



PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT • DECEMBER 2015 • [DHICKOK@EXPLOREFAIRBANKS.COM](mailto:DHICKOK@EXPLOREFAIRBANKS.COM)



Explore Fairbanks sends good cheer to you and yours for a healthy and happy holiday season. Adding to the fun of reconnecting with colleagues, friends and family, the holidays also open the door for reflections on the past year. Together with you, our business partners and community stakeholders, we had a merrily productive 2015:

- Explore Fairbanks destination video won two awards: in February, the North American Travel Journalists Association's Silver award in the Destination Videos and, in July, the Public Relations Society of America-Alaska Chapter's 1st Place Award of Excellence for Video Material
- Explore Fairbanks greeted a record number of visitors and provided customer service at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center with more than 120,000 visitors to date
- Hosted 23 press tours for a total of 40 travel media and 12 "familiarization" tours with a total of 40 tour operators and travel agents
- Celebrated the 15th anniversary of Condor Airlines in Fairbanks
- For the 2nd time in its history, Fairbanks hosted the Iditarod restart
- The 13th Annual Visitor Industry Walk for Charity raised \$19,100, with 100 percent of the donations distributed to 44 charities and, since its inception, the walk has raised \$314,800
- Generated economic impact from meetings by collaborating with UAF and stakeholders to position Alaska's Golden Heart City as the arctic hub community for the United States
- Facebook "likes" are currently more than 105,000
- Golden Heart Gala honored 24 Golden Heart Meeting Ambassadors who brought more than \$4.67 million in Estimated Economic Impact and 21 Golden Heart Greeter volunteers who donated 179 hours of service
- Welcomed China Airlines' three Taipei-to-Fairbanks charters and, with market demand for Fairbanks still strong in Japan, another charter airline also with three flights – all six in December



Like you, we'll jump right onto the sleigh in 2016. A few of the good things yet to come:

- The Interior Tourism Conference on January 27<sup>th</sup> will be packed with current information on the state of the tourism industry as well as the cruise sector, advice on how to maximize your presence from TripAdvisor, and updates on the growing China market
- Media and tour operator visits, international charters and conferences will make for a jolly ol' February and March
- Explore Fairbanks Annual Banquet on April 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Visitor Walk for Charity on May 13<sup>th</sup>
- A new state-of-the-art Explore Fairbanks responsive website to be launched by September
- Welcoming the Elders and Youth Conference and the Alaska Federation of Natives conventions during the week of October 17<sup>th</sup>

Meanwhile, wishes for a happy new year with glad tidings for lots of comfort and joy!



Warm Regards,

Deb Hickok  
President and CEO