



STATE OF ALASKA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**  
COMMUNITY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Office of Economic Development

*Sarah Palin, Governor*  
*Emil Notti, Commissioner*  
*Joe Austerman, Director*

Impact of the Tourism Mentorship Assistance Project (TMAP)

As a pilot project, TMAP was a great success. Entrepreneurs were paired with experienced business owners to serve as their mentors for the duration of the project and gleaned considerable amounts of information and insight from them. All mentors who volunteered their time were able to either meet in person, on the telephone or through email at least 2 hours every month with their entrepreneur.

*Bob Wysocki (Huna Totem Corporation) is a fantastic mentor. He is very generous with his time and his experience. I have learned so much from him. Bob is realistic and provides a very practical but encouraging vision.*

Michelle Anderson  
Ahtna Development Corporation

Seven out of the eight TMAP participants who applied for the Alaska Marketplace rural business plan competition were selected as finalists with three of our TMAP participants winning the competition. All in all, our TMAP Alaska Marketplace finalists and winners received over \$112,000 in seed money for their tourism businesses.

Business development workshops were conducted throughout the project at various times and featured topics such as risk management, internet marketing, insurance considerations, and website development.

*I gained the most new information from the "State of Risk" (risk management) DVD session. I am glad to have that DVD because we need to draft a waiver for our tour, and now I feel...I can draft the waiver effectively and then run it by our attorney.*

Kathleen Svenson  
Alaska Racing Tours



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Participants also attended the Alaska Travel Industry Association annual conference in Juneau and were able to network and meet with numerous Alaska travel industry contacts during this event.

*Attending the ATIA conference in Juneau was extremely beneficial and rewarding. The contacts we made with vendors, tour operators, B&B owners, and other travel industry professionals were phenomenal. These contacts are critical when developing a new tourism business. Both Jill and I felt very welcomed and excited to share our business plan with others. The networking opportunities afforded at ATIA were tremendous and the workshops and key note speakers enlightening.*

*TMAP is a remarkable program and exceptionally well run and organized. The workshops and classes provided have been invaluable... Alaska Educational Tours is fortunate to be chosen for the mentorship program. Our mentorship group is fantastic and we will support each other through referrals, partnerships and friendships.*

Tonia Lawrence-Gilkey  
Jill Davis  
Alaska Educational Tours

TMAP created websites for seven of our participants and each person was provided with software that will enable him/her to update their own website and make the necessary changes, instead of hiring a costly website developer to make changes every time they add new information to their website.

Lastly, two educational DVD's were created to provide advice and insight on securing a contract with the Alaska cruise lines and on how to operate an Alaskan Bed and Breakfast. The videos can be viewed from our website (<http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/TMAP/whatsnew.htm>) or copies can be requested from our office.