



Alaska Wildland Adventures

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Awards and Honors for Alaska Wildland Adventures

Local Tour Operator Receives National and Worldwide Acclaim

ANCHORAGE – Alaska Wildland Adventures (AWA) was named one of the 2007 Top Small Workplaces in the United States in the first annual report by *The Wall Street Journal* and Illinois-based nonprofit Winning Workplaces. The judging panel, which considered an initial field of 850 small to midsize businesses, selected the final 15 winners based on a broad criteria for positive workplaces. In recognizing Alaska Wildland Adventures, the report highlighted the company's emphasis on internal promotion and job growth, employee camaraderie and non-traditional benefits such as flexible vacation time and complimentary fishing and rafting trips.

Judges were also impressed by staff loyalty. Small businesses and seasonal operators often have difficulties in retaining talented employees; at AWA, the average tenure of the 11 year-round staff members is over seven years, and many of the 76 summer seasonal employees return year after year to do everything from washing dishes to guiding hikes. "The fact that both customers and employees come back is unbelievable," says Colleen Barrett, president of Southwest Airlines and one of the judges. Such loyalty is fostered by a company that invests in the future of its employees as well as the community; each year, Alaska Wildland Adventures donates 10% of its pretax earnings to nonprofit Alaska conservation groups.

National Geographic Traveler has also recognized Alaska Wildland Adventures' blend of hospitality and social responsibility. Each year, the magazine's "Stay List" designates 150 properties that represent a commitment to location-inspired ambience, eco-stewardship and community involvement. In 2005, the "Stay List" featured AWA's own Kenai Backcountry Lodge for its charming accommodations, environmental sensitivity and unique sense of place in remote Alaska.

AWA again received acclaim from *National Geographic Traveler* in 2008, when the magazine compiled a list of the world's best guided trips, emphasizing the importance of eclectic adventures and authentic local experiences.

Tours of a Lifetime: 50 of the World's Best Trips highlighted AWA's Alaska Life List Adventure as the best guided trip in Alaska:

Here, in one trip, are all the things you're supposed to do before you die — in Alaska, at least. Hike atop a glacier, spot brown bears, reel in a salmon, paddle a sea kayak, mush a dogsled, raft down the Copper River and listen to stories about native Alaskans over dinner at a remote lodge.

In 2005, the Condé Nast Traveler Green List distinguished Alaska Wildland Adventures as the leading ecotourism tour operator in the world. Since its inception in 1977, AWA has remained committed to a set of core values, emphasizing Alaska's natural and cultural history while also operating in a fashion that protects and preserves Alaska's diverse habitats. Environmental responsibility has always been a guiding principle at the company. Where some companies might see expense or inconvenience in broad environmental policies, AWA believes that such practices are simply good business—and that the element of environment awareness and education is a trip enhancement for guests. According to AWA president Kirk Hoessle, it boils down to one clear motive: "Our company has always been focused on offering the best possible experience in Alaska."

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