



CENTRAL COUNCIL

*Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Public Safety Department Hires Kake VPSO

**Juneau, AK** (April 27, 2018) – The Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is pleased to announce its Public Safety department has hired Dean Cavanaugh as the Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) for the community of Kake.

The VPSO program is funded through the State of Alaska and was established in the late 1970s. The program trains and employs individuals as first responders to public safety emergencies to reduce the loss of life in rural Alaskan communities. VPSOs are trained in areas such as search and rescue, fire protection, emergency medical assistance, crime prevention and basic law enforcement.

Dean reported for his first day on April 13, 2018 and will be attending a 16-week VPSO training course through the Department of Public Safety Training Academy in Sitka, Alaska.

Dean is the son of Lolanda (Tlingit) and the late Willis Cavanaugh (Tlingit and Haida). He is of the Eagle Moiety and *Was'ineidi* clan. His Tlingit name is *Shakéutgee*, and his family comes from Kake and Hydaburg, Alaska. Dean was raised in Kake where he graduated from Kake High School in 2007. After living and working in Anchorage, Alaska for nine years, Dean decided to move back to Kake with his fiancé Tauni Minelli and his two sons, Noah (5) and Lucas (2).

“We are really excited to have Dean on board and have someone from the community step up to take on the responsibility of providing public safety in Kake,” said Public Safety Manager Jason Wilson. “Recruitment and retention have been a great challenge not only for Tlingit & Haida, but for the VPSO program as a whole. The Kake VPSO position has been vacant for almost two years and we are happy to have it finally filled, especially by a tribal citizen.”

Tlingit & Haida administers the VPSO program in Southeast Alaska and has operated the VPSO program since 2010. The Public Safety Manager works closely with local municipalities in each community as well as with the Alaska State Troopers to administer the program. The following communities are supported by the VPSO program with eight funded VPSO positions paid through Tlingit & Haida’s payroll system: Angoon, Hydaburg, Kake, Kasaan, Pelican, Saxman and Thorne Bay.

“The VPSO program is essential to the safety of our communities,” said President Richard (*Chalye Éesh*) Peterson. “Our Southeast Alaska communities have experienced first-hand how much a community can suffer and be impacted when there is a lack of public safety services available. I never want to see our Southeast communities without the essential services of public safety and am committed to working with the State of Alaska on pursuing possibilities of compacting Public Safety.”



The community of Kake has also been approved for a second VPSO position that is in the process of being filled. The additional VPSO position will provide more on-duty coverage, back-up in necessary situations, as well as provide coverage in other communities in times of need. The VPSO program is in the process of hiring a Statewide VPSO Program Recruitment & Training Officer to promote the program and to find and refer eligible candidates for all 10 VPSO grantors throughout the State of Alaska.

If you are interested in becoming a VPSO officer in Southeast Alaska, please consider applying and become a first responder by visiting: <https://ccthita.bamboohr.com/jobs/view.php?id=6>.

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