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ALASKA'S RAINFOREST ISLANDS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MISSION GETS UNDERWAY – *Eight Tour Operators to Visit Central Southeast Alaska*

Petersburg May 22, 2009 - Alaska's Rainforest Islands, the friendly communities of Prince of Wales Island, Wrangell, and Petersburg; and the Alaska Office of Economic Development have invited 8 established national and international tour operators to visit these communities and the many attractions that the region has to offer. The visiting operators will help give local operators a better understanding of the visitor market, and how your business can reach that market.

Tour Operators from Alaska, the Lower 48, and Canada will experience the people, the totems, the caves, and the wildlife on Prince of Wales. They will visit tidewater glaciers, the Stikine River, the Inside Passage, and historic and picturesque Wrangell and Petersburg, and help assess the potential for new or expanded tourism products in the region. According to Claude-Jean Harel of Great Excursions, a Canadian destination management company based in Saskatchewan that is looking to offer more Alaskan experiences, "the education side of this trip is crucial, if we can help local operators and communities expand and grow, that means more distinctive products for our catalog."

If you would like to meet with these experts, please join them at one of these open houses:

Thursday June 4:

Klawock:	8:00 – 9:30 AM	Fireweed Lodge
Thorne Bay:	Noon	Adventure Alaska Southeast Lodge
Coffman Cove:	3:30 PM	Weatherbee's Lodge

Friday June 5

Wrangell:	6:00 – 8:00 PM	Wrangell Museum
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Sunday June 7

Petersburg:	5:00 – 7:00 PM	Holy Cross House
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In October of 2004 representatives from Prince of Wales Island, Wrangell and Petersburg, with some assistance from the Alaska Office of Economic Development and the US Economic Development Administration, sought to develop a "brand" for Central Southeast Alaska, a region that features the best Alaska has to offer in one compact area: History and Culture, glaciers, whales, bears, birds, and wildlife, wilderness, mountains, fishing, and more; also a region that offers quality visitor services – comfortable hotels & lodges, good food, skilled guides, and tours. **Alaska's Rainforest Islands** was chosen as that brand. It promises three things that the region can certainly deliver: Alaska, Rainforest, and Islands. You can visit the website at <http://www.alaskarainforestislands.com/>.

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