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## **American Bus Association names World Eskimo-Indian Olympics and Midnight Sun Festival two of North America's 100 Best Events for 2016**

*Fairbanks, Alaska* - The American Bus Association (ABA) announced that Fairbanks is host to two of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2016. Inclusion in the Top 100 list, published as a supplement to the September/October issue of *Destinations* magazine, indicates that both the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics and Midnight Sun Festival offer excellent entertainment value to both tour groups and individual travelers from around the world, according to ABA. Through nomination by Explore Fairbanks, the 2016 Top 100 Events Selection Committee considered the event's broad appeal, their accessibility to motorcoaches and skill at handling large groups, and a variety of other relevant criteria.

"Congratulations to WEIO and the Midnight Sun Festival for being included in ABA's 2016 Top 100 Events in North America list," said Explore Fairbanks Director of Tourism Scott McCrea. "Events such as these, along with the many other ones that we proudly celebrate in Fairbanks, play an important role in our local visitor industry and help define us as a year-round destination."

At the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, Native peoples of the Far North gather to participate in games of strength, endurance, balance and agility, along with dancing and storytelling. Visitors learn about Alaska Native culture and witness their incredible athleticism; feel the beat of the drums and get carried away by the timeless song and motion of traditional dance; and appreciate the skills of carving, beading, weaving and sewing handed down for generations.

The Midnight Sun Festival, put on by the Downtown Association of Fairbanks invites visitors to join locals in celebration of the summer solstice in downtown Fairbanks, Alaska, as they bask in 24-hour daylight just 200 miles from the Arctic Circle. The festival is Alaska's largest single-day event, with a 35-year history of celebrating sunshine in the Golden Heart city. The 12-hour street fair is marked by 30,000 attendees perusing hundreds of vendors and 33 live performances, and is host to gold panning, break dancing and a climbing wall. Musical guests, tasty treats and a family-friendly atmosphere make this a "don't miss event."

"The attractiveness of these two events as don't-miss entertainment values are only part of why their selection this year is such a distinction for Fairbanks," said Peter J. Pantuso, CTIS, ABA's president and CEO. "The real news here is that Fairbanks has been recognized as a potential magnet for tourism dollars, at a time when reenergizing domestic tourism is so important to our spirit and our economy. These honors give Fairbanks an important boost in visibility among professional tour planners."

According to studies completed by researchers at Dunham and Associates, one overnight visit by a motorcoach group can leave up to \$25,000 in a local destination's economy. Those dollars are spent on lodging, meals, admissions, fees, shopping, souvenirs, services and local taxes.

"Tour groups spend more and stay longer," Pantuso said. "That's why these two events are truly local economic assets. There is no better way to jump-start tourism than to attract motorcoach groups to a great event and convince them to extend their stay."

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#### **About Explore Fairbanks**

Explore Fairbanks is a non-profit marketing organization whose mission is to be an economic driver in the Fairbanks region by marketing to potential visitors and optimizing the visitor experience. Explore Fairbanks markets Fairbanks as a year-round destination by promoting local events, attractions and activities to independent travelers, group tour operators, travel agents, meeting planners and the media.