



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Impressive Group of Leaders to Award Funds to Alaska's Top Entrepreneurs

April 6-7, 2006

Exclusive Early Press Entry: Thurs, April 6 @ 9am
Press Conference: Thurs at 12pm ConocoPhillips Atrium

ANCHORAGE, AK: The following list of 23 prominent and experienced nonprofit, educational and government leaders and businesspeople are preparing to make history this week when they convene as the Official Jury for the first annual Alaska Marketplace competition:

- Al Bolea (Vice President, BP)
- Arliss Sturgulewski (Senator)
- Arlon Tussing (President (Assn. At ISER), Mindspring)
- Art Nelson (Rural Development Consultant)
- Byron Mallott (First Alaskans Institute)
- Cheryl Frasca (Director, State of Alaska - Office of Management and Budget).
- Chuck Becker (US Commercial Services)
- Craig Jacobson (VP Native Programs, Ecotrust)
- Deborah Bonito (Owner, Sourdough Mercantile)
- Dennis Metrokin (President, Koniag Inc.)
- Gail Schubert (CEO, Inuit Services Inc.)
- Jim Anderson (President, LeadDog Consulting)
- Judit Camacho (Executive Director, Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science)
- Julie Kitka (President, AFN)
- Karen Gills (Executive Director, Bering Sea Fishermans Association)
- Ken Donajkowski, Vice President of the Health, Safety Environment for ConocoPhillips Alaska
- Leo Barlow (National Cooperative Bank)
- Marc Stemp (COO, Bethel Native Corporation)
- Mark Edwards (Director, State of Alaska - Economic Development)
- Orié Williams (President/CEO, Doyon)
- Patrick Kane (CEO, Saoirse Corporation)
- Robert Preston (Alternative Energy Portfolio Manager, Merrill Lynch Global Investment)
- Roy Agloinga (Rural Affairs Coordinator, Office of Mayor Mark Begich)
- Tom Hawkins (COO, Bristol Bay Native Corporation)

"This Jury was selected based on their broad experience, expertise and connection to rural Alaskans," said Kitka. "We are involved because our investment in this program is an investment in our own communities."

The Alaska Marketplace is a revolutionary 'ideas competition' for innovative business ideas from Alaskans aimed at creating jobs and stimulating rural village economies.

(MORE)

During the two-day event, booths and business demonstrations will be set up for the judges to assess each project and business plan in regards to sustainability, innovation, job creation/poverty reduction and the integration of cultural heritage elements.

According to Charles Becker, Director of the Alaska Export Assistance Center with the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the first economic development director for the city of Anchorage, the Alaska Marketplace is "a much-needed program that will only help to develop rural Alaska's potential and ability to be self-supporting."

A press conference will be held during initial judging from 12-1 pm on Thursday, April 6, 2006, with the announcement of the winners and awards ceremony set for Friday, April 7, at 4 pm.

Key investors in the groundbreaking initiative include ConocoPhillips and BP, who have contributed a combined \$300,000 to support start-up funding and award money for the innovative program.

The 44 Finalists will present their ideas in-person to the judges on **April 6-7, 2006**, at the ConocoPhillips atrium in Anchorage, Alaska. All winners will 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 be able to vote on the "People's Choice Award" for the best business idea. The winner of this award will receive \$1000 to help support their start-up idea.

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, a list of the 44 Finalists, and a schedule of events, visit www.alaskamarketplace.org or contact us at (907) 360-2288.

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