



ANNUAL REPORT

Alaska Travel Industry Association

2019-2020

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) will be the leading industry organization promoting Alaska as a top visitor destination, communicating and promoting the Alaskan tourism industry as one of the state’s major economic forces, and will be the respected voice of the industry for the growth of the industry, while remaining stewards of the state’s natural resources, cultures and Alaska’s unique quality of life.

Letter from the Chair

Interesting times, indeed.

When I was elected to serve as the 2019-2020 Alaska Travel Industry Association Board of Directors Chair, none of us had any idea of what the year would bring. And what a year it has been for each and every one of us!

When we last gathered together in Juneau in October 2019, our industry was on track to set records across all tourism segments. It was an exciting time for tourism, and we left ATIA’s annual convention buoyed with optimism for the dawn of a new decade of sharing Alaska with visitors from around the globe. Winter and summer numbers were up, the Governor had committed to a marketing investment of \$5 million for FY 2020, and our association’s membership was growing. In fact, tourism was the talk of the town – the one industry that was not only growing, but – more importantly – was contributing more than ever to Alaska’s economy. We left the fantastic convention in Juneau buoyed with optimism and stoked to cross the threshold into a new decade.

And then there was 2020. Sure, our industry had faced challenges before. We had difficult conversations on how to develop a sustainable statewide destination marketing program, and we continue to educate elected officials and community members alike on the value of a healthy tourism economy. At the convention in Juneau, we shared passionate words on the future of the Tongass National Forest. We were confronting challenges to the long-term accessibility along the Denali Park Road. And throughout it all, your ATIA team was always there to react, respond, and problem solve.

It’s not a stretch to say that Alaska’s visitor industry was hit extremely hard by the coronavirus pandemic. ATIA was there, front and center, to advocate for Alaska’s seasonal workforce and financial support for small businesses. We called out to Alaskans to Show Up for Alaska and support Alaska’s tourism businesses and explore the state – without the tourists. And we continue to advocate for statewide tourism marketing funding through state and federal avenues so we can bring back visitors to our naturally social distanced and wide-open spaces when it is safe to do so.

There is no doubt this has been the toughest year we’ve ever faced as an industry. Some of you chose to close this summer, others found new ways to support your communities and expand business offerings. We don’t know what the next year will bring, but I know our industry is always looking forward and finding new ways to share Alaska with the world. And the ATIA team, led by a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors, will be there to help. Thank you all for supporting each other – and ATIA – during this most interesting time.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Oberlatz".

Dan Oberlatz
2019 - 2020 ATIA Board Chair
Owner, Alaska Alpine Adventures

Letter from the President

ATIA's fiscal year starts July 1st in one year and ends June 30th the next. I don't think the two halves of the year could have been any more different than FY 2020.

The second half of 2019 started with positive growth for ATIA, our members, and industry. It had been a record year for Alaska tourism, with more than 2.25 million visitors. The ATIA Foundation launched a Professional Development Scholarship Program for industry professionals seeking to build upon their expertise in the tourism industry. The Adventure Green Alaska program – Alaska's only certification program for sustainable tourism businesses – had its standards fully recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. ATIA received a \$7.42 million capital grant from the State of Alaska to support our statewide destination marketing efforts. We advocated for immediate and long-term solutions for the Denali Park Road. Our annual convention and trade show had record attendance in Juneau. And, we started to think of 2020 as an even better year for Alaska tourism.

The second half of our fiscal year - January through June 2020 – was nothing we could have anticipated. In March, the ATIA's Board of Directors made a commitment to the health and safety of visitors, employees, and our communities. ATIA convened a working group comprised of industry and public health professionals to develop industry protocols to help businesses begin to adapt and operate safely in a COVID-19 world. ATIA hosted informational webinars for members and non-members alike on topics related to COVID-19, safety protocols, CARES Act funding, and listening sessions with state leaders and Alaska's congressional delegation. ATIA sent multiple requests to the congressional delegation and Governor Dunleavy and testified to Alaska's legislature, seeking help for tourism businesses across the state, devastated by the loss of visitors. We also took steps to reserve marketing funds for 2021, developing an award-winning *Alaska Will Wait* campaign to encourage travelers to think about Alaska and, thanks to generous sponsors, ATIA created a Show Up for Alaska campaign to encourage in-state travel, too.

While COVID-19 continues to impact our industry, our teams, families, and friends, the ATIA team and travel community will continue to adapt and look forward.

Thank you to ATIA's members and partners who support us. Together, we will keep ATIA as a solid and resilient voice for Alaska's tourism community.



Sarah Leonard, President & CEO



ATIA Sustaining Partners, 2019 - 2020

Thanks to all our [Sustaining Partners](#), which play a key role in the growth of ATIA programs, resources, education, advocacy, and more.

PREMIER DENALI LEVEL

Holland America Group

DENALI LEVEL

Alaska Airlines

ARCTIC LEVEL

Alaska Collection by Pursuit

Alaska Railroad Corporation

Explore Fairbanks

John Hall's Alaska

UnCruise Adventures

Visit Anchorage

ORCA LEVEL

Holiday Vacations

Ketchikan Visitors Bureau

Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau

Northern Alaska Tour Company

Premier Alaska Tours

Travel Juneau

White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad

RAVEN LEVEL

Alaska Coach Tours

GOLD LEVEL

Alaska Skylar Travel

Cruise Line Industry Association - Alaska

Skagway Convention & Visitors Bureau

JADE LEVEL

Alaska Alpine Adventures

Alaska Business

Membership

ATIA is the leading statewide industry organization for travel-related businesses and supporters. ATIA's members enjoy exclusive benefits such as the ATIA Annual Convention and Trade Show, online courses offered through the ATIA E-Learning Center, and participation in local chapters.

In FY 2020, ATIA added a health benefit for ATIA members through the [Small Association Leadership Alliance \(SALA\) healthcare program](#) and we began the process of incorporating the Alaska Host, Cultural Host, and Alaska Tour Guide training programs from the State of Alaska.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, ATIA's goal became strengthening Alaska's tourism industry as a whole. ATIA opened up programs to members and non-members alike, hosting webinars and sharing information broadly through e-newsletters and a special COVID-19 section on [Alaskatia.org](#).

648

Members
(June 30, 2020)

5

Chapters

- Anchorage
- Fairbanks
- Juneau
- Ketchikan
- Arts, Culture & Heritage

42

Alaska communities represented
(from all Alaska regions)
Plus 10 Outside communities



2019 ATIA Annual Convention & Trade Show

Legend of Alaska | Juneau, Alaska | October 7-10, 2019

Attendees → **677**

Trade Show Booths → **37**



Businesses Represented

↳ **357**





[Adventure Green Alaska](#) (AGA) is ATIA's voluntary certification program for sustainable tourism businesses operating in Alaska. Since 2009, AGA has recognized and promoted Alaska tourism businesses who practice economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability. Applications for certification or re-certification are reviewed bi-annually by the AGA Review Committee.

In September 2019, AGA's standards for accommodations and tour operators were fully recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) accreditation panel and now meet international best practices.

In February 2020, AGA certified 22 new and renewing businesses. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, AGA extended the May application period until November 2020 for businesses seeking to re-certify their AGA status.

Thank you to lead sponsor, Alaska Airlines, and supporting sponsors Alaska Railroad Corporation, Alaska Wildland Adventures, Explore Fairbanks, and Northern Alaska Tour Company for your support of Adventure Green Alaska.



2019-2020 CERTIFIED AGA BUSINESSES



As the voice for Alaska's tourism industry, it is ATIA's mission to advocate for a healthy tourism sector.

During FY 2020, ATIA sponsored the first TREND Fashion Show to raise awareness and engagement in the [Tourism Works for Alaska](#) program, continued to share economic information on the importance of Alaska's tourism industry to the public and elected officials, and used the popular Tourism Works for Alaska brand to carry our message on the importance of reinvesting in Alaska's statewide destination marketing program.



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Statewide Tourism Marketing

In FY 2020, ATIA received a \$7.42 million capital grant from the State of Alaska to manage [Alaska's statewide destination marketing program](#). This program, leveraged by more than \$1.5 million in cooperative marketing partner purchases, promotes travel to domestic and international markets through digital, print media, and direct mail campaigns. The increase in funding over FY 2019 allowed Travel Alaska to resume television advertising. ATIA held the annual Alaska Media Road Show and provided media assistance to 481 journalists. Travel Alaska's social presence consistently beat industry standards of engagement.

In March, ATIA paused the advertising campaign and the Board of Directors reserved remaining marketing funds for FY 2021. ATIA evolved the *Alaska Will Wait, for You* campaign to encourage potential travelers to keep Alaska top of mind as a future travel destination. Public relations efforts shifted to virtual travel experiences, and a video for social media generated more than 100,000 views.

By May, and with sponsor support, ATIA launched the *Show Up for Alaska* campaign to encourage Alaskans to support local tourism businesses. A special micro-site on [TravelAlaska.com](#) highlighted resident travel specials and multi-day regional travel itineraries. Social media, digital ads, pre-roll, sponsored content, and newsletter promotions reached out to Alaskans across the state.



470,599

Facebook followers

44,846

Twitter followers

93,848

Instagram followers

427

Participating businesses

\$1,534,885

Cooperative marketing sales generated



350,000,000

Paid advertising impressions

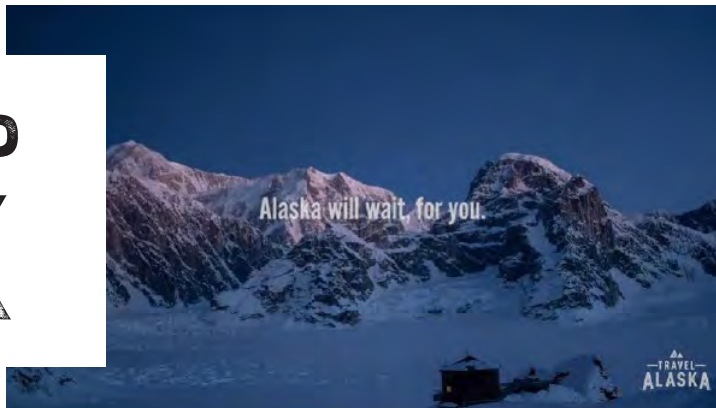
667

Articles published, (\$97 million value)

1,500

Alaska Certified Experts trained

SHOW UP
for AK



ATIA Foundation

The [ATIA Foundation](#) reinvests in the future of the Alaska tourism industry. Alaskans pursuing a degree related to tourism or seeking continuing education opportunities can qualify for scholarships. Scholarship funds are raised through memberships and at the ATIA Annual Convention.

In FY 2020, the ATIA Foundation also launched a Professional Development Program for individuals seeking to build upon their expertise in a visitor industry-related position.



\$27,413

Total ATIA Foundation funds raised in FY 2020

\$29,000

Awarded in FY 2020

2020 ATIA Foundation Scholarship Recipients



Carter Thomas, Ketchikan
\$2,500 - Holland America Line Scholarship



Laura Sherrill, Ketchikan
\$1,000 - Alaska Collection by Pursuit Scholarship



Casey Aragon, Fairbanks
\$1,000 ATIA Anchorage Chapter Scholarship



Sullivan Schulz, Ketchikan
\$1,000 Talkeena Air Taxi Scholarship



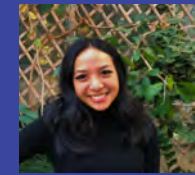
Noah Brandon, Anchorage
\$1,000 - Alaska Railroad Corporation Scholarship



Ellie Wells, Anchorage
\$1,500 Premier Alaska Tours Scholarship



Annalynn Brown, Homer
\$1,000 - Cruise Line Industry Association Alaska Scholarship



Ivan Irish Nate, Anchorage
\$1,000 Premier Alaska Tours Scholarship



Alex Malouf, Ketchikan
\$2,500 - Kris Geldaker Memorial Scholarship



Chloe Manderson, Anchorage
\$1,500 All Alaska Tours Scholarship



Erika Rauwolf, Ketchikan
\$1,000 Chuck West Memorial Scholarship



Jessica Whitehead, Skagway
\$1,000 Tim McDonnell Mentorship Scholarship



Madison Cox, Skagway
\$1,500 - White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad Scholarship



Rafael Bitanga, Kodiak
\$1,000 - Alaska Collection by Pursuit Scholarship
\$1,000 Alaska Airlines Scholarship
\$2,000 ATIA Rural Scholarship



Jade Steele, Delta Junction
\$1,000 ATIA Anchorage Chapter Scholarship



Sawyer Munson, Anchorage
\$1,000 Alaska Airlines Scholarship

3 1-year scholarships funded through member pledges were also awarded:

Annalynn Brown, Homer - \$1,500

Noah Brandon, Anchorage- \$1,500

Brooks Christian, Eagle River- \$2,500

Government Relations

ATIA regularly advocates and monitors policy issues affecting Alaska's tourism industry. Our voice was heard by stakeholders and policy makers at both the state and federal level:

- Advocated for State of Alaska support for tourism marketing
- Supported federal actions related to transportation and infrastructure which benefit Alaska's tourism industry, including short- and long-term actions to address the structural integrity of the Denali Park Road.
- Hosted a second annual Land Managers Forum to discuss agency and industry response to COVID-19
- Advocated for [COVID-19 relief](#) for Alaska's tourism industry at state and federal levels.

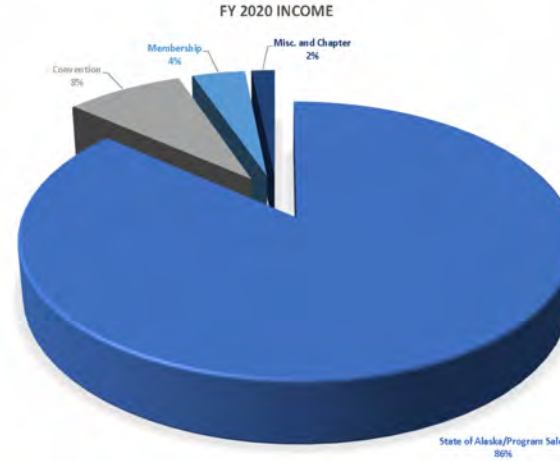
COVID-19 Response

On March 25, 2020, Governor Dunleavy issued travel mandates for international and interstate travel. These mandates, revised in early June, led to hundreds of calls to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) from travelers seeking clarification on how - or if - they could visit Alaska.

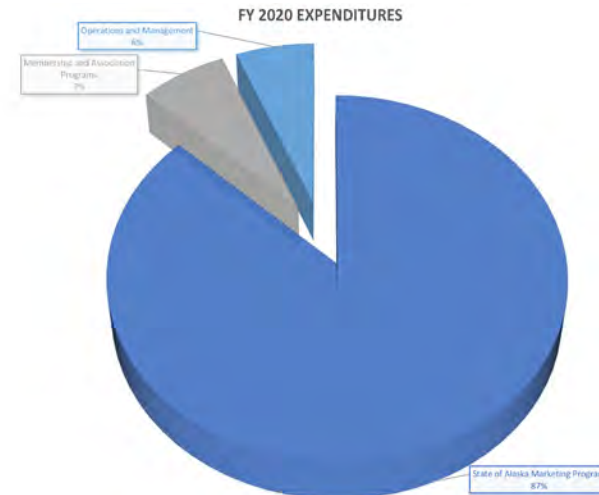
In late June 2020, ATIA entered into a contract with DHSS to staff a travel hotline and provide up-to-date information to potential visitors on the latest State health mandates. With the support of ATIA team members, individuals who submitted email and phone messages to the hotline received timely, accurate information generally within 24-hours of contact.

In addition to the hotline and traveler information posted on [TravelAlaska.com](https://www.travelalaska.com), ATIA provided updated information for businesses on [Alaskatia.org](https://www.alaskatia.org).

Financials



State of Alaska Grants and Program Sales	\$8,421,594
Convention	\$811,291
Membership	\$366,764
Misc. Income/Chapters	\$161,299
Total Income	\$9,760,948



Travel Alaska Cooperative Marketing Program	\$7,454,670
Membership and Association Programs	\$584,421
Management and Operations	\$521,869
Total Expenditures	\$8,560,960

ATIA held approximately \$500,000 in grant funds in reserve for FY 2021.



ATIA Staff

President & Chief Executive Officer

Sarah Leonard

Vice President

Jillian Simpson

Director of Partnerships & Travel Trade

Tanya Carlson

Director of Finance and Administration

Andrea Rayt

Communications and Public Relations Manager

Julie Jessen

Member Services Manager

Tay Clayton

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Skye Hostetler

Administrative Manager

Alicia Reando

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AlaskaTIA.org

2019 - 2020 ATIA Board of Directors

Executive Committee

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Dan Oberlatz, Alaska Alpine Adventures

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Bill Pedlar, Knightly Tours

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Holly Johnson, Wings Airways & Taku Glacier Lodge

TREASURER/FINANCE CHAIR

Dave McGlothlin, Holland America Group

PAST CHAIR

Elizabeth Hall, John Hall's Alaska Cruises & Tours

TOURISM POLICY & PLANNING CHAIR

Josh Howes, Premier Alaska Tours

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Sarah Leonard, Alaska Travel Industry Association

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Brett Carlson, Northern Alaska Tour Company
Kory Eberhardt, A Taste of Alaska Lodge
Camille Ferguson, Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Carol Fraser, Aspen Hotels of Alaska
Deb Hickok, Explore Fairbanks
Kirk Hoessle, Alaska Wildland Adventures
Craig Jennison, TEMSCO Helicopters

Patti Mackey, Ketchikan Visitors Bureau
Dennis McDonnell, Alaska Coach Tours
Bonnie Quill, Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau
Dan Rough, Holland America Line
Dale Wade, Alaska Railroad Corporation
Tennelle Peterson Wise, Grande Denali, LLC

Lt Governor Kevin Meyer, *Ex Officio*