

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: ROSSIA, Inc.****Federal Tax ID: 71-0879791****Project Title:****Project Type: Remodel, Reconstruction and Upgrades**

# Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska - Preservation of the Holy Assumption Russian Orthodox Church in Kenai

**State Funding Requested: \$230,000****House District: Kenai Areawide (28-30)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

**Brief Project Description:**

Outbuilding construction and installation of fire and theft systems

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$2,682,953
Funding Already Secured:	(\$20,000)
FY2014 State Funding Request:	(\$230,000)
Project Deficit:	\$2,432,953

*Funding Details:**National Trust for Historic Preservation:*

2012 - \$5,000. 2011 - \$5,000. 2010 - \$5,000.

*Rasmuson Foundation:*

2012 - \$18,215. 2010 - \$25,000

*Alaska Historical Commission:*

2011 - \$20,000

*Alaska Association for Historic Preservation:*

2010 - \$4,000 St. Nicholas

*National Park Service:*

2008 - \$125,492.

*State of Alaska:*

2010 - \$76,000 2012 - \$50,000

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Russian Orthodox churches represent some of the oldest structures in Alaska, and they are at a critical point in their existence as time and weather have taken a toll on these wooden structures. This funding will support assessment, design

and construction efforts for immediate stabilization of roofs and foundations, fire protection, conservation of icons and artifacts and deferred maintenance.

These churches are part of our collective heritage and many hold the distinguished title of National Historic Landmark, our country's highest honor for a historic building. Others are on the National Register of Historic Places. To lose these landmarks to neglect and decay would be a significant cultural and historical loss to our state.

The mission of ROSSIA (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska) is to preserve Alaska's historic Russian Orthodox churches and iconography. ROSSIA has the collective expertise to restore and preserve these churches, and has been working toward this mission for ten years. Started in 2002 by preservation-minded Alaska Native corporation leaders, Orthodox clergy, government officials, architects, and historians, ROSSIA has completed assessments and restoration work in several parts of the state.

ROSSIA is an all-volunteer board with very little administrative overhead. Alaskans often accomplish the work of assessment and restoration. The preservation of the churches included in this funding request, listed below, and the supplemental educational components mean ongoing spiritual practice for current parish members, also. In addition, this funding will maintain the heritage of communities within our state by, increasing heritage tourism dollars, and educating others about our collective history, and by embracing our history as a state.

Details of funding request: This funding request will allow for preservation work including assessment, design and construction, icon restoration and management costs for the immediate needs of the following churches.

Details of funding request:

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Kenai - National Historic Landmark

Restoration Phase II: 2013-2014

1. Outbuilding construction to house furnace/boiler and fire suppression system: \$100,000.00
2. Install fire and theft systems \$130,000.00

### Project Timeline:

Funds will be spent out over the next one to three years depending on individual church projects.

### Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Local Parishes and Diocese of Alaska

### Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Sheri Buretta  
 Title: Chairman  
 Address: 19530 Wingham Circle  
 Eagle River, Alaska 99577  
 Phone Number: (907)227-0595  
 Email: sburetta@chugach-ak.com

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No



# Sitka Historical Society and Museum

330 Harbor Drive Sitka, Alaska 99835

Voice: 907 747 6455 Fax: 907 747 6588

<http://www.sitkahistory.org> / [sitka.history@yahoo.com](mailto:sitka.history@yahoo.com)

## Board of Directors

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January 29, 2013

Sheri Buretta  
Chair: ROSSIA  
Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska  
PO Box 212315  
Anchorage, AK 99521-2315

Dear Ms Burreta:

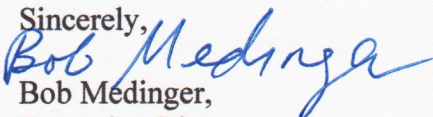
This is a letter in support of St Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Sitka for efforts of historic preservation and conservation under the guidance of ROSSIA (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska.) A grant from the State of Alaska will assist in funding necessary restoration and repair work and ultimately the preservation of Sitka's St Michael's Cathedral, a National Historic Landmark, in the center of historic Sitka. Besides its traditional use as a church, the Cathedral is used for the education and inspiration of heritage tourism as well as for local public social events.

From a tourism marketing perspective, the restoration and preservation of Sitka's beloved building and most frequently used symbol of the City, St Michael's Cathedral, will assure its continued use and presence in the historic downtown district of central Sitka. As a visitor attraction, it offers a vivid and living opportunity for education about the Russian presence in 19<sup>th</sup> century Alaska. As a heritage tourism feature, St Michael's is a unique example of a continuously functioning, traditional Orthodox Cathedral founded by a 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian Saint and still today has a primarily Native Alaskan parish. Since the interior of the bell tower was reconstructed two years ago through a joint community and parish effort, the Cathedral bells have been ringing, bringing joy to visitors and residents alike.

The continued historic preservation, reconstruction, and maintenance of this significant structure are centrally important to the City of Sitka.

The Sitka Historic Society urges you to consider approving a grant for ROSSIA to assure that St Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral will continue to serve the public as well as the local community.

Sincerely,

  
Bob Medinger,  
Executive Director

*Mission: To preserve and promote the events, stories and artifacts of the human history of the Sitka area for the inspiration, education and benefit of the public and future generations.*



January 25, 2013

Ms. Sheri Buretta  
Chairperson  
ROSSIA, Inc.

Dear Ms. Buretta:

Please accept this letter in support of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Juneau in their preservation efforts with ROSSIA, Inc. (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska). A grant from the Alaska State Legislature will assist in financing necessary restorations of and preservation efforts to this church.

From a tourism marketing standpoint, the restoration and preservation of Juneau's only Orthodox church (and the oldest continually functioning Orthodox church building in Southeast Alaska) will assure its continued presence as a visitor attraction and opportunity for education in the Russian presence in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alaska. The unique structure and central location of St. Nicholas make it a popular stop on city walking and driving tours and greatly adds to the flavor of downtown Juneau.

To lose this landmark to neglect and decay would be to lose a local iconic landmark, and it would be Juneau's loss.

The Juneau Convention & Visitors Bureau urges the Alaska State Legislature to approve grant monies for ROSSIA, Inc. so that St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church will continue to flourish.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Arnett  
Interim President/CEO

January 18, 2013

Senator Stevens and Representative Austerman  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Rooms 429 and 505  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stevens and Representative Austerman:

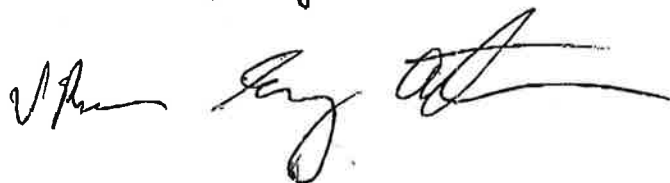
Please accept this letter of support for state funding request of ROSSIA, Inc. (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska) so they may begin the historic preservation of the Saints Sergius/Herman of Valaam Church in Nanwalek, Alaska. ROSSIA Inc.'s mission is the preservation of Alaska's Russian Orthodox Churches and Iconography. Preservation-minded Native corporation leaders, Orthodox clergy, government officials, architects, and historians started the organization in 2002. Their 10-year anniversary marked the continuation of critical work for the heritage of all Alaskans.

The Saints Sergius/Herman of Valaam Church is one of seven churches across the state slated for work through this funding request. ROSSIA, Inc. is requesting \$2,662,953 in total project funds from the State of Alaska, with \$75,000 of those funds going to assessment, design and construction for Saints Sergius/Herman of Valaam. More specifically, funds will be used to begin the work of immediate stabilization of the roof and foundation. We appreciate any support you can offer during this process.

We also invite you and your staff to attend an open house at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Juneau on February 12 from 11:30-12:30 to learn more about the work of ROSSIA, Inc. and see the benefits first hand.

Sincerely,

V Rev. Sergue Active Rector





CALISTA CORPORATION  
www.calistacorp.com

January 23, 2013

Senator Stevens and Representative Edgmon  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Rooms 429 and 410  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stevens and Representative Edgmon:

We ask your support of the state funding request of the organization ROSSIA, Inc. (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska, Inc.) so they may begin historic preservation work on the Saint Sergius of Radzoneh Orthodox chapel in Chuathbaluk, Alaska. The chapel is reported to be the mother church of the region. It was built in 1900, dedicated in 1905, and the community used the original logs for a reconstruction in 1955. There is an active parish with weekly services.

ROSSIA's mission is the preservation of Alaska's Russian Orthodox Churches and Iconography. Preservation-minded Native corporation leaders, Orthodox clergy, government officials, architects, and historians started the organization in 2002. Their 10-year anniversary marked the continuation of critical work for the heritage of all Alaskans.

The St. Sergius of Radzoneh Chapel is one of seven churches across the state slated for work through this funding request. ROSSIA, Inc. is requesting \$2,662,953 in total project funds from the State of Alaska, with \$75,000 of those funds going to assessment, design and construction for St. Sergius of Radzoneh. More specifically, funds will be used to begin the work of immediate stabilization of the roof and foundation. We appreciate any support you can offer during this process.

We also invite you and your staff to attend an open house at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Juneau on February 12 from 11:30-12:30 to learn more about the work of ROSSIA, Inc. and see the benefits first hand.

Sincerely,  
CALISTA CORPORATION

Andrew Guy  
President & CEO



# City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street Sitka, Alaska 99835

*Coast Guard City, USA*

February 1, 2013

Sheri Buretta  
Chair: ROSSIA  
Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska  
PO Box 212315  
Anchorage, AK 99521-2315

Dear Ms Bureta:

This is a letter in support of Sitka's St Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral in its effort to proceed with historic preservation and conservation under the guidance of ROSSIA. A grant from the State of Alaska will contribute to the necessary restoration and repair work and to the accessibility of St Michael's Cathedral.

One of Sitka's economic drivers is its visitor industry. St. Michael's has been an iconic symbol of Sitka for generations; its location in the center of town makes it a dominant presence for both resident and visitor alike, on a daily basis, year-round. Additionally, its active congregation adds a healthy diversity to Sitka's worship community and helps preserve an important part of Alaska's history. St. Michael's is an integral part of our downtown core; its loss would be a huge one.

I urge you to consider approving a grant for ROSSIA to assure that St Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral will continue to serve the public as well as the local community.

Best wishes,

Mim McConnell  
Mayor

C: Assembly

Sheri Buretta  
Chair: ROSSIA  
Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska  
PO Box 212315  
Anchorage, AK 99521-2315

Dear Ms Burreta:

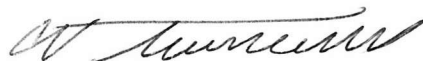
Several years ago I was involved with the project to restore the bell tower of St Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Sitka along with the parish, the Sitka Historical Society, and the National Park Service. My letter supports the preservation and reconstruction efforts planned by ROSSIA (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska) at St Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral in downtown Sitka. A grant from the State of Alaska will contribute to the necessary restoration and repair work there and ultimately to the accessibility of Sitka's St Michael's Cathedral, a National Historic Landmark, to Sitka's visitors as well as the local community.

From a tourism and marketing perspective the preservation of Sitka's most frequently photographed and visible symbol of the City, St Michael's Cathedral, will assure its continued use and presence in the historic downtown district of central Sitka offering visitors and residents an opportunity to learn about the continuing presence of Russian America in Alaska. Since the bell tower was reconstructed two years ago the Cathedral bells have been ringing, bringing more life to Lincoln St.

St Michael's continued presence in the center of Sitka is important to the economic well-being of the community and merchants.

As a fourth-generation merchant and business owner in downtown historic Sitka, I urge you to approve a grant for ROSSIA to confirm that St Michael's Russian Orthodox Cathedral will continue to serve the visiting public as well as the local community.

Sincerely,



Chuck Trierschild ,  
Sitka Business Owner: SITKA BAZAAR  
January 30, 2013





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i OrfJiOfJor CrmrcJi

P. O. Box 1227  
**Kenai, Alaska 99611**  
**(907) 283-4122**



February 3, 2013

Sheri Buretta, Chair  
ROSSIA (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska)  
P.O. Box 212315  
Anchorage, AK 99521-2315

Dear Ms. Buretta,

Please accept this letter of support for the continued work of ROSSIA, Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska, in the preservation of Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Kenai, Alaska. Built in 1896, our church is the principal and most enduring representative of Russian culture in Southcentral Alaska. It is one of only 49 National Historic Landmarks in the state of Alaska.

We are an active parish and the church remains in use for regular, weekly services. It is also open to visitors for tours regularly throughout the summer and by appointment in the winter. Thousands of visitors tour this National Historic Landmark every year.

Thanks to ROSSIA and the National Park Service, our parish has accomplished much work together toward the preservation of the church. We are midway through our five-year plan for this important site.

As you know, work completed thus far includes four key components:

1. Securing the building to its foundation with steel infrastructure;
2. Replacing the rotten log walls;
3. Repairing the front porch, and;
4. Developing an accessible entry into the church.

**A National Historic Landmark**

We understand that ROSSIA is requesting \$717,151 in project funds from the State of Alaska, going specifically to the assessment, design, construction, and icon restoration for the Holy Assumption church in Kenai.

On behalf of the entire parish, I would certainly appreciate your support of our request as the process continues.

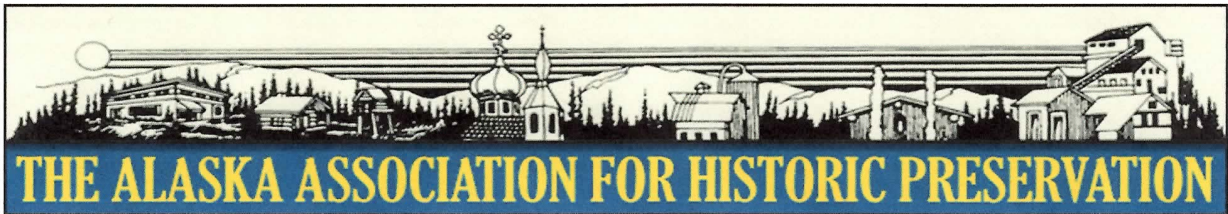
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Thomas".

Father Thomas Andrew, Rector

Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church

A National Historic Landmark



January 30, 2013

To The Legislative Body of the State of Alaska  
Juneau, AK

It has come to our attention that an appropriation request is being submitted to the Legislature by ROSSIA (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites In Alaska). As the principal non-profit, statewide organization advocating and promoting preservation of historic sites and structures in Alaska, AAHP (the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation) wishes to convey its strong support for this funding request from ROSSIA.

With well over two hundred years of Orthodox tradition, The Russian Orthodox Church has left a historic imprint over much of our state. With many churches still in operation, to date in Alaska, six Orthodox church properties are noted as National Historic Landmarks and twenty-three are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Beyond these twenty-nine listed properties, another half dozen or so have already succumbed to the ravages of Alaska weather and benign neglect and will go unrecognized due to their advanced loss of material integrity.

The importance of this legacy is illustrated by such a variety as St. Michael's Cathedral in Sitka, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Juneau, St. George the Great Martyr Church on St. George Island, Presentation of Our Lord Chapel in Nikolai, St. Nicholas Chapel in Igiugig, and Transfiguration of Our Lord Church in Pilot Station, to name a few. These properties continue to actively represent a vital part of Alaskans' historical and spiritual culture, particularly in many of our smaller bush communities. The full list is available at [www.rossialaska.org/churches](http://www.rossialaska.org/churches).

Over the past ten years, ROSSIA has shown itself to be an organization very capable in the process of planning and executing several important restoration and preservation projects. Their most recent project at Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church in Kenai successfully implemented some much needed structural repairs funded in part by a grant of federal funds.

We believe the funding request by ROSSIA will be well used to implement further work at the Kenai church and at St. Michael's Cathedral in Sitka, both National Historic Landmarks, the nation's highest category of recognition for historical significance.

It will also serve to support work required on five National Register churches -- St. Nicholas Church in Juneau, Ascension of Our Lord Chapel in Karluk, St. Sergius of Radzoneh in Chuathbaluk, Old St. Nicholas Church in Eklutna, and Saints Sergius/Herman of Valaam Church in Nanwalek.

AAHP appreciates your sincere attention to this request.

Kind regards,

Anne Elise Pollnow, AAHP President

P.O. Box 102205 Anchorage, AK 99510-2205  
Main: (907) 929-9870 Email: [akpreservation@gmail.com](mailto:akpreservation@gmail.com)  
[www.aahp-online.net](http://www.aahp-online.net)

February 2, 2013,

Representative Mike Chenault  
House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capital  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Chenault,

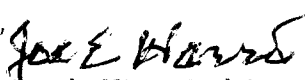
Kenai Peninsula Historical Association is dedicated to preserving history on the Kenai. As you are aware, history here is quite diverse. As such, we offer this letter of support for the continued work of ROSSIA, Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska, in the preservation of Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Kenai, Alaska. Built in 1896, our church is the principal and most enduring representative of Russian culture in Southcentral Alaska. As you likely know, it has an active parish and the church remains in use for regular, weekly services. It is also open to visitors for tours regularly throughout the summer and by appointment in the winter.

ROSSIA's mission is the preservation of Alaska's Russian Orthodox Churches and Iconography. It was started in 2002 by preservation-minded Native corporation leaders, Orthodox clergy, government officials, architects, and historians. Their 10-year anniversary marks the continuation of critical work for the heritage of all Alaskans.

Over the past several years, ROSSIA and the Holy Assumption parish have accomplished much work toward the preservation of the church, a National Historic Landmark. We are midway through our goals for this important site. Work completed includes four key components: securing the building to its foundation, stabilizing the rotten log walls, repairing the front porch and developing an accessible entry into the church. ROSSIA is now working with our community to construct an outbuilding, which will house a mechanical room, restroom and gift shop in an effort to further the restoration of Holy Assumption. Additional preservation efforts are underway including the restoration of the bell tower and the development of a museum in the Narthex of the church.

ROSSIA is requesting \$2,662,953 in total project funds from the State of Alaska, with \$717,151 of those funds going specifically to the assessment, design, construction, and icon restoration for Holy Assumption in Kenai. Our church is one of seven churches across the state slated for work through this funding request. We would certainly appreciate your support of our request as the process continues.

Sincerely,



Kenai Peninsula Historical Association, Joe Harris, President

February 2, 2013,

Representative Kurt Olson  
House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capital  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Olson,

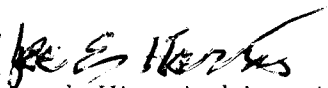
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Sincerely,



Kenai Peninsula Historical Association, Joe Harris, President

February 2, 2013,

Senator Micciche  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capital Rooms 125  
Juneau, AK 99801

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Sincerely,



Kenai Peninsula Historical Association, Joe Harris, President

February 2, 2013

Sheri Buretta, Chair  
ROSSIA  
PO Box 212315  
Anchorage, AK 99521-2315

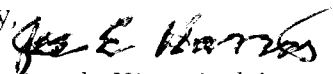
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Sincerely,



Kenai Peninsula Historical Association, Joe Harris, President