



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Commerce, Community,  
and Economic Development

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October brings fall colors and a seasonal lull between adventure-filled Alaskan summers and upcoming celebrations, winter athletics, and northern lights. Alaska's tourism industry enjoyed a robust 2013 and is on track to report the fourth consecutive year of increased visitation. Driving this growth are increased cruise ship calls and new air service, including domestic and international routes.

Alaska's tourism industry is a vital component of our economy, with an economic impact of \$3.7 billion annually. It generates \$179 million for state and local governments and employs 45,000 people during peak season. In 2012, we welcomed 1.82 million visitors and year-round visitation in 2013 is expected to be even higher.

Governor Sean Parnell is committed to the individuals, businesses, and communities that rely on a strong tourism industry. The governor led the comprehensive strategy that has restored growth to the industry through increased marketing, reduced taxes, reasonable regulations, and a positive business environment. Alaska's economy has benefited as a result.

When I travel the state, I see how important our commitment to a robust and effective marketing program is to our tourism industry partners. Working together, we promote Alaska around the world and share Alaska's abundant wildlife, vast wilderness, and rich culture with millions of potential visitors.

Last year, we attracted the popular television show *Top Chef* to film two episodes in Alaska. Department of Commerce staff and contractors worked with the show's producers to include as many Alaskans and tourism businesses as possible in each episode. As a result, *Top Chef* showcased at least a half-dozen Juneau locations, many Alaska agricultural and seafood products, and numerous local businesses including Alaska Airlines, AVIS Alaska, Westmark Baranof Hotel, Prospector Hotel, Aspen Suites Hotel Juneau, Temsco Helicopters, Era Alaska, Taku Smokeries, Juneau Carrs Safeway, and Alaska Glacier Seafoods.

Our commitment to generate this kind of high-level awareness about Alaska as a premier vacation destination meant that an estimated 2.6 million *Top Chef* viewers were exposed to the state's beauty and bountiful seafood resources in each episode. Likewise, a multi-faceted "Dream of Alaska" Facebook campaign drew thousands of people to share their Alaska travel stories. We are rolling out new winter promotions that highlight our unique festivals, cultural events and outdoor activities with complementary travel planning information online at [travelalaska.com](http://travelalaska.com).

As we celebrate the year's accomplishments, we also mourn the recent loss of two beloved icons of the tourism industry. Stan Stephens of Valdez and Mark Eliason of Anchorage were passionate about Alaska. They dedicated their lives to the visitor industry and mentored many new employees and entrepreneurs. Both men

will be greatly missed and their impact on Alaska's tourism industry will undoubtedly be felt for years to come.

We owe it to our tourism industry partners, and to the memory of Alaskans like Stephens and Eliason, to continue to work together to make Alaska "*the*" destination for travelers from around the world. With a unique and amazing destination, a commitment to Alaskan jobs and families, our future is north of extraordinary.