



PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT JUNE 2021

Passion and awareness and the road to recovery

Jack Johnson of Destinations International, an organization that represents destination marketing and management professionals, has been publishing a series of blog postings related to the core values of an effective destination organization. These are values identified by Destinations International that are integral to developing a successful community alignment roadmap to align public support around a shared vision for a destination, and include passion, awareness, transparency, inclusiveness, engagement, collaboration, innovation, stewardship and relevance.

On the [value of destination passion](#), Johnson writes the following:

“We define destination passion as an intense enthusiasm for our destination, our community, and its people. We are passionate about our destination. We have a strong desire to strengthen the community’s economic position and vitality and provide an opportunity for all its residents. And it is with enthusiasm and eagerness that we seek to tell the world the story of our destination, of our history, of our culture, of our community and of our people.”



One of the many reasons I made the decision to pursue the position of president of Explore Fairbanks, a very daunting task given I would be attempting to step into the shoes of Deb Hickok after 22 years of exemplary leadership that redefined both our destination and our organization, was because of the small but mighty team here who are truly passionate about our destination. Even during this last year and a half with salary reductions and increased workloads due to layoffs and attrition, that passion never wavered...and, in fact, it flourished.

The Explore Fairbanks team pictured above represent a combined 114 years of service to the organization and more than 400 years of calling the Golden Heart of Alaska their home. That longevity in both areas connects to the second value, awareness, of which [Johnson writes the following](#):

“If you are passionate about something, you should know a lot about it. And while no one person will know everything, a destination organization filled with passionate and aware people will be able to answer most questions about a destination because someone on the team will know the answer to the questions. Passion drives awareness. And awareness makes you and your team the destination experts – for visitors and residents alike.”



Passion and awareness go beyond the Explore Fairbanks team, those attributes can be found within **you**, the close to 400 partners that make up our membership and have had to endure dramatic hardships over the last year and a half that truly crippled our beloved industry. You persevered and worked harder than ever as well, with a sense of resiliency and dedication that is so indicative of who we are as an industry and a community.

We're on the road to recovery, but there is much work to do. To that end, we want to be sure that here at Explore Fairbanks we have that opportunity to check in with our partners --- who define our destination just as much as Mother Nature --- to hear how you are doing. Next Friday, June 18th at 10a.m., I would like to invite you to join us for a virtual "coffee chat" so that we can update you on what we are doing at Explore Fairbanks to move us down that road to recovery, but more importantly, for you

to provide updates and insights on how the season is going for you now and looking ahead. We're planning to hold these informal chats on a monthly basis throughout the summer and would love for you to join us. No registration needed. Pop in and say hi.

Thank you for all that you do. We're in this together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott McCreary". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

President and CEO