

BING SANTAMOUR  
Bethel Community member

For record: Jim against  
building or adding onto  
jails - they only get filled  
up w/ my people. Put that  
money into providing effective  
counseling & treatment  
programs. This will I believe,  
reduce return of people and  
help them grow up and out of  
alcohol abuse - statistics  
show this is major reason  
for majority of  
accidents &  
accidental  
deaths &  
suicides.

## Tribal Courts:

- ↳ These village-based system have been dispensing justice for immeasurable time.
- ↳ In rural Alaska, where State & Federal Courts are absent, the tribal court system does exist. Their existence and functioning does much to keep those State Courts' caseload smaller. We don't see any published reports on tribal courts effectiveness or dispensation of community-based justice. (Most indigenous Peoples are or have oral history rather than written records, which is in line with culture and language.) I believe, though uncertain, is being sent to Bethel for court - state and/or federal - justice ~~may~~ be used as a hammer or threat to or for offenders.

↳ Tribal Courts, are, special entities unto themselves. The village members and culture make up how the tribal court will act, react and dispense justice to its community members.

↳ Within tribal courts, the focus is to work out any situation whereby final decision is made within traditional and culturally relevant action.

↳ As a person with a tribal heart, I believe that a closer <sup>both</sup> relationship <sup>governments</sup> should be developed with State & federal with their respective divisions and departments. We hear and read about some of the successful <sup>states</sup> work — so the underlying work is or seems to be unofficial rather than official recognition of local tribal entity.

↳ I would recommend that State of Alaska move in this direction, officially.

↳ Think about state law that corporations are living entities — able to sue and be sued. This is official, on-the-books recognition by state but the double standard steps in w/ the official non-recognition of Tribal governments.

↳ last week's preparation meeting was made up of local tribal govt staff, state of Alaska agency staff and community members.

↳ ONC's tribal court has several things working against it.

↳ in Bethel, as a hub center, there are already 2 other court systems in place - state & federal.

↳ Because of its location, of 2 other recently established systems, community members think first of these other courts systems before they think of ONC's Tribal Court.

↳ It's a mindset that will take some additional time to clear up.

↳ The traditional laws are getting written down - slowly but surely. Our Elders often say that they don't know how to answer if they're not asked.

↳ ~~the~~ This shows culturally relevant learning (since people learn by demonstration and words) so specific questions should be asked. Remember most indigenous peoples have oral history.

↳ Tribal court development now, leads to having written codes to show jurisdiction to state & federal entities.

↳ With this in mind, OAC provided training to its community members on child protection, Indian Child Welfare Act, PC 280 and later on once court was established, and all its written judicial codes in place, court processes and procedures. It's still getting

↳ With an Elder panel of judges, I ~~feel~~ <sup>believe</sup> that time needs to be spent with Elders to bring them up to speed on written codes that mesh well with traditional laws.

↳ Because of the undocumented savings of dispensation of justice at tribal level, in rural Alaska, please recommend that funding remain for tribal courts.

↳ Additionally, other public safety funding needs to be (re)commended? Continue — JPSO program — DV & child protection <sup>work</sup> — <sup>same level</sup> credentials for <sup>level</sup> <sup>work</sup>

↳ An Elder said that support is given to decisions made — as long as they're of benefit to people.  
Personal choice / personal decisions