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April 7, 2006

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Surprise Gift Makes All Finalists Winners In First U.S. Marketplace Competition

ANCHORAGE, AK: In the historic first rural economic development "ideas competition" in America, all of the *Alaska Marketplace* finalists will leave the ConocoPhillips Atrium tonight with seed money in their pockets, a big step closer to launching their innovative ideas into reality. The top half of the 43 finalists will take home awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, while the remaining honorable mentions will each walk away with \$1,000 awards. Three People's Choice awards for \$1,000 were also awarded for the most popular proposals with the public.

"Every one of these finalists is a winner, and we are thrilled to be able to recognize these talented Alaskan innovators whose ideas will contribute to building our rural economy," said AFN President Julie Kitka.

Alaska's best innovators received prize money from the *Alaska Marketplace* today after Al Bolea, President of BP Pipelines and Co-Chair of the *Alaska Marketplace* Jury, announced last night that BP would more than double the award awards pot to \$500,000.

"It's so important that the *Alaska Marketplace* succeed in its first year, and after hearing from finalists yesterday about what their real needs were, and seeing the quality of proposals, BP determined that more funds were needed to help ensure the success of this initiative," said Al Bolea.

These popular projects earned \$1,000 apiece in People's Choice Award contest, funded by Koniag Inc., Old Harbor and Alaska Native Business Resource Directory:

- John Oscar, Mekoryuk, *Nunivak Arts & Crafts*
- Lauren J. Padawer, Cordova, *Glacial Skincare*
- Ulric J. Ulroan, Chevak, *Chevak Bird & Cultural Tours*

"The excitement and enthusiasm generated by this project will only serve to build stronger rural economies and promote sustainable development," said Ken Donajkowski, Vice-President Health, Safety and Environment of ConocoPhillips.

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The *Alaska Marketplace* winners hailed from regions across Alaska, from the coast to the interior, including 4 from Southcentral, 5 from Western, 5 from the Arctic, 4 from the Interior, 3 from Southeast Alaska and 1 from the Aleutian Islands:

- Jennifer Maguire, Fairbanks, *Interior Alaska Native Artists' Cooperative*, \$25,000
- Charles Parker, Anchorage, *Development of Alternative Renewable Energy Models for Rural Alaska*, \$20,000
- Lauren J. Padawer, Cordova, *Glacial Skincare*, \$16,000
- Hogarth Kingeekuk Jr., Savoonga, *Rural Alaska Small Parts & Repair Shop*, \$30,000
- DuWayne Johnson, Dillingham, *Alaska Sport's Sleds*, \$8,000
- Joanne Beck, Eagle, *Han Athabascan Grocery & Native Arts Store*, \$12,000
- Chris O'Neil, Noatak, *Noatak Natural Products & Organic Farming Cooperative*, \$22,000
- Jennifer Harrison, Chickaloon, *Chickaloon Four-Season Greenhouse*, \$25,000
- Dora Nukapigal & David Smith, Nuiqsut, *Wild Medicinal Plants of Nuiqsut*, \$10,000
- Robert Kocsis, Delta Junction, *Delta Junction Biodiesel Pilot Plant*, \$20,000
- Esther Ashton, Wrangell, *Manufacturing Health Products from Southeast Alaska Forests*, \$25,000
- Axel & Kathleen Svenson, Ketchikan, *ThrillerAlaska's Native Tour*, \$20,000
- Paul Markoff, Anchorage, *Togiak Cultural Tourism Development*, \$20,000
- Agnes Hailstone, Deering, *Caribou-Adventures*, \$30,000
- Ulric J. Ulroan, Chevak, *Chevak Bird & Cultural Tours*, \$25,000
- Jill Wheeler & Tonia Lawrence, Eagle River, *Alaska Educational Tours*, \$20,000
- Barbie Baumgartner, North Pole, *Unity Catering*, \$30,000
- Karin Holser, St. George Island, *North South St. George Island Institute*, \$50,000
- March Runner, Dillingham, *Cultural Tradition Shown Through Quilting & Beading*, \$20,000
- Brian Bourdon, Nome, *Artist Development in the Bering Strait Region*, \$10,000
- John Oscar, Mekoryuk, *Nunivak Arts & Crafts*, \$20,000
- Michelle Sparck, Bethel, *ArXotic Bath & Beauty Products derived from Nanutaat (tundra botanicals)*, \$20,000

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 Alaska. 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 43 Finalists and 23 Judges, visit www.alaskamarketplace.org or contact us at (907) 360-2288.