

WILD REVIEW

A VISITOR INDUSTRY UPDATE PUBLISHED BY
VISIT ANCHORAGE

May 2022



WORKING ON WORKFORCE

Visit Anchorage's enhanced effort to help with hiring has hit full stride. This year put added emphasis on filling jobs in Alaska tourism by targeting Alaskans looking for a temporary job or new start, reaching out to groups including retirees, teachers, college students in the Lower 48 looking for an enjoyable and enviable summer job, and mid-career professionals in search of new and rewarding experiences along their career path.

Since late 2021, the jobs page on [Anchorage.net](https://www.visitanchorage.net) has featured more than 50 members detailing several hundred open positions in the industry. Digital paid advertising significantly increased traffic to the jobs section of Anchorage.net, surpassing 10,000 pageviews in the first months of 2022; it was a top 10 landing page on the site in Q1.

Involvement in local job fairs and limited virtual opportunities with Lower 48 colleges further developed the pipeline of qualified candidates for seasonal positions. Visit Anchorage promoted travel and tourism jobs at local job fairs through the Anchorage airport, UAA, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc., King Tech, and a tourism job fair hosted by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

"Employment won't be a short-term issue," said Jack Bonney, Visit Anchorage's community engagement director. "People need better pathways into Anchorage's travel and tourism jobs and fewer barriers keeping them out of the workforce more generally. Solutions will take time and focus."

Expect workforce initiatives to shift in Q2 and beyond to longer term planning and program coordination to introduce opportunities in the industry to a new cohort of locals, better prepare students and new hires, attract new talent to Alaska, and retain an experienced labor pool. The initiative also has government relations elements, as Visit Anchorage shares industry needs and challenges on workforce-related issues including childcare, transportation, and housing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Working on Workforce	1
Letter from the President	2
Workforce Partnerships	3
Leaders & Lawmakers	3
Hosted Journalists	4
Sales Update	5
Membership Update	6
VIC Update	6



524 W Fourth Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2212
907.276.4118

[Anchorage.net](https://www.visitanchorage.net)

VISIT ANCHORAGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Sonya Wellman, Chair
Rasmuson Foundation

Jin Chen, Vice Chair
Brilliant Connection Consulting

Schawna Thoma, Secretary
Northern Compass Group

Tom Marriage, Treasurer
MILEPOST/Alaska Magazine

Nina Bonito Romine, Past Chair
The Kobuk

DIRECTORS

Allison Bendis
Klondike Promotions

Lori Brewer
Caffe D'arte/
Alaska Coffee & Restaurant Equipment

Lanie Downs
Cruise Line International
Association Alaska

Raquel Edelen
Hotel Captain Cook

Nicole Geils
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center

Scott Habberstad
Alaska Airlines

Mandy Hawes
Get Lost Travel Vans

Glen Hemingson
Alaska Skylar Travel

Lisa Kruse
Phillips Cruises and Tours

Jacob Lyon
Premier Alaska Tours

Angie Oberlitner
Alaska Step-on-Guides

Kameron Perez-Verdia
Municipality of Anchorage Assembly

Pete Petersen
Anchorage Assembly

Jim Powell
Judy's Touch of Class B&B

Michele Robuck
Alaska Mint

Kate Sprout
Hilton Anchorage

Doug Thompson
Princess Cruises & Tours

Dale Wade
Alaska Railroad

Toni Walker
Logistics, LLC

EX OFFICIO BOARD ADVISORS

Bill Popp
Anchorage Economic
Development Corporation

Chris Swalling
Swalling & Associates, PC

PRESIDENT & CEO

Julie Saupe
Visit Anchorage

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Guide to Summer 2022: Be Excellent, and Be Excellent to Each Other

Summer is here. It is shaping up to be a big one, though it continues to defy easy prediction. It almost doesn't make sense to compare to prior years anymore. Perhaps it's enough to say that all indications point to a strong season, though one with some singular challenges.

Some of the challenges we face might prove to be temporary bumps, while others may need nuanced approaches and take time to solve. Know that Visit Anchorage is here to support you.

Our marketing and promotions initiatives are bigger and better and will continue to help fill the seats and rooms in the months ahead. Meetings have resumed in the convention centers and hotel ballrooms, and sales efforts will regrow that business in the years to come. And now, we are looking to what's needed next for the longer term. Whether that's better educating your new staff (and enticing adventurous locals) through the expanded Frontline Trade Show, working with community partners on long-term workforce solutions, or engaging with elected leaders to ensure industry issues and needs are understood and continue to get support. Keep reading this issue to learn more about what we've been working on.

Those of us in Alaska tourism tend to focus on what needs to get done, remain eager to jump into tasks, and willing to put others first. If you don't believe me, invite a bunch of us over, and watch how many immediately start helping set up tables and start moving chairs around to prepare, and also how graciously they suggest someone else be first to the snacks.

You are likely already deep into the daily: how many rooms need to be turned, or how to keep the fleet on schedule, or how to seat everyone who's booked, or how to schedule staff to get it all done.

Take a moment. Step back. Remember that the reward of all this work is helping people see and experience Alaska the way we do as locals. All of that work is to make someone's trip one they'll enjoy, one that they'll relive for a lifetime, and (hopefully) one that they'll rave about to their friends.

Be good to each other. Despite Alaska's grand scale, it's still a place that can feel deceptively small. We're all interconnected, and we need one another to succeed and thrive. Support your partners as they support you. Patience and understanding will go a long way, even in the whirlwind of activity that is summer.

I'm confident we can deliver. Despite new challenges, we'll all make it work.

Thank you,

Julie Saupe
President & CEO



3 WAYS TO PARTNER ON WORKFORCE

Host an ASD intern

The Anchorage School District's Career and Technical Education Program connects high school juniors and seniors with internship opportunities across the private sector. Student interns gain credit and real-world experience, and complete the program in 60 hours. The next cohort of internships take place over a 6-10 week period from October - December. To explore opportunities, visit <https://www.asdk12.org/Page/14073>.

Connect with CITC Youth Employment Program

Cook Inlet Tribal Council places Alaska Native and Native American youth age 14-25 in the private sector through a year-round internship program. The three sessions run June to August, October to December, and February to May. To get started, contact Meg Mielke at mamielke@citci.org.

Create a School Business Partnership

This long-running program through the Anchorage School District matches businesses with schools for a mutual benefit. The partnership is designed to serve both student needs and business mission. Contact executive director Collete Moring to explore opportunities at Moring_Colette@asdk12.org.



Director of community engagement, Jack Bonney, attending the King Tech Spring Hiring Event.

LEADERS, LEGISLATORS & LAWMAKERS

Visit Anchorage joined the Anchorage Assembly for a worksession on the American Rescue Plan Act in the Dena'ina Center on March 3. The worksession was an opportunity to share the achievements of the marketing and business relief initiatives funded in 2021 through the first tranche of federal funds, and to consider ongoing needs and ideas for the second disbursement, expected to arrive this summer. Visit Anchorage also reached out to assembly candidates prior to the April 5 election. Candidate surveys help better inform members on the positions of office seekers, and help expand the candidates' understanding of the industry as well.

Visit Anchorage President & CEO Julie Saupe was also one of four tourism leaders from across the state to testify before the House Committee on Arctic Policy, Economic Development, and Tourism on March 24. Remarks focused on the gains of 2021, the outlook for 2022, and the opportunities and challenges for the industry. Legislative work in Juneau has also included testimony supporting trails projects in the Capitol budget for FY2023 as part of the Alaska Long Trail initiative, and advocacy for sustained statewide marketing efforts.

Conversations with Alaska's federal delegation continued during the U.S. Travel Association's Destination Capitol Hill event on April 6.

"Coming from Alaska, I'm always proud of how our representatives understand and support tourism," Saupe said. "When the entire industry works together, we see success – and it starts with planting seeds and advocating for the industry. This year, we planted seeds about future workforce needs, including visa issues, and policies to support the return of the international traveler, cruise, and business travel."



HOTEL NUMBERS

March saw a continuation of year-over-year growth for Anchorage hotels in ADR, demand, and RevPAR. March occupancy was 72%, higher than historically seen for the March monthly average (Anchorage hotels typically don't pass 70% occupancy until May). This follows one of the better Februaries on record, at least in terms of hotel revenue: February 2022 saw ADR up to \$131 and demand up 20% compared to February 2021. Dive into more Anchorage hotel insights at [Anchorage.net/for-businesses/members-only/member-news/](https://www.visitanchorage.net/for-businesses/members-only/member-news/).



ORCHESTRATED INSIGHTS

Get ready to enjoy access to a deeper pool of analytics and industry insights. Visit Anchorage is completing the onboarding process with Tourism Economics' Symphony, a data processing and report platform designed to create a centralized database for important research. This means more informed decision-making for member businesses, and smarter growth for our entire community. Stay tuned for more: Bookmark [Anchorage.net/for-businesses/members-only/travel-research](https://www.visitanchorage.net/for-businesses/members-only/travel-research).

SIMPLEVIEW SUMMIT

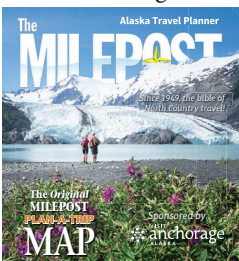
Visit Anchorage staff members attended the annual Simpleview Summit in Phoenix, Arizona April 10-13, networking with other DMOs and participating in numerous educational sessions and workshops covering everything from destination marketing to tech tools designed to improve the visitor experience. Expect to see some of these techniques put to use optimizing Visit Anchorage sales and marketing efforts over the long term; others will make an immediate impact for visitors and residents alike (think improved trail maps at Anchorage.net, inspiring new website content, and more).



Visit Anchorage staff attending the Simpleview Summit in Arizona.

MILEPOST

Travelers using The Milepost to plan a trip to Alaska now have access to a new tool: A full-size pullout map of Alaska features Anchorage destination information including the wide array of experiences available throughout the year. Made possible with funding from the Municipality of Anchorage, the map is poised to help thousands of visitors spend more time in the Anchorage area, benefiting businesses throughout the municipality.



HOSTED JOURNALISTS

The first quarter of 2022 brought a raft of hosted journalist visits and positive media coverage produced with Visit Anchorage assistance. Hosted travel writers included:

- Jessica Poitevien, a Florida-based freelance travel journalist whose work has appeared in TravelAge West, Travel + Leisure, Conde Nast Traveler, Fodor's, National Geographic Traveler, and The Daily Beast.
- Oklahoma-based freelance writer Heide Brandes and travel photographer Lyle Kilgore traveled to Anchorage in mid-March to visit the Alaska Native Heritage Center, research winter adventures, and explore Anchorage's craft brew and coffee scene for pitches to TravelAwaits, Fodor's, Cowboys & Indians, and National Geographic.



Sherry Ott ice fishing on Cheney Lake.



Matthew Wastradowski exploring Spencer Glacier.

- Sherry Ott, a freelance travel writer and author of Ottsworld Travel Blog, returned to Anchorage in March for a FAM tour and whirlwind of winter activities.
- Orgeon-based travel and outdoors freelance writer Matthew Wastradowski traveled to Alaska March 9-19, researching an article about aurora watching for AAA Via. Wastradowski's work has previously appeared in Outside, Northwest Travel & Life, REI Co-op Journal, and OnTrak Magazine.
- Chris McLennan, a commercial photographer, traveled to Anchorage to collect winter imagery in March.

That's just the beginning: Visit Anchorage also assisted non-hosted travel writers reporting for Fodor's Travel, Lonely Planet, TripAdvisor, Northwest Meeting & Events, Northwest Travel & Life, Paste Magazine, TravelAwaits, Travel Pulse, Travel Weekly, and USA Today Go Escape Summer Travel Magazine. Collectively, these stories are poised to reach hundreds of thousands of prospective travelers around the globe, spreading the Anchorage inspiration and planting the seeds for future visits.



National Tour Association Contact opening ceremony at the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

THE LATEST FROM SALES

Visit Anchorage sales staff stayed busy throughout the first quarter of 2022, participating in a flood of trade shows, sales blitzes, and other events intended to market Alaska to travel advisors and meeting planners around the country.

NTA Contact

The annual National Tour Association Contact event took place March 23-26 in Anchorage, convening dozens of tour operators for three days of networking, site visits, educational programming, and product development. The group enjoyed an extraordinary evening reception at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, a special train ride down Turnagain Arm, and lots more only-in-Anchorage fun. It was a rousing success based on comments received from event organizers:

- Contact 2022 in Anchorage was given a 4.9 rating on a 5-point scale
- 93% of tour operators were happy with the 1:1 ratio of buyers to sponsors
- 100% of sponsors were pleased with their Contact 2022 experience, citing affordability, visibility, speaking opportunities, and connections with operators



Meetings

At Destination Celebration in Kansas City, Visit Anchorage sales staff networked with 71 meeting planners, joined by Darren Hubbard, national sales manager at the Hotel Captain Cook.

At an April Industry Exchange in Chicago, sales managers celebrated Global Meetings Industry Day alongside 210 meeting professionals, cultivating valuable connections and laying the groundwork for future meetings and conventions in Anchorage.

At the annual Cvent Connect in Las Vegas, thousands of attendees came together for additional educational and peer networking opportunities centered on cutting-edge events and inspiring meeting strategies.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Interested in learning about future opportunities to travel with the Visit Anchorage sales team? Contact sales@anchorage.net.



Pictured left: Attendees at Destination Celebration in Kansas City, MO. Picture right: Visit Anchorage sales managers stay engaged with meeting planners at Cvent Connect 2022.

Coming Up

Visit Anchorage's Juneau Meeting Planner Appreciation Luncheon takes place July 14. Interested in participating and building valuable connections with in-state meeting planners? Contact Visit Anchorage Sales Manager Jody Overstreet to learn more: Email JOverstreet@Anchorage.net.

FAM Fun

Travel advisors and other planning professionals continue to learn about Anchorage via Visit Anchorage's popular FAM tours. Groups traveling during Fur Rendezvous and Iditarod experienced everything Anchorage has to offer in the winter, while upcoming spring FAMs are set to introduce even more sales partners to the magic of Alaska's largest city. Our FAM tours focus on fantastic activities, top local attractions, and all the great ways to enjoy the city. Want to connect with Alaska-focused travel advisors and planners by supporting a future Visit Anchorage FAM? Contact sales@anchorage.net to learn more.



FROM MEMBERSHIP

2022 frontline TRADE SHOW

Frontline Trade Show

The Frontline Trade Show is back and better than ever: While the first half of the show is dedicated to frontline industry employees, the second half of the show is open to the general public (as well as frontline workers). Residents and visitors alike are invited to come see what's new for 2022, and learn about the latest and greatest activities, attractions, visitor amenities, and more.

It all takes place Wednesday, May 11 from 1-6 p.m., at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center.

Toast to TOURISM
Celebrate Alaska's vibrant visitor industry at a special reception with Visit Anchorage friends and partners. Enjoy appetizers, a no-host bar, and live music by 'Nothin' But Trouble. Tickets \$20 per person, or \$60 for four.

FRIDAY MAY 13
5 P.M. – 8 P.M.
DENA'INA CENTER
THIRD FLOOR FOYER & TERRACE

RSVP BY MAY 10 AT NOON
Anchorage.net/rsvp | 907.257.2377

Toast to Tourism

Celebrate Alaska's vibrant visitor industry at a special reception with Visit Anchorage friends and colleagues. Enjoy appetizers, a no-host bar, cornhole on the terrace, and live music by Nothin' But Trouble. Bring co-workers, significant others, or business partners to celebrate our industry's resilience and toast to successful seasons to come. Tickets

are \$20 per person or \$60 for a group of four. Visit Anchorage.net/RSVP to register by May 10 at noon, then mark your calendars for an evening full of festivities – Friday, May 13, from 5-8 p.m. at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center.

Membership Renewals & MML

Annual membership renewals are right around the corner, which means it's the perfect time to connect with your membership rep to make sure you're maximizing all the benefits available through Visit Anchorage. Freshen up your website listings for summer visitors, learn about additional advertising options, and stay tuned for more information from the Visit Anchorage membership department.

Miss a Monthly Membership Luncheon and want to catch up? All luncheons are recorded and available to view online at Anchorage.net/for-businesses. Review recent industry presentations, then reserve your spot at future events via Anchorage.net/RSVP.

LATEST FROM THE VIC

The number of people who stopped by the log cabin and downtown visitor information centers totaled 700 during the last week of February and first week of March. Fourth Avenue filled with visitors and residents alike for Fur Rendezvous and the ceremonial start of the Iditarod, and the VIC's friendly staff and volunteers provided extended visitor center hours to answer visitor questions and offer insight and advice.



Job + Volunteer Opportunities

Visit Anchorage visitor information centers are preparing for the busy summer season ahead: Know someone who wants to join the team? A mix of paid staff and volunteer opportunities are currently available for interested Alaskans. For more information contact Shared Services Director Linda Brandon at lbrandon@anchorage.net.

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Get to know these new members; they could be your next business partners!

- [Aloft Anchorage](#)
- [Alaska Jeep Adventures](#)
- [Borealis Basecamp](#)
- [Ellison Air, Inc.](#)
- [Private Alaska Tours](#)
- [Riverside RV & Camper Park](#)
- [Sheep Shuttle](#)
- [Showdown Alaska](#)
- [The Broken Blender](#)
- [Wiki-Licious](#)

