Archaeological Dig Begins Today

Thursday, 19 June 2008

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Mary Donaldson/KMXT

The Baranov and Alutiiq Museums are teaming up to begin an excavation at the historic Baranov Museum site as a part of their Bicentennial Archaeology Project. Mary Donaldson has more.

This year marks the bicentennial anniversary of the construction of the Baranov Museum’s Erskine House. The Russian American Magazin is the oldest building in the state of Alaska. It was originally constructed in 1808 as a warehouse for a Russian-American Company’s storage of sea otter furs before their transit to markets in China and Russia.

Katie Oliver, the executive director at the Baranov Museum says the history of the museum is rich.

(Oliver 1 :31s “…the Erskine house now.”)

The Erskine House is also one of the four remaining Russian-constructed buildings in the U.S.

To mark the 200 year anniversary of the Erskine House, the Baranov Museum is collaborating with the Alutiiq Museum to begin a two week archaeological dig on the Baranov museum grounds to recover any historical artifacts.

Mark Cassell is a historical Archeologist from Territory Heritage Resource Consulting in Anchorage. He will be working on the dig and says it is meant to uncover the past use of the land at this location.

(Cassell 1 :40s “…all the way up into the 1960’s.”)

As part of the excavation, archaeologists and community members will be mapping, surveying and recovering historical artifacts at the location. He also says very little archaeological work has been done at the site previously.

(Cassell 2 :15s “…the Erskine house, ever.”)

Oliver says that there will be many more events taking place in celebration of the bicentennial year for the museum.

(Oliver 2 :31s “…and speeches.”)

She says the first Friday of each month throughout the museum’s bicentennial year will be family fun nights, which will include extended hours and free admission for families to enjoy. The two week dig begins today (Thursday).

I’m Mary Donaldson.

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