Saturday March 24, 2012, 8:30 am - 4 pm, the Dene-Yeniseian Workshop will be held at ANLC & Brooks Bldg, Gathering Room

Watch for workshop program, readings, & live webcast instructions at www.uaf.edu/anlc/dy

Tuesday March 27, 2012, 7 pm, Schaible Auditorium, UAF
free public lecture sponsored by Alaska Native Language Center

The Peopling of the Americas and the Dene-Yeniseian Connection
Prof. Edward J. Vajda
Western Washington University

Data from archaeology, human genetics, and linguistics are providing a clearer understanding of how the American continents were first colonized by peoples from Siberia and Asia’s Pacific Rim. Archeological remains, along with patterns in the distribution of human DNA, reveal much about the first peopling of the Americas. Historical-comparative language studies can add a third perspective. While most languages spoken in North Asia today were brought northward by pastoral peoples relatively recently and show no connection to those spoken in the Americas, the Ket language, spoken by a small group of forest hunters in the Yenisei River area of central Siberia, is related to North America’s Tlingit, Eyak, and Athabaskan languages – a family called Na-Dene. Evidence includes systematic correspondences in consonants, vowels, and tones, as well as parallel verb structure. The presentation discusses the role of linguistic fieldwork in uncovering this link and emphasizes what the comparison adds to our understanding of prehistoric migrations across the Bering Strait region.

The Dene-Yeniseian Connection (2010, ed. by Kari & Potter) 367 pp., $40 is available at www.uaf.edu/anlc/dy or at UAF at 310 Eielson Bldg. or 400 Brooks Bldg.