gmail.com)