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Knock Northern Lights Viewing Off Your Bucket List in Fairbanks During Aurora Season

Fairbanks, Alaska (AK) – Want to knock northern lights viewing off your bucket list? Fairbanks is one of the best places on earth to do just that. Fairbanks' renowned aurora viewing lures people from all over the world during the Aurora Season from August 21 to April 21. The community's location is ideal for northern lights viewing because it is directly under the "Auroral Oval" – a ring-shaped zone over the far north where aurora activity is concentrated. Additionally, low precipitation in Fairbanks contributes to consistently clear nights. All combined these variables make the Fairbanks region an outstanding destination for possible aurora viewing.

Due to the fact that Fairbanks is an obvious choice for northern lights viewing, Explore Fairbanks has built the Aurora Tracker for the website to assist visiting chasers. The Aurora Tracker correlates three individual streams of data in order to predict northern lights viewing opportunities for six locations in the Fairbanks region. Data streams include: aurora forecast data from the Geophysical Institute, weather forecast data for specific northern lights viewing locations and the amount of daylight hours. The aurora will be visible in Fairbanks an average of four out of five nights when the sky is clear and dark enough. Visitors who stay a minimum of three nights and are actively out during the late evening hours increase their chance of seeing the aurora by more than 90 percent.

The solar wind occurs daily and is the wellspring of most aurora activity. Additionally, there are occasional solar storms, correlated with sun spots and the 11-year solar cycle, that also create auroras. Because of our far north position under the "Auroral Oval," Fairbanks is not impacted by the 11-year solar cycle that affects aurora viewing in other parts of the world. "Since any auroral activity, even at the lowest level, is visible from Fairbanks, observing is not affected by the solar cycle," said Don Hampton, Research Assistant Professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute.

There are many intriguing ways for visitors to chase the aurora in Fairbanks. They can drive to a nearby vantage point and wait for them to appear, view them from a heated "aurorium" cabin or lodge away from the city, see them on a dog sled adventure, or even on a tour farther north above the Arctic Circle. Many lodging properties in Fairbanks offer a wake-up call to alert guests when the lights are out. Once visitors have witnessed the aurora, they can stop by the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center in downtown Fairbanks for a free, personalized aurora certificate from Explore Fairbanks. There are no guarantees, but the longer visitors are here, the better their chances of seeing a great light show.

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About Explore Fairbanks

Explore Fairbanks is a non-profit marketing and management 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 as well as by developing public policy and infrastructure to achieve marketing objectives. Find out more at explorefairbanks.com.