



*Dedicated to the recognition and preservation of Alaska's maritime heritage*

February 19, 2008

Honorable Ted Stevens  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510  
FAX# 202-224-2354

Dear Sen. Stevens and Staff,

First, thank you for your past assistance in making the Kodiak Maritime Museum a reality. With your help, in 2003 we received a \$50,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to fund operating expenses, and a feasibility study and business plan for construction of a permanent museum building. Our museum is still a "museum without walls," but we are now working to acquire land, hire architects, and to eventually build the Kodiak Maritime Heritage Center. When completed, the Kodiak Maritime Heritage Center will include a museum building and mariners park on Kodiak's waterfront.

Meanwhile, our ongoing projects include an oral history project, harbor history tours, the cataloguing of Kodiak maritime photographs, a fishermen's spoken word event, local maritime history displays, and our annual fundraising dinner, this year featuring an expert on Alaska shipwrecks.

We are also embarking on our most ambitious maritime heritage project to date: The Kodiak Harbor Gateway Project. The Harbor Gateway Project will transform St. Paul Harbor into a maritime museum without walls and will feature a multimedia tribute to Peggy Dyson, an Alaskan maritime icon. Dyson was the "Voice of the North Pacific" for 25 years, broadcasting messages and marine weather forecasts twice daily from her home in Kodiak and standing by 24 hours a day to relay emergency transmissions. Her heroic public service is still remembered by mariners throughout the North Pacific to this day.

We are currently seeking funding for the Harbor Gateway Project / Peggy Dyson display. We anticipate costs for the entire project at \$350,000. A rough cost estimate breakdown is attached. Also attached is the Museum's Interpretive Plan describing the project in detail.

Again, Sen. Stevens, on behalf of the Kodiak Maritime Museum Board of Directors, I thank you for your past assistance in securing funding for our programs to preserve the illustrious maritime heritage of our great state of Alaska.

Director, Kodiak Maritime Museum



## Cost breakdown for the Kodiak Maritime Museum Harbor Gateway Project:

Architectural Services	\$50,000
Renderings	\$15,000
<i>Thelma C</i> exhibit construction	\$75,000
Harbor Signage Design and Construction	\$40,000
Peggy Dyson Interpretive Display	\$150,000
	<u>\$330,000</u>
6% Contingency	\$19,800
Total estimated cost	<u>\$348,900</u>

## **Kodiak Maritime Museum Interpretive Plan**

**Prepared for**

**Kodiak Maritime Museum  
PO Box 1876  
Kodiak, Alaska 99615**

**July 11, 2006**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

New Directions	3
Audience Development and Institutional Identity	5
Overview of Interpretive Elements	6
Narrative Walkthrough of Visitor Experiences	8
Satellite Exhibits	17
Program Ideas	18

## NEW DIRECTIONS

### Background

Kodiak Maritime Museum (KMM) was founded in 1996 by a group of Kodiak residents with close ties to the region's fishing and maritime heritage. The Museum's founders had been first-hand observers of the fishing boom of the 1960s and 1970s; they had witnessed profound changes in Alaska's fishing industry in the 1980s. Among the founders is a fishing pioneer who watched Kodiak grow from a small fishing village to one of the nation's busiest ports.

This group of volunteers shared a common purpose: to document, collect, and preserve Kodiak's maritime heritage. Marine resources and regulations were changing. Evolving technologies and materials rendered beautiful, time-honored boat designs obsolete. Abandoned boats sat in the harbor, their moorage fees unpaid; eventually most would be stripped of their hardware and burned on the beach.

Museum volunteers have met this preservation challenge with resourceful energy. In a few short years, Kodiak Maritime Museum has recorded enough oral histories to fill 19 DVDs. KMM is also building a photo archive that already contains 250 historic images.

Recognizing St. Paul Harbor as the city's most visible center of the fishing industry, KMM sponsored the creation of outdoor exhibits that make harbor activities accessible and understandable to visitors. These beautifully illustrated panels line the west and north sides of the harbor, interpreting a wide range of fishing technology and lore. The same graphic designs have been packaged as an attractive booklet, *Celebrating Our Maritime Heritage*, and are displayed as a virtual museum on the Museum's richly informative web site.

KMM volunteers offer guided tours of the harbor to cruise boat passengers, convention groups, and other visitors to Kodiak. Each April, the Museum brings a noted scholar to Kodiak for a presentation on the region's maritime history, as part of the *Tastes and Tales from the Sea* fundraiser.

Now Kodiak Maritime Museum is embarking on its most ambitious heritage project to date: the transformation of St. Paul Harbor into a maritime museum without walls. The project has three components:

- *Hello All Mariners*, a multi-media and interactive exhibit honoring the legacy of Peggy Dyson, who for 25 years broadcast weather and personal messages to mariners in the Gulf of Alaska, the Bering Sea, and beyond.
- *Thelma C: Built for Survival*: close-up viewing of a 38-foot, wood-hulled salmon seiner, built with relief funds after the 1964 tsunami that devastated the Kodiak fishing fleet.
- *Harbor Gateway signage*: extension of outdoor exhibits along the north and east sides of St. Paul Harbor. Colorful illustrations and first-person quotes will interpret a range of maritime heritage topics.

### **The goals of interpretation**

According to Freeman Tilden, author of *Interpreting Our Heritage*, the aim of interpretation is "to reveal meanings and relationships...rather than simply to communicate factual information." Interpretation provokes attention and curiosity, relates concepts and facts to visitors' own lives, and reveals key messages in unforgettable ways.

Making use of a variety of objects, experiences, and media, interpretive exhibits and programs appeal to as many senses as possible. Interpretive displays and activities seek to engage visitors intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

### *Mission*

Interpretive planning for the St. Paul Harbor exhibits is grounded in the Museum's mission:

***The Kodiak Maritime Museum is dedicated to the recognition and preservation of Alaska's rich maritime heritage.***

### *Take-Home Messages*

The first step in mission-driven interpretation is to identify the important take-home messages to be communicated to all visitors. Working with interpretive planner Alice Parman, the KMM planning team identified two key take-home messages for the ensemble of exhibits at the harbor experiences:

- Kodiak Island has some of the worst weather, and some of the best fishing, in the world.
- Kodiak wouldn't exist without its wealth of marine resources.

### *Interpretive Objectives*

Take-home messages provide the conceptual framework for organizing the visitor's experience of the Kodiak Maritime Museum's exhibits and programs. Interpretive exhibits focused on take-home messages are intended to influence visitors' understanding, attitudes, and behavior. We expect that after their experience of the harborside displays, visitors will:

- Feel that they are warmly welcomed in Kodiak;
- Understand that fishing is vitally important for this community;
- Recognize that residents of Kodiak take pride in their history.

## AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY

Kodiak Maritime Museum serves a dual audience: visitors to the island, and the people who live here. In this special place where weather, tides, and fish stocks are big news, the Museum's exhibits and programs are potentially as interesting to locals as they are to tourists.

Most travelers come to Kodiak Island for pleasure; many business travelers stay on for a few days of fun and adventure. Tourists from out of state, as well as international visitors, come here in search of "the real Alaska." About half of Kodiak's visitors are drawn to the island by the presence of family or friends, including people stationed at the nation's largest U.S. Coast Guard base. Remarkably, nearly everyone who visits Kodiak goes fishing at least once.

The Kodiak Island archipelago, an area roughly the size of Connecticut, is home to fewer than 14,000 people. Yet this remote and thinly populated place is profoundly cosmopolitan. Many languages are spoken here, including the island's Native tongue, Alutiiq. Tagalog, the lingua franca of the Philippines, is spoken by 40 percent of students at Kodiak High School. Spanish speakers are on the rise. Names of places and people preserve the heritage of Russians, Scandinavians and other Europeans, Asians, Pacific Islanders.... People from all over the world have chosen to live in Kodiak, drawn by rich marine resources, active fisheries, and busy canneries.

The harbor is the city's signature tourist attraction, and a focal point for local residents. Many of the island's most popular gathering places are clustered nearby, and important community events take place there. Engaging, one-of-a-kind exhibits at St. Paul Harbor, in the heart of downtown Kodiak, will give Kodiak Maritime Museum new visibility. Using the harbor as a vast indoor/outdoor gallery, the Museum will welcome people of all ages and backgrounds to an insider's tour of the fisherman's world.

## OVERVIEW OF INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS

Decorative archways and an illustrated map welcome visitors to Kodiak's busy harbor. The **Harbor Gallery**, a small building near the Harbormaster's Office, is a starting point for exploration of Kodiak's maritime history. On the building's facade, the name and logo of the Kodiak Maritime Museum are ornamented with nautical gear. Colorful stained glass images, displayed in the north-facing windows, offer glimpses of the region's fishing heritage. Inside a covered area, visitors immerse themselves in a unique audio-visual exhibit.

*Hello All Mariners* tells the story of Peggy Dyson, who broadcast the weather report to mariners in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Strait, morning and night for 25 years. Interactive sequences, eyewitness accounts, and a recreation of Dyson's home office bring her legacy to life. In *The Harbormaster*, visitors hear unforgettable personal stories. They gain insight into the life-and-death importance of an accurate and timely weather forecast, as well as the special qualities that Peggy Dyson brought to her communications work. *Single Sideband* shows how Peggy's broadcasts originated as a way to keep in touch with her family; her son shares memorable conversations on the family's private crystal. *Shut Up! Peggy's On!*, with more first-hand memories, highlights the unique personal connections that mariners felt with Peggy Dyson. *Mayday!* illustrates how Peggy worked with the U.S. Coast Guard during a search and rescue operation, and how her carefully kept logbooks aided in rescues. In *The Tradition Continues*, a National Weather Service employee shares how Dyson's example continues to inspire him. Although communications technologies have evolved, personal connections remain vitally important.

Between episodes of the multi-media presentation, visitors enjoy interactive opportunities. They use a mini-weather station to forecast today's weather, operate a radio control panel, spell boats' names using the phonetic alphabet, and search for crucial information on a logbook page.

**Communications: a Bridge between Land and Sea** is the title of four mini-exhibits on maritime communications, displayed along the passageway through the Harbor Gallery building. *Centuries of Communication* highlights breakthrough technologies from telegraph to email. *It Takes a Fleet to Make a Forecast* asks visitors to compare on-site weather observations, emailed to the National Weather Service, with a computer-generated map based on those reports. Visitors can push a button to hear a current marine weather forecast. *Remembering Peggy Dyson* offers a changeable selection of first-person accounts by fishermen, tug captains, U.S. Coast Guardsmen, airline pilots, and others. *Always Ready*, a changeable bulletin board, features rescue stories in the news. A fifth display acquaints visitors with the Kodiak Maritime Museum's displays throughout the harbor area, and with the Museum's programs and events.

**Thelma C: Built for Survival** features a historic salmon seiner, displayed near Oscar's Dock, with a ramp for accessible viewing. Along the viewing ramp, interpretive graphics and interactive experiences bring fishing history to life for visitors of all ages. The

introductory panel teaches visitors some nautical vocabulary and the basics of design and construction of this heritage vessel. *Close Quarters* uses an artist's rendering to convey a sense of four people living in a tiny space during many months at sea. *On the Back Deck*, also illustrated by a knowledgeable artist, shows the crew of the *Thelma C* hard at work. Quotes and firsthand stories give visitors an inside look at life aboard a fishing vessel. *An Earthquake Built This Boat* tells the story of the 1964 earthquake and tsunami, the terrible losses to Kodiak, and the resulting federal aid that funded construction of the *Thelma C*. *Lifeblood of the Community* draws connections between changing fisheries management practices and the fate of boats like the *Thelma C*. Inset in the interpretive panels are interactive experiences: touchable floats of cork, wood, and plastic; a wheel and throttle, mounted at child height; line-coiling and knot-tying; and the opportunity to listen to a sea chantey, sung by local musicians.

### **Harbor Gateway Signage**

Along the north and east sides of historic St. Paul Harbor, additional interpretive panels will augment the popular signage program that Kodiak Maritime Museum has already put in place. Maritime history topics may include Native fishing traditions, the evolution of Kodiak's fishing fleet, the history of fishing management, and the story of the Star of Kodiak. Visitors might learn about the seasonal calendar of fishing, and about specific fisheries—halibut, or salmon. A fun panel could teach them to "talk like a fisherman."

Another set of panels would go beyond maritime history, acquainting visitors with museums on Kodiak Island, wildlife watching opportunities (including information on Bears and Fish), and the region's geology.

### **Satellite Exhibits**

Kodiak Maritime Museum will continue to produce changing mini-exhibits on maritime history topics, in displays at Kodiak College and Key Bank. Potential subjects include family histories, canneries and cannery workers, boat builders, fisheries management, and more. The Museum will seek business sponsors for special projects developed in collaboration with community groups.

## **NARRATIVE WALKTHROUGH OF VISITOR EXPERIENCES**

### **Harbor Gateway**

As newcomers to Kodiak catch their first glimpse of the harbor, they get a lasting impression of an unusual number and variety of boats. This is a working waterfront, home to one of North America's largest fishing fleets. Visitors can watch as fishermen mend their nets, load food and equipment, clean fish, make repairs, and maintain their vessels.

Twin decorative archways at the northeast and northwest corners welcome visitors to St. Paul Harbor, established in 1792. At key locations along the approaches to the harbor, visitors find an appealing illustrated map that orients them to downtown Kodiak. This fun bird's-eye view, created by a local artist, is drawn in retro, cartoon-like style. The map draws attention to the harbor's main features, harborside exhibits, museums and hiking trails within walking distance, and other nearby places of interest, such as St. Herman's Harbor, the Star of Kodiak, Near Island, and cannery row.

### **Harbor Gallery**

The small building just west of the Harbormaster's office has been transformed into a must-see first stop for visitors. Attractive signage, hanging from the building's north and south rooflines, identifies the Kodiak Maritime Museum Harbor Gallery. On the north wall, the Museum's logo is interwoven with an assemblage of nautical gear: line, fenders, nets, floats, and name boards of boats that are no more.

Inside the four windows on the north side of the building, stained glass illustrations by local artists offer a colorful synopsis of Kodiak Island's maritime heritage. Some possibilities: Native fishermen in a traditional baidarka, cod fishermen lining from a dory, a fishing crew stacking a net, and cannery workers packing fish. Visible by daylight and brilliantly backlit at night, these memorable images will quickly become harbor landmarks.

Visitors can enter a covered viewing area and a passageway through the building, by using the stairs at the east end, or an accessible walkway at the west end. (A sign tells them that to access the public restrooms along the passageway, they can obtain a key at all hours in the Harbormaster's office.)

Within the viewing area, visitors look through a large window to experience a lively, interactive multi-media exhibit. Museum-quality lighting and sound, installed to be secure and weatherproof, ensure a rewarding experience. The presence of visitors activates the program; an override button in the Harbormaster's office switches it off for ease of maintenance, or to accommodate special programming.

### ***Hello All Mariners***

This unique multi-media program invites visitors to discover how one person helped shape the maritime legacy of Kodiak. They also learn how members of Kodiak's fishing fleet, and other mariners in the vast Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea, have made use of evolving communication technologies to survive some of the world's worst weather.

#### • Main messages

Visitors may pause to look and listen for a few minutes, or linger for half an hour or more. No matter how long they spend, all visitors will come away with the understanding that *in the fishing industry in this region, everything depends on the weather. As they hear stories of how Peggy Dyson communicated with the fishing fleet, they will realize the extent of her faithful service. Accounts of vessels lost and found, along with good and bad news from home, convey the sense that it's one big family here on Kodiak Island. Coordinated communications during a Mayday show how fishing people help each other because someday it might be you that needs help, and illustrate the invaluable role of the U.S. Coast Guard.*

#### • The setting

Through the viewing window, visitors see a foreshortened, stage-set version of Peggy Dyson's home office. An illusion of depth is created by means of a life-size photomural of the actual room, tinted in 1970s photo colors. Replica objects add dimensionality to this imagined space.

At first glance Peggy's workplace looks ordinary, with a lamp and telephone, a cup full of pens and pencils, a stapler, a cane-backed chair with a cushion, and a row of family photographs pinned to the wall. Her window overlooks a neighbor's back yard and garage. Nothing unusual...then visitors notice the crystals hanging in the window, and the tinfoil pyramids suspended over the radio. And the radio itself, with its impressive array of dials, knobs, and gauges; and a microphone on a sturdy base, ready for action. A log book is open, ready for the next broadcast. On the wall are a dozen official-looking plaques and certificates, many with Peggy Dyson's name in big letters. A scroll with Chinese characters has a prominent place near the window. Weather instruments are near at hand, along with a comprehensive set of nautical charts. Bookshelves display works on diverse topics, reflecting the varied interests of a lifelong learner.

#### • Hello All Mariners

A video monitor is set slightly apart from the office, positioned for easy sightlines through the viewing window. To match the office décor, the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital monitor is housed in the casework of a 1980s TV. This bright screen displays a half-hour video program, broken into episodes of varying lengths. Between episodes, on-screen text with audio narration engages visitors with interactive opportunities; these are displayed on a narrow, wheelchair-accessible reader rail along the viewing window.

*Hello All Mariners* is a home-grown video production, created by local media experts and students. The program integrates existing audio and video footage, historic photographs, and new video footage and imagery. *Hello All Mariners* builds on—and updates—an

award-winning 1981 public radio program produced by Maggie Wall. Oral histories from the Kodiak Maritime Museum are part of the mix, along with photographs from the KMM archive, U.S. Coast Guard video footage of search and rescue cases, and new documentary footage showing fishermen at work.

### Episode 1: The Harbormaster

The first segment opens on board the Harbormaster's boat, *M/V Sea Breeze*. Standing on the flying bridge next to Harbormaster Marty Owen, we see colorful boats and busy fishermen in a working harbor. Marty tells us that this is one of North America's largest fishing fleets. The waters around Kodiak Island have some of the world's best fishing—and some of the world's most dangerous weather. A timely, accurate weather forecast can save your life. These days, weather buoys and satellite images give you a good idea of what's happening throughout the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. But in the old days—just a couple of decades ago—it was Peggy Dyson who got that life-and-death information to the fishing fleet.

Cut to Fisherman's Hall, where a group of fishermen are drinking coffee around the table. Close-up shots reveal their warmth and respect as they speak of what Peggy Dyson meant to the fleet. Their eloquent, heartfelt statements illustrate the range of services she provided, and show how special she was to so many people. As we hear audio clips of personal tributes from the 1981 radio program, we see family photographs of those fishermen and their boats.

### Interactive 1: What's the weather?

On the reader rail, a mini-weather station provides an electronic readout of current wind speed and barometric pressure. On-screen text with audio narration shows visitors how to convert knots to miles, and tells why mariners reckon wind speed in knots. A second text/audio segment conveys the basics of rising and falling barometric pressure, and asks visitors to guess if today's weather will stay the same, get worse, or improve.

### Episode 2: Single Sideband

This episode draws heavily on the 1981 public radio program, with added contemporary narration by Peggy Dyson (if possible) or her son, Rob Hoedel. The narrator draws our attention to the radio, and to other objects throughout the office. On-screen images include close-ups of Peggy's actual office, family photographs, and period photos of fishing vessels from the KMM collections. We learn that Peggy first bought a transmit/receive radio to stay in touch with her husband, Oscar Dyson, who was crab fishing in the Bering Sea. She tells how other members of the fleet began listening in on the weather forecasts she prepared for him, morning and evening. She describes the National Weather Service seminar, held in Kodiak, where fishermen "volunteered" Peggy to broadcast regular weather forecasts to the fleet.

Peggy outlines her typical day: receiving on-site forecasts from fishermen, updating the National Weather Service, and making her regular broadcasts at 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Rob Hoedel tells us about the family's private crystal (its secret number known only to Radar Alaska) that enabled the Dysons to "switch over" for a private family conversation. He quotes Peggy's command, "Robbie, you switch over right away!" as he remembers the day when a whale got tangled up in his net.

#### Interactive 2: Send and Receive

Peggy Dyson demonstrates the operation of the radio controls. As visitors manipulate the dials and knobs on a replica control panel, on-screen film or illustrations show a hand on each control; visitors can hear what happens when that dial or knob is turned.

#### Episode 3: Shut Up! Peggy's On!

Fishermen recall the hush that fell over the fleet when Peggy's voice was heard. Video footage and historic images show a variety of fishing boats at sea, in all kinds of weather conditions. First-person reminiscences about personal messages—birth announcements, news of an accident or loss of life—are synched with on-screen images of fishermen and their families.

Peggy explains that when she had to deliver bad news, she would ask the family member to give her the exact wording. She reveals that some fishermen told her in confidence where they would be fishing, trusting her to keep their location to herself unless something happened. U.S. Coast Guard commander Fred Squires describes how Peggy's knowledge of personal matters—which are outside Coast Guard jurisdiction—sometimes came in handy. When a boat was overdue, the Coast Guard called Peggy; she might have a radio report that the fisherman in question was holed up somewhere, waiting for weather.

#### Interactive 3: Phonetic Alphabet

When she broadcast the name of a boat, Peggy spelled it out using the phonetic alphabet, so there would be no mistake. On-screen text invites visitors to spell boats' names using a phonetic alphabet chart (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie...) mounted on the reader rail.

#### Episode 4: Mayday!

In narration drawn from the 1981 radio program, Peggy tells how she worked with the U.S. Coast Guard during a search and rescue operation. She describes the detailed logs she kept during all of her broadcast sessions, and explains their usefulness during a Mayday. Video footage shows vessels in stormy seas, and U.S. Coast Guard lifeboat and helicopter crews at work.

#### Interactive 4: Log book

On-screen text and audio narration asks visitors to search a logbook page for information about a vessel that radioed a Mayday signal. Visitors learn the sequence of events and the outcome of that case.

### Episode 5: The Tradition Continues

We see family photos of a series of people, as they pay tribute to Peggy Dyson's years of dedicated service. "When you heard her voice," a fisherman says, "it was like you were in your mother's house." Other fishermen add: "She was always the same, no matter what was happening." "She is the lifeline of the fishing industry." "We love her—our life depends on her forecast." A U.S. Coast Guard commander tells us, "She is responsible for saving a lot of people."

Finally, we see a National Weather Service employee at the weather station on the U.S. Coast Guard base on Kodiak Island. He explains how far the technology has evolved since Peggy's day, and affirms that the personal connections remain vitally important. He tells a personal story that illustrates how Peggy Dyson inspires him to go beyond the weather forecast...to be that voice that links the fishing fleet to their island home.

### **Communications: a bridge between land and sea**

Along the passageway through the Harbor Gallery building, five windows showcase colorful interpretive displays. They are lit from above and below for good visibility, with typefaces and viewing heights designed for accessibility. Four of these informative mini-exhibits place the story of Peggy Dyson in the context of the history of maritime communications, from the earliest days to now. A fifth display window announces current and upcoming programs and events sponsored by the Kodiak Maritime Museum, and showcases retail products and membership.

#### • Centuries of Communication

A graphically interesting timeline uses period typefaces and illustrations, with superimposed photographs of artifacts and documents, to trace evolving communications technologies from the days of the Russian occupation of Kodiak to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Visitors learn how the unreliability of ship-borne letters was both an advantage and a disadvantage to Russian fur traders. Breakthrough technologies are highlighted: the telegraph, early radios, and the emergence of single sideband. Photos show today's Kodiak fishermen talking on marine radio-telephones, exchanging emails, and studying satellite weather maps. Eyewitness accounts and quotes from actual messages give visitors a sense of the people who have made use of changing technologies to survive in these waters, for more than three centuries.

#### • It Takes a Fleet to Make a Forecast

A map of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea is inset with weather-related email messages from fishermen at diverse locations on a particular day, along with an example of data from a weather buoy. A photo of a National Weather Service forecaster, and a first-person quote, convey the importance of on-site reports in generating an accurate forecast. A computer-generated weather map reflects the information communicated in the email messages. When visitors push a button, they hear today's marine weather forecast for the region.

- Remembering Peggy Dyson

A changeable display features photos and stories from fishermen, tug captains, U.S. Coast Guardsmen, airline pilots, and others. Their insights and recollections cover a vast geographic region and a 25-year time span. Visitors learn that they can share their memories of Peggy Dyson by writing or emailing the Kodiak Maritime Museum. They are directed to the KMM web site, where they'll find more stories about rescues, memorable incidents, and mariners' connections to home.

- Always Ready

A changeable bulletin board displays newspaper clippings of current and recent rescue stories. Visitors learn of the U.S. Coast Guard's vital role in search and rescue operations throughout the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea.

- Kodiak Maritime Museum

Here visitors learn that the Harbor Gallery is part of a museum without walls: the Kodiak Maritime Museum. Changeable graphics highlight nearby harbor signage and the *Thelma C*, as well as upcoming events and programs, including regularly scheduled harbor tours. Membership benefits, the web site, and nearby retail outlets for KMM products are also part of this low-key but persuasive presentation.

### ***Thelma C: Built for Survival***

Leaving the Harbor Gallery, visitors can tour the harbor on their own, or with a guide. A highlight of the harbor tour is a close-up, insider's look at a historic fishing vessel, the *Thelma C*. Here visitors will learn how this small boat's design kept it afloat in high winds and stormy seas.

- Main messages

A graphic behind-the-scenes tour of the *Thelma C* will acquaint visitors with the kinds of big waves and high tides she must survive, in the *extreme weather conditions* around Kodiak Island. Stories and quotes will convey the stark reality that a fishing crew lives day by day: *it's you and three or four others in this little boat, on that big vast ocean*. Visitors will learn that a *tsunami* destroyed the *Thelma C*'s predecessor, and that she was built with *earthquake relief funds*.

- The setting

The *Thelma C* is displayed under cover on the Spit, near Oscar's Dock. A ramp leads visitors up to a viewing platform, where they can walk along the vessel to enjoy clear views of the flying bridge and back deck. The platform is fenced for visitor safety. Along the fence rail, interpretive signs and interactives engage visitors in close study of this very special boat.

- Interpretive approach

During salmon season, *Thelma C* can be loaded with gear as if her crew were busy fishing. Signage and live interpreters help visitors identify the different lines and their uses, the plunger pole, boathook, and anchor; net needles and mending twine; coolers and grocery box; raingear locker, brailer, deck knife, and more. In the off-season, depending

on the weather, the vessel might be closed up tight with everything stowed; or there could be evidence of cleanup or preparation activities under way.

Staffing issues will determine how often actual artifacts are displayed on the vessel. (The viewing platform will keep visitors off the *Thelma C*, but for security reasons, gear must be stowed and locked at day's end.) It may be most practical to display the actual gear during community events, cruise tours, and other special occasions. Interpretive signage will always be available, with illustrations that give visitors a sense of the *Thelma C* in operation.

During cruise tours, convention events, and other high-profile programs, visitors would appreciate the opportunity to talk with a fisherman, in working garb, who would serve as interpreter and host on the viewing platform. In summertime, children would enjoy playing in a scaled-down rowboat or skiff, set in a safe location near *Thelma C*.

• **Graphic and interactive displays**

Along the viewing platform, visitors find five colorful signs, produced in the same artistic style already in use for harbor signage. This installation also lets people put their hands on some fishing gear.

**Thelma C: Built for Survival**

A portrait of the vessel en route to the fishing grounds serves as an introduction. Visitors learn some basic nautical vocabulary, including the parts of a fishing boat. Quotes from fishermen explain why this boat is called a seiner, why it's suited for salmon fishing, and why its shallow draft is appropriate for fishing in this region. A "top ten" list draws visitors' attention to the details that helped the *Thelma C* survive some of the world's worst weather, while her crews engaged in some of the world's best fishing. Then-and-now photos show how boat-building materials and gear have changed through time: from wood to aluminum hulls; from linen and cotton seines to the nylon of the present day.

Interactive #1: In a hands-on example of evolving materials, visitors compare cork, wood, and plastic net floats, while viewing photos of glass floats from Japan, Korea, and elsewhere.

**Close Quarters**

An artist's cross-section lets visitors see the boat's interior, during an unusual period of "down time". It's evident that the three-person crew and skipper are crammed into a very small space. Labels and quotes describe the scene below decks: oil stove and engine, a tiny galley, a six pack of beer or pop, a cribbage game in progress, a Louis L'Amour novel. A "can you find it?" question points out to visitors—if they haven't already noticed—that there is no place to put a bathroom, laundry facilities, or a refrigerator on board the *Thelma C*. First-person stories convey the challenges of living in such close quarters for months at a time.

Interactive #2: A wheel and throttle are mounted along the viewing platform, at child height.

### On the Back Deck

A lively scene depicts the *Thelma C*'s crew working the back deck. Clothed in shirts with cut-off sleeves, Woolrich shirt jackets, and jeans, they wear a variety of hats such as a baseball cap, sou'wester, or halibut hat. Rubber boots, Helly Hanson raingear, and white nylon gloves complete the outfit. Two are busy working the net or stacking net, corks, and lead lines. One is using a plunger to keep fish from escaping. A series of inset views shows fishermen setting the net with the help of the skiff man; visitors see how the fish are caught in the net, and finally loaded onto the boat.

Interactive #3: Visitors follow instructions to make a neat coil of a length of line and fasten it securely to a cleat.

Interactive #4: Visitors use lengths of line to make a clove hitch and a bowline. Line drawings and storytelling instructions make knot-tying fun and doable for all ages.

### An Earthquake Built This Boat

Dramatic photographs contrast the harbor and the town of Kodiak before and after the earthquake and tsunami of March 27, 1964. Powerful eyewitness accounts spell out the losses to the fishing fleet and to the community. *Thelma C*'s history serves as an example of federal programs that helped Kodiak, and all of Alaska, recover from one of the most destructive earthquakes on record.

### Lifeblood of the Community

Quotes—along with easy-to-understand facts—convey the essentials of fishing economics. Visitors learn that a fishing boat is only worth what its owner can earn by fishing. In contrast, an artist's imaginative rendering of an interconnected circle links wild Alaska fish to healthy people, and to the lifeblood of this community, fishing.

Interactive #5: Visitors press a button to hear local musicians sing a sea chantey. The 30-second excerpt, played on a repeater chip, can be changed from time to time.

A photo of a burning boat shows the fate narrowly avoided by *Thelma C*. Quotes from KMM board members explain the difficulty of preserving boats that are no longer in use, and why the choice was made to preserve this vessel.

### Harbor Gateway Signage

To enrich visitors' experience and complement the installation of the *Thelma C*, KMM expects to add interpretive signage along the north and east sides of the harbor. New signs (and replacement signage for the rest of the Harbor, when the time comes) should include the name and logo of the Kodiak Maritime Museum.

Some potential topics:

- Native fishing traditions: subsistence practices, food preservation and preparation, diet.
- From fishing village to remarkable port: the evolution of Kodiak's fishing fleet, harbor and port

- History of fishing management, and its impact on the resource and the industry (from Native weirs to fish traps to present-day harvesting methods)
- The *Star of Kodiak*: its connection to the 1964 earthquake, and its subsequent history
  
- A Fisherman's Year: the seasonal calendar of fishing. What people are fishing for, when they fish, where they go, and how long they stay out.
- The halibut fishery: contrast large and small operations
- Fish camps, set netters, tenders, and canneries
- Talk Like a Fisherman: teach visitors to sound like locals and think like fishermen. All boats are "she," etc.
  
- A guide to the island's museums, highlighting exhibits on maritime history and natural history
  
- Wildlife Watching: show visitors that the birds and mammals they see in the harbor depend on fish, just as people do
- Bears and Fish: acquainting visitors with the fact that most of Kodiak Island is bear refuge; refer them to visitor centers at the refuge and the Fishing Research Center.
  
- Geology of the region: Katmai eruption, earthquake/tsunami, and the plate tectonics that give rise to these events.

### **SATELLITE EXHIBITS**

Display cases at Key Bank and Kodiak College give KMM an inexpensive way to mount changing exhibits on topics of current interest. Business sponsors could underwrite development and production costs. Additional businesses and organizations may be willing to host KMM satellite exhibits. Native communities, school and college classes, youth organizations, service clubs, congregations, and other groups could be invited to organize exhibits under KMM auspices.

A small satellite exhibition can be thought of as the interpretive equivalent of a newspaper feature story. Pausing for a few moments, visitors find a blend of fascinating facts, images, and objects that capture their attention, awaken their interest, and make them want to find out more. At the same time, they associate the display with Kodiak Maritime Museum (and potentially, with a business sponsor as well).

Suggested topics for future satellite exhibits:

- Family histories that represent the experiences of a larger community. For example, the fishing heritage of residents of a Native village; the story of a Filipino family that has lived in Kodiak for several generations; or the perspective of Central American people who are first-generation Kodiak residents.
- Maritime stories that tie Kodiak to other parts of Alaska: mail boats, ferries (and the Pumpkin Run), barges, cruise ships, etc.
- Canneries and cannery workers, past and present. What has changed and what has stayed the same? Feature canneries in remote places, rotating canneries, and more.
- Boat builders: baidarkas, Opheim dories, Mexican shipwrights, and other examples from yesterday and today.
- Fishing shares: new deal or old story? How the system works and what people think of it.
- Whale's Tales: first-person stories of fishermen's encounters with whales (and a whale shark)
- Watch Over Us: fishermen and their congregations. The Blessing of the Fleet and other special occasions where churches and fishing come together.

These are only examples. The mission of the Kodiak Maritime Museum enables the organization to interpret any topic of current and/or historic interest, related to Alaska's maritime heritage.

## PROGRAM IDEAS

### Education programs

- Oral histories

An admirable oral history program, a joint project of KMM, the Alutiiq Museum and the Baranov Museum, deserves ongoing support. Partnerships with K-12 and higher education, and/or public television, could help this valuable material gain wider access. Transcription and indexing become more fundable when oral histories are used as source material for education and research.

- Historic photographs

The photo archive, *Pictures from the Past*, is another vital preservation effort. To step up the collecting pace, KMM might seek a couple of committed volunteers to organize "family album socials" at schools, community centers, and churches. Volunteers would scan family photos related to maritime history, while collecting stories and obtaining permission to use the images. Of course, it would also be advantageous to the Museum to collect original prints and slides. Secure, climate-controlled storage for original photographic material may be found through partnership with another organization. Thumbnail versions of the images can be posted on the KMM web site, along with a PayPal link for ordering jpgs or prints.

- Self-guided tours

Visitors who see Kodiak on their own can easily miss a lot of interesting sights. A printed self-guided tour and map, distributed through hotels and visitor information centers and downloadable from the KMM web site, would be a boon to tourists. KMM could seek a corporate sponsor or sell display ads to support free distribution. A family tour is another possibility, designed as a treasure hunt that takes visitors all over downtown. An audio version, developed by locals with experience in media production, could also be made available as a free download from the Museum web site.

- Talk with a Fisherman

When cruise ship and ferry passengers, and other visitors, are touring the harbor area, and during community events, KMM could invite people to talk with a fisherman. Program participants might listen to a retired fisherman tell stories on the viewing deck of the *Thelma C*, or chat informally with working fishermen at the harbor docks. A portable sign with the KMM logo (and potentially, a business sponsor's name) would direct people to fishermen who have volunteered to talk with visitors about the work they're doing.

- Guided tours of the harbor

This excellent program should be continued and expanded. Consider offering weekend and summer tours led by high school and community college students. Seek workforce development funds to recruit, train, and manage these seasonal employees.

- Customized tours

KMM might experiment with dude fishing programs, combining hands-on experience on a boat or at a fish camp, conversations with old-time fishermen, and a cannery tour. Such a program could initially be offered as an Elderhostel, or as a family camp for a YMCA in Anchorage or Seattle. The partner agency could be asked to assist KMM with planning and arranging the first series of offerings. Another possibility would be to develop a high-end, high-priced maritime history option for private parties, in collaboration with local tour operators.

- Educational traveling trunks

Selected satellite exhibits could be modified to serve as hands-on, in-depth curricular units for schools and youth groups. Grant funds or sponsorships would enable KMM to contract with classroom teachers to plan the contents of each unit, develop lesson plans, and test them in a classroom setting. KMM could partner with school districts and Native communities to circulate these fun and educational resources throughout Kodiak Island.

### Retail opportunities

As a museum without walls, Kodiak Maritime Museum must find innovative ways to connect with potential customers. Here are some ideas for revenue-generating retail projects, consistent with your mission:

- *Celebrating Our Marine Heritage*

This beautiful and informative booklet could be sold in bulk to tour companies and cruise lines as a giveaway to their customers. KMM might consider publishing a second volume, drawing on the graphics and information in the Harbor Gateway project.

- Souvenirs

Most 21<sup>st</sup> century souvenirs of Kodiak seem to be made in China. Kodiak Maritime Museum might consider offering a few attractive and useful souvenir items. Charge enough to make the venture worthwhile; sophisticated travelers will pay more for an authentic item.

It's hard to find postcards that show the real Kodiak. Consider developing a set of 5 or 10 cards using KMM historic images, along with donated beauty shots by local photographers.

Something handmade and affordable for children, such as a jigsaw puzzle, knot-tying game, or carved wooden boat, would be a big hit with grandparents who can't go home without presents. A fun puzzle for all ages consists of a small wood tray filled with wooden cubes. Turning the cubes (and putting the right cube faces upright) reveals images of different fishing boats.

KMM might partner with local craftspeople to produce maritime toys with authentic content. Some artisans might be interested in developing products on commission—such as an Opheim dory in a bottle. Unusual historic items might be marketable beyond Kodiak—at other museums in Alaska, and in maritime museums all over the world.

At the other end of the retail spectrum is CafePress.com, a low-risk, dependable on-line source of souvenirs imprinted with your logo and/or images—screen savers, mouse pads, t-shirts, coffee mugs, etc. It costs very little to set up an account and a link from your web page. The Museum could order a few items for placement in a local retail outlet, find out what sells, then consider ordering larger quantities from a cheaper source.

• Pocket guide to Kodiak

KMM could create a pocket guide to Kodiak's maritime history, perhaps as a joint project with other museums. Written on contract for a publisher, or self-published, the succinct and informative guidebook could cover such topics as:

- the island's marine natural history and watchable wildlife
- the fishing industry, past and present
- Native maritime traditions
- Russian history and influence
- Weather, forecasting, and safety at sea
- the 1964 earthquake and tsunami
- Kodiak today.

The pocket guide might also include self-guided walking and driving tours encompassing working maritime sites such as the harbor, canneries, the dry dock, ferry slips, and the U.S. Coast Guard base; interpretive installations at museums, the Fishing Research Center, the National Wildlife Refuge Center, and the Kodiak Military Museum; and other locations with significant photo displays, such as Tony's Bar, the Kodiak Inn, and the Kodiak High School auditorium.