

January 31, 2020

As the Explore Fairbanks Team roars into the '20s, we'd like to pause to relay our heartfelt gratitude for your support of the local travel industry.

As we gather information on 2019, indicators point to another banner year for tourism in the Fairbanks region. These successes reflect the commitment of the tourism industry to make investments in our community and to create a customer base that sustains local businesses throughout the year. Explore Fairbanks along with our industry partners generate far-flung awareness and reputation for the region that supports all economic sectors. Tourism truly builds community. A few of the highlights for 2019 are:

- Hotel/Motel Tax collections in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, including the cities of Fairbanks and North Pole, increased by an estimated 2% to mark the fifth consecutive year of record-breaking increases. Passenger traffic at the Fairbanks International Airport and along the railbelt Anchorage-Denali-Fairbanks also increased. Cross-Gulf cruise passengers increased by 11%.
- The Explore Fairbanks Visitor Services team welcomed a record number of 164,000 guests to Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center.
- As we gravitate more to digital advertising, our two campaigns through Travel Spike resulted in 2.5 million impressions yielding more than 26,000 clicks with a click-through rate of 0.35%.
- The number of new visitors to the [www.explorefairbanks.com](http://www.explorefairbanks.com) website increased 25% with a total of 424,691; total page views were 1.3 million, a 17% over 2018; and the 98,674 returning visitors marked a 24% increase.
- Social media engagement also increased. Facebook "likes" jumped 15% to end the year with 263,269; Twitter followers upped by 5%; and Instagram followers swelled by 55%.
- In 2019, our community welcomed the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention for the sixth time since this annual gathering reconvened in Fairbanks in 2005 after a 16-year hiatus. Explore Fairbanks coordinated nine local planning committees that worked together to prepare for and host "convention week."
- Volunteers in our Golden Heart Greeter program contributed 5,234 hours of service.
- We managed 31 media tours with 50 participants. Positive press on the region was featured in a wide range of print, broadcast and on-line media, such as *The Daily Beast*, United Airlines in-flight magazine *Hemispheres*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Northwest Military*, 11-minute feature on San Francisco-based KRON TV Channel, and the Japan-based *VISA* magazine with a two million-plus circulation.
- We introduced the region to nearly 200 international and domestic travel trade representatives as they participated in on-the-ground tours. Local tourism businesses donated more than a quarter of a million dollars of in-kind goods and services to support these excursions. We participated in 14 trade shows and sales missions in the USA and overseas. In addition, Explore Fairbanks continued contracts with firms in both China and northern Europe to represent the region in these two key travel markets.

We are honored to work with you for the good of our community. Enclosed please find the Explore Fairbanks' 2020 *Official Visitors Guide* and the *2019/20 Winter Guide*. If you would like multiple copies, please email Executive and Finance Coordinator Judy Dellinger at [jdellinger@explorefairbanks.com](mailto:jdellinger@explorefairbanks.com).

With warm regards for a productive and happy 2020,



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