



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ConocoPhillips Donates \$100K to Alaska Marketplace

Final Competition Set To Award \$200,000 to Alaska Entrepreneurs

Final Round: April 6-7, 2006

ANCHORAGE, AK: ConocoPhillips today made a significant contribution to stimulate business development in rural Alaska, announcing a \$100,000 donation to the Alaska Marketplace program. Additionally, ConocoPhillips is contributing the use of their atrium as well as providing other logistical support for the two-day Marketplace awards event.

"We are excited to be part of this innovative economic development effort in Alaska," said Jim Bowles, president of ConocoPhillips. "Our philosophy is to support community development and job creation. The Alaska Marketplace represents the best of those ideals."

This investment follows on the heels of a substantial \$200,000 investment by BP last fall. In total, more than \$700,000 has been raised to support start-up funding and award money for the innovative program.

"As a rural resident for 45 years I appreciate the willingness of ConocoPhillips and others to invest in worthwhile causes like the Alaska Marketplace, thereby strengthening the future of rural economic development and enhancing Alaska's communities," said Freddie Christiansen, Alaska Marketplace spokesman. "By contributing to Alaska Marketplace we are continuing to build relationships and bridge the gap between urban and rural Alaska."

The Alaska Marketplace is an exciting new program for Alaskans with innovative ideas on how to create jobs and stimulate rural village economies. More than 150 business proposals came from across

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Alaska representing a variety of backgrounds and industries -- including for-profit businesses, non-profits, government administration, banking, financial investment and law. Two-thirds of the total applicants were women, with 68 percent of the applications submitted by Alaska Natives.

Out of the 50 Finalists, 22 percent are tourism-related, 20 percent involve environment and land use, 18 percent focus on energy and technology, 16 percent involve arts & crafts, 14 percent are Heritage-related and 10 percent are in the general business category. Broken down by age group, the finalists range in age from 23 to 64 years old, with the average age being 42.

With the Final Round set for **April 6-7, 2006**, at the ConocoPhillips atrium in Anchorage, Alaska, the 50 Finalists will present their ideas in-person to the judges, who will choose approximately 20 winners to receive a portion of the \$200,000 in award money as start-up funds for their business ideas.

Admission for the 2-day event is free to the public, who will also have the opportunity to vote on their favorite business proposition. A press conference will be held immediately after the Awards Ceremony on Friday, April 7, and will include select panel judges as well as the Alaska Marketplace winners.

The Alaska Marketplace competition for ideas is modeled after The World Bank's Development Marketplace and managed by the Alaska Federation of Natives. Initiated by the Denali Commission, the Alaska Marketplace is also underwritten by the BP, Telecommunications Development Fund, Alaska Growth Capital, and ConocoPhillips. Other partners include the Alaska Manufacturing Extension Partnership, College of Rural Alaska, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and Alaska Village Initiatives.

For more information on the Alaska Marketplace initiative and a list of the 50 Finalists, visit www.alaskamarketplace.org or contact us at (907) 360-2288.

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