



Haines Tourism Department Haines, Alaska

March 9, 2009

Senator Albert Kookesh
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Kookesh:

I'm writing to you today not only as the Haines Tourism Director, but also a citizen concerned about my small Alaska community. I'm sure you understand better than most the impact tourism has these small communities. Unfortunately, this small-town challenge is now state-wide as many states in our nation are vying for those tourist dollars to sustain their own economies.

Haines is blessed with extra attention this year through acknowledgements such as being number five on Trip Advisor's top 10 places to visit in 2009 and being one of the four Alaska communities to host the Smithsonian New Harmonies music exhibit for six weeks. But Haines faces some very huge challenges for this season and most especially for next year. Fewer visitors means less money being spent in the community and less funding for local marketing efforts.

You might ask what this has to do with my request of your support for ATIA's tourism marketing programs. Small communities have small budgets for their CVBs and tourism departments. To maximize those dollars and have a presence to be state competitive in the national as well as global realm of attracting visitors, destinations like Haines take advantage of special co-op advertising, sharing booth space at trade shows, and participating in trade missions.

I position Haines to ride the marketing coattails of ATIA. Thanks to a revision in structure of CVB membership contributions to ATIA, Haines has been able to broaden its coverage of the ATIA marketing programs offered. Here are a few of the ways Haines is able to market itself in the national and global playing field because of ATIA's programs:

- Haines is able to have a presence in seven consumer shows ATIA attends through their brochure distribution program.
- Haines participates in at least three of the cooperative advertising publications ensuring we are part of the Alaska picture for potential visitors. An example of this success is the March 2009 ad in *Good Housekeeping* which to date has resulted in over 1,000 individual requests for Haines information.

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- Haines is able to distribute vacation planners and work the ATIA booth at conventions such as NTA (National Tour Association) where we have appointments and meet with package tour operators bringing groups to Alaska. This also allows Haines to participate in the Dine-Around Event where a select group of operators are treated to evening of Alaska while people such as me are able to spend time them promoting my community.
- Haines was able to attend a foreign trade mission with ATIA to New Zealand and Australia. ATIA handled the arrangements for meetings with and presentations to nearly 300 travel agents, package tour operators, and travel media in four major cities. Local Haines hoteliers and B&Bs are reporting an increase in bookings from this market. This includes an Australian tour operator adding four additional group tours to his Alaska program with Haines in the itinerary.
- Haines is also able to attend Alaska Media Roadshow and work with ATIA's public relations company to get the word out about our unique features, attractions, and events such as the above mentioned Smithsonian exhibit and our status with Trip Advisor.

This is just a few of the programs Haines takes part in with ATIA. There is no way the Haines tourism budget could absorb the cost of doing this all on our own. It's the same scenario with all small Alaska communities trying to attract visitors. While this participation in such programs is vitally important for smaller communities, it also makes the big picture of Alaska as a destination all the more appealing.

Haines has enjoyed the enrichment of tourism and knows too well about the impact when losing these visitors. The state as a whole may experience this same situation to some degree if funding is reduced and programs are cut. Now is not the time to diminish the marketing efforts for Alaska. It is still the dream of many that can come true. It is more important than ever the legislature support the state's tourism marketing programs, which in turn, trickle down to support communities such as Haines.

Bottom line, visitors spend money and tourism creates jobs; all resulting in people in Alaska circulating money through the systems that sustain local, regional, and the state economies. I respectfully ask you and your colleagues consider the ATIA proposals so all in tourism can do their part in supporting the great state of Alaska in this challenging economic time.

Your Haines Tourism Director,

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