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March 4, 2009

Dear Representative Guttenberg aka Dave:

The Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau is asking for your support for small businesses in Fairbanks and the Interior. You can do this by supporting the marketing funding for the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA).

Entrepreneurialism is one of the hallmarks of the Alaska visitor industry. These local business owners and their employees are your neighbors, friends and constituents. Furthermore, tourism has a ripple effect throughout our community, generating construction, transportation and countless other services, infrastructure and quality-of-life benefits to our community.

The beauty of a state destination campaign is that it reaches a depth and breadth of potential customers that is beyond the reach of most small businesses. Destinations operate in a fiercely competitive marketing environment which becomes even more ferocious in trying economic times such as these.

The success of our "mom-and-pop" businesses is not only creativity, hard work and persistence but also relies on the success of the ATIA campaigns. On a daily basis, the FCVB sees the benefits of the marketing and sales efforts of ATIA. Please support small business by doing the following this legislative session:

- Continue the reinvestment of vehicle rental tax revenues into Alaska's tourism marketing program [QTA contract] at the \$9 million level in the FY10 operating budget. This will be matched with \$2.7 million in private-sector funds, including funding from FCVB.
- Pass legislation to provide a tax credit to payers of the Cruise Line Corporate Income Tax for contributions to Alaska's tourism marketing program. The goal should be to sustainably grow Alaska's tourism marketing funding to at least \$20 million. 50% of Fairbanks' summer visitation is cruise related. Let this tax credit help us to grow small businesses in Alaska and to grow our winter tourism season!
- Measure the results of Alaska's tourism marketing reinvestment. Appropriate \$850,000 in the FY10 capital budget to fund the Alaska Visitor Statistics Program, an economic impact study. FCVB cannot afford this kind of important research on our own.

Now in my tenth year at FCVB, over the years, I have seen our marketing team work hand-in-hand with the ATIA marketing team to bring visitors to Fairbanks and the Interior. We feel blessed to share our wonderful Alaska product with visitors from throughout the world.

On a personal note, I have made my living since 1982 as a destination marketing professional. I feel personally blessed to have challenging work in a field that I feel passionate about while supporting my child.

Last but certainly not least, thank you for your tireless efforts in Juneau. It is an honor to work with you to foster the economic development of our community.

I'll be in Juneau on April 1 and 2 and look forward to seeing you then. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (907) 459-3770 or dhickok@explorefairbanks.com.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Hickok". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Deb Hickok
President and CEO