



CARES ACT GRANT REPORT

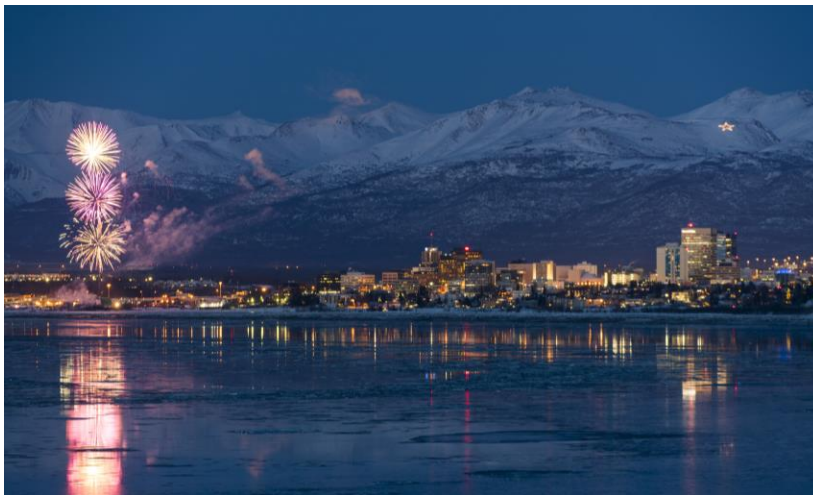
Submitted to Municipality of Anchorage by Visit Anchorage





PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH CARES ACT

With support from the Administration, projects were selected based on their benefit to Anchorage tourism businesses, ability to position Anchorage for recovery, and their long-term economic benefit to the city



Projects were grouped under the themes:

- Analyze
- Adapt
- Acquire
- Activate



ANALYZE: TRAVELER SENTIMENT RESEARCH

Research conducted to gauge consumer openness to travel messaging and inspiration

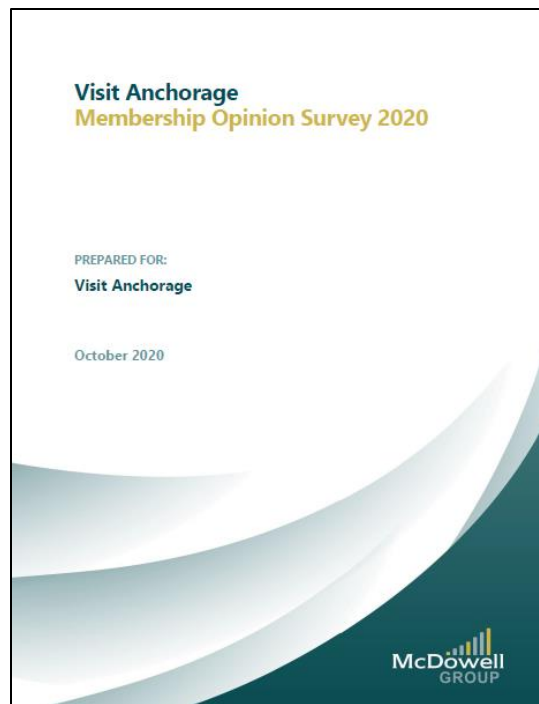


- Research helped guide the decision to stay out of the market during a time when consumers weren't ready to travel, and allowed us to save resources for a time when travelers were more open to inspiration and booking information
- Research was shared with businesses to provide them an anticipated traveler horizon to base near and mid-term expectations and decisions
- This research provided insight into changing traveler priorities and expectations
- With vaccine-based optimism, nearly 1/3 of American travelers anticipate catching a flight in the first half of 2021



ANALYZE: ALASKA RESIDENT SURVEYS

Gauge Alaska businesses and resident sentiment due to the pandemic



Membership Survey:

- 67.14% of members strongly agree with mask wearing policies
- Determine satisfaction with Visit Anchorage's response to the pandemic
- Determine how membership responded to the pandemic
- Learn how pandemic impacted staffing and marketing activities
- Outlook for recovery in 2021

Alaska Resident Survey:

- Focus on travel sentiment
- Gain better understanding of travel interest and motivators and utilize these insights to guide ad campaign that encourages Alaskans to buy local and visit Anchorage



ANALYZE: CONCEPT TESTING

Conducted by Destination Analysts



The research conducted was used to better understand the mindset and expectations of the COVID-conscious leisure traveler. The findings of the creative concept testing were used to:

- Test health/safety messaging with imagery including being socially distant and mask wearing
- Design ads containing messages and visuals that set Anchorage apart
- Communicate Anchorage's accessibility
- Finalized new theme: Urban & Wild



ADAPT: REPLACEMENT ANCHORAGE.NET

Includes revised content and visuals appropriate for pandemic and post-pandemic audiences



COVID-19 TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR ANCHORAGE, AK

Planning a trip to Alaska? Keep reading. Both the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage have established a variety of health and safety measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. These measures help protect the community, allowing travelers to plan with confidence knowing safety is a priority.

In Anchorage, [face masks are required](#) in indoor or communal outdoor public places. Gathering size limitations, physical distancing requirements, and other public health precautions remain in effect. Travelers are also asked to observe [statewide testing recommendations](#).

Many businesses demonstrate their commitment to guest wellness by making the [Healthy Anchorage Pledge](#). Those that take the pledge ensure they're implementing best practices from the CDC and other health authorities, guarantee face masks and physical distancing, and other precautionary measures. [Learn about the Healthy Anchorage Pledge](#).

[Click here to read the Municipality of Anchorage's Emergency Order 19.](#)

[Click here to read the State of Alaska's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Health Advisory No. 2: International and Interstate Travel.](#)

Domestic Arrivals

All visitors arriving in Alaska should submit a [Travel Declaration and Self-Isolation Plan](#), and then either 1) arrive with proof of a qualifying negative COVID-19 test (molecular-based PCR swab test) taken within 72 hours of departure, or 2) follow their employer's work plan filed with the State of Alaska, or 3) take a free COVID-19 test upon arrival in Alaska, then observe strict social distancing until results arrive.

International Arrivals

Beginning Jan. 26, 2021, all travelers arriving in the U.S. from a foreign country must get tested no more than 3 days before their flight departs, then provide proof of the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight, according to an order from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Read more here.](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Municipality of Anchorage Public Health Information

Traveler requirements and public health precautions in the Municipality of Anchorage.

[VIEW MORE](#)



State of Alaska Public Health Information

Travel requirements and visitor health information from the State of Alaska.

[VIEW MORE](#)



Public Health Information From the CDC

Current public health and travel information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

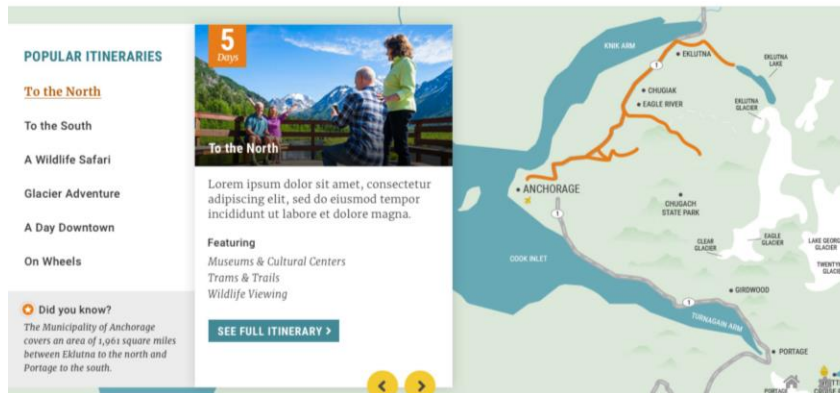
[VIEW MORE](#)

- Updated COVID-conscious travel mandates, overhauled imagery, and included virtual options
- Refreshed content emphasizing outdoor spaces and local parks and trails
- Increased emphasis on tools, content and images that appeal to a more independent, versus group, traveler
- Mobile optimized in response to continued growth from mobile devices
- Microsite featuring wedding content highlighting elopements and small events
- Refreshed and expanded information of itinerary content for travel trade audiences



ADAPT: INTERACTIVE MAPS ON WEBSITE

New maps increase visibility of itineraries/routes to encourage longer stays for a fly/drive traveler

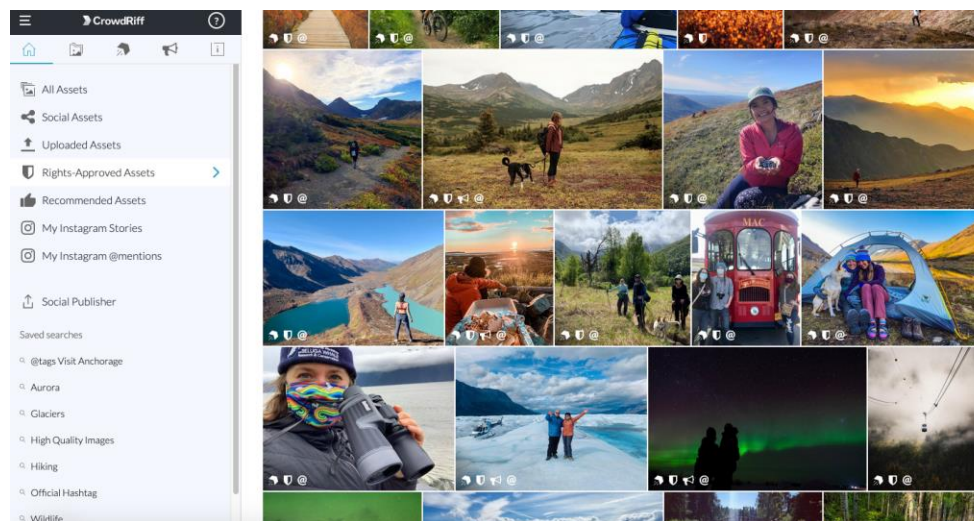


- Interactive maps highlight the DIY option for independent travelers of all ages, from multigenerational families to adventurous folks. This is a demographic Visit Anchorage anticipates will increase relative to group travelers in the near and mid-term.
- Experiences and places to visit are showcased along each route
- Information on modes of travel with approximate times for each trip are given
- Highlights the routes, activities, and attractions that could keep independent travelers in Anchorage for 2-5 days



ADAPT: EXPAND VISUAL CONTENT

Secured licensing for Crowdriff, to enhance and expand visual content



- Allows Visit Anchorage to continue to secure user generated images and manage digital assets
- Enables Visit Anchorage to quickly and visually communicate various health and safety measures with a large social media audience
- Able to immediately source and share COVID-conscious imagery of visitors and residents enjoying the city
- Assists with sourcing inspirational “come see this later” type images for future travelers
- To date, secured over 100 assets specifically showing COVID-conscious activities



ADAPT: UPDATED VISITOR GUIDE

Replacement visitor guide includes updated content featuring travel mandates, safety protocols, and imagery



RESPONSIBLE & READY

Whether you're planning a city escape or an off-road adventure, these health and safety tips will help you experience Anchorage with ease. Following a few simple guidelines can keep you on the right trail, no matter where you're headed.

Know before you go: Depending on when you travel, additional testing and a traveler declaration form may be required. These statewide requirements help keep Alaska safe and secure for all visitors. Find current travel guidelines, more details, and links to additional resources at VisitAnchorage.com.

Pack a mask: State and local guidelines recommend protecting community health by wearing a face covering in public settings. During your visit, masks may be required in public indoor settings and communal outdoor spaces in Anchorage, and many other businesses and attractions throughout the state also require masks in indoor spaces. Be prepared to cover up when ordering food, visiting museums and cultural centers, and exploring populated public places where it's difficult to maintain a safe distance from others. Handmade face coverings with Alaska patterns and creative designs make a unique souvenir.

Seek open spaces: Physical distancing can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and health authorities recommend keeping at least 6 feet of physical distance from non-household members whenever possible. Luckily, Anchorage's spacious parks and trails make that easy to do (Chugach State Park offers more than 485,000 acres of room to roam). In the city, new pedestrian-only zones offer extra space to stretch out, and many favorite local restaurants offer outdoor or curbside dining options. When you have the choice, opt for outside.



Many Anchorage businesses have taken the Healthy Anchorage Pledge, committing to doing their part to keep their staff and guests safe. Find a list at VisitAnchorage.com.



Watch for wildlife: Anchorage is home to hundreds of bears, moose, and other urban wildlife, and it's important to remember they're exactly that – wild. Give them plenty of space, never approach, feed, or harass, and remember to make noise (talk, sing, clap, or speak softly) when exploring local trails. It's the best way to warn animals of your presence, and avoid startling a foraging bull or bear.

Practice trail safety: Follow posted trail signs, pack adequate supplies, and make sure to explore with a buddy, or share your hiking plans with a friend or family member before setting out solo.



- Produced 112-page visitor guide with 8-panel inserted map
- 150,000 copies were printed with mailing envelopes
- Imagery shows mask wearing, traveling in small groups, and Anchorage's wide-open spaces
- Land Acknowledgment page features Alaska Native place names
- Digital version is available at Anchorage.net
- Provided ads and listings at no charge to businesses that appeared in the prior version of the Guide



ACQUIRE: PHOTOGRAPHY

Targeting consumer audiences

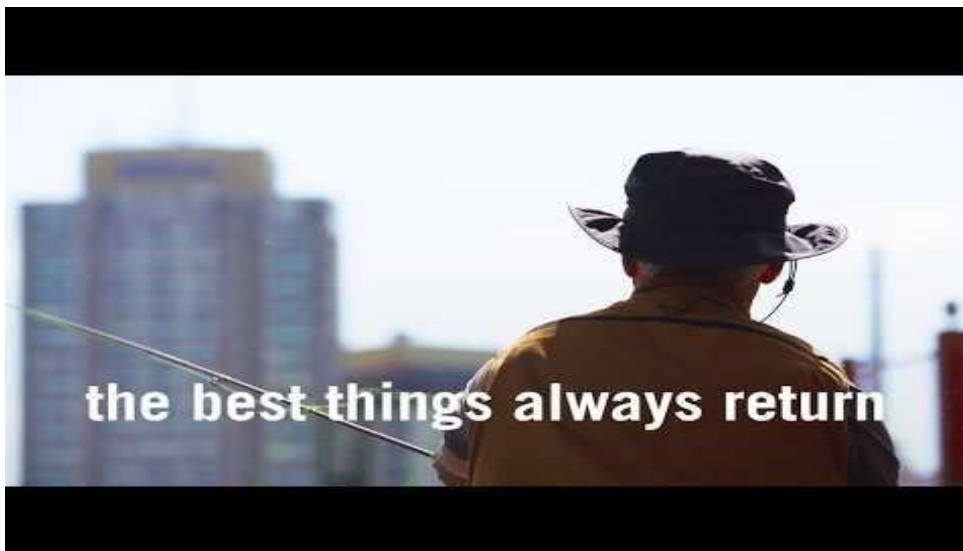


- Secured photos and video footage to refresh imagery across all marketing efforts
- Images were selected to reflect the new travel landscape and what research showed inspired interest in traveling to Anchorage
- Photographers included Jody Overstreet, Ralph Kristopher, Donna Dewhurst, Matt Hage, Kerry Tasker, Calvin Hall, Carl Johnson, Frank Flavin, Todd Salat, Michael DeYoung, Clark Mishler, and Jovell Rennie



ACQUIRE: VIDEOS

Targeting consumer audiences



45 second inspirational video to encourage potential travelers to consider visiting Alaska

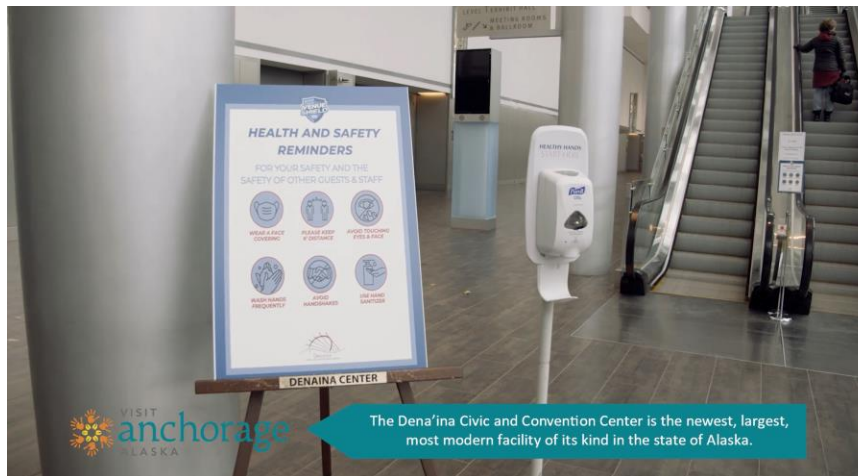
- Communicating that in Anchorage, the best things always return
- Reinforcing Anchorage's initial COVID response messaging and reiterating the temporary pause in travel
- Encouraging potential visitors to travel at a later date and extending our welcome when the time is right

Two minute "Welcome to Anchorage" video highlights all aspects of a visit to Anchorage



ACQUIRE: VIDEOS

Targeting travel trade and meeting audiences



- Production of two videos showcasing meeting and convention spaces at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center and the Alaska Native Heritage Center
- Videos show how the venues are adapting to health and safety measures
- Still photography of the Visit Anchorage sales team was acquired to reflect consolidation of two departments



ACQUIRE: PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

For distribution among audiences



- 500 face masks featuring iconic Alaska imagery
- 1,000 individual hand sanitizers
- Items will be distributed in the Visitor Information Centers, and were provided to visiting journalists, meeting planners, and FAM participants



ACTIVATE: MEDIA OUTREACH

Generate articles featuring travel to Anchorage



- Outreach to ensure health and safety mandates and protocols are being communicated
- To reassure consumers that Anchorage is a COVID-conscious destination
- New and creative engagement methods were utilized to reach key journalists and editors with Anchorage's message
- Hosting and media outreach is a long-term benefit, with articles and features anticipated to add to ROI for months, or years to come
- Updated Media Press Kit and added new information on COVID-19 and diversity



ACTIVATE: MEDIA ASSISTANCE

Assisted a wide variety of journalists



Journalists represented the following publications:

- Forbes
- TravelAge West
- Washington Post
- New York Times
- Outside Magazine
- Condé Nast Traveler
- Ski Magazine
- Lonely Planet
- Global Traveler Online
- Roadtrippers
- SmarterTravel



ACTIVATE: MEDIA HOSTING

Hosted four journalists



- Onnalee McDonald/AFAR magazine
 - Went aurora viewing with Alaska Photo Treks
 - Information was provided on the Nordic Spa at Alyeska Resort and Double Musky Inn
- Debi Lander/freelance journalist
 - Visited AWCC, Aviation Museum, Kincaid Park, Earthquake Park
 - Met with reps from Anchorage Trolley and Anchorage Museum
- Kim & Nash Finley/The Nomadic People
 - Visited Alyeska Resort
 - Went helicopter flightseeing, snowboarding, and took a trip on the Alaska Railroad



ACTIVATE: MEDIA BRIEFINGS

Briefings were conducted virtually



Briefings held with:

- Bailey Berg (April)
 - Focused on how Anchorage tour operators were adjusting their business models
- Meghan McRae (October)
 - Focused on Alyeska Resort, helicopter tours, Alaska Native Heritage Center
- Chere Coen (November)
 - Focused on birding, Alaska cuisine, Native culture



ACTIVATE: MEDIA OUTREACH

Visit Anchorage had to get creative



- Anchorage Experience boxes were sent to journalists in their homes to bring the Anchorage experience to them
- Each box included an insert with 11 story ideas and pitches for their own articles
- 15 boxes were compiled and mailed
- Journalists represent media outlets including:
 - Condé Nast Traveler, USA Today, AARP, Lonely Planet, Fodor's, AFAR, National Geographic Traveler, CNN Traveler, and NBC News
- Journalists have given praise and appreciation for the creative and thoughtful boxes:
 - "Just wanted to say I received the package and thanks so much! It's so nice to imagine traveling again and once again thinking 'yeah, I'm going to visit this spa and get a facial' when all year I've been stomping down on any travel yearnings."
 - Amy Alipio, National Geographic Traveler



ACTIVATE: ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Strategic development of new advertising campaign



- Campaign created based on research to determine what post-COVID travelers are looking for in a travel destination
- Ads position Anchorage in the marketplace and feature messages and images that resonate with travelers expected to be among the first when travel resumes
- Campaign included print ads, electronic ads, videos, and a new PowerPoint template designed for use during destination promotional events and travel advisor training sessions



ACTIVATE: ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Print and electronic ads



- Series of print and electronic ads were created incorporating the Urban & Wild theme
- Variety of dimensions and ads sizes allow for use in different publications and mediums



ACTIVATE: ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Travel Vlogs



- Four-part travel vlog series developed to show visitors all Anchorage has to offer
- Series includes scenes with and without face masks to ensure long shelf life
- Video consumption has grown tremendously since the beginning of COVID-19
- Videos will be strategically rolled out and placed on the following outlets:
 - [Anchorage.net](https://www.anchorage.net)
 - Social media, email marketing, YouTube, and Vimeo
 - Advertising channels



ACTIVATE: ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Ad Placements

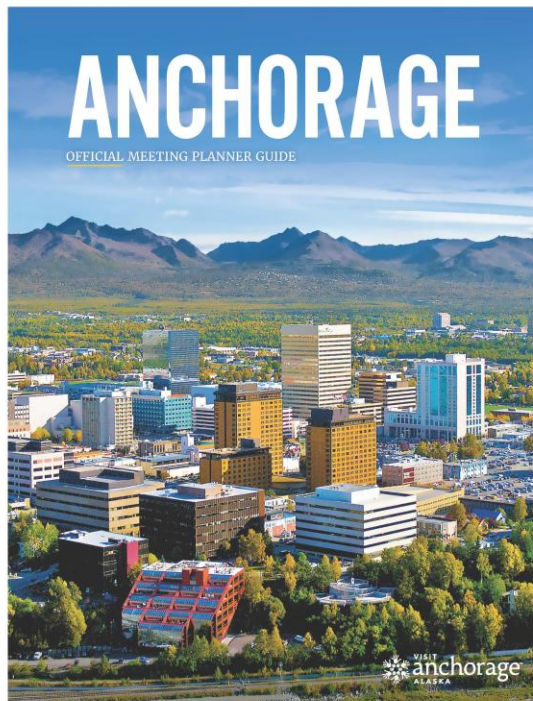


- Summer and Fall Stay & Play campaigns ran on Facebook, Instagram, ADN.com, and TravelAlaska.com
- Additional ad placements included AFAR, Alaska Magazine, Travel + Leisure, TripAdvisor, TravelGuidesFree, Google PPC, and Bing PPC
 - Focus was on inspiring future travel when consumers feel safe to do so



ACTIVATE: MEETING PLANNER GUIDE

New guide designed for the meeting planner audience



- Updated content with information on travel mandates and health/safety protocols
- Expanded content on outdoor recreation and accessibility to trails and parks
- Highlights the top 10 reasons to meet in Anchorage
- Imagery was updated
- 1,000 copies were printed
- Digital version available online



ACTIVATE: WORKSHOPS

Independent Traveler and Clean & Ready Workshops



Independent Traveler Workshop:

- Focused on how businesses can prepare for the upcoming tourism season
- A panel of operators gave first-hand accounts on 2020 operational changes as well as preparations for 2021 season

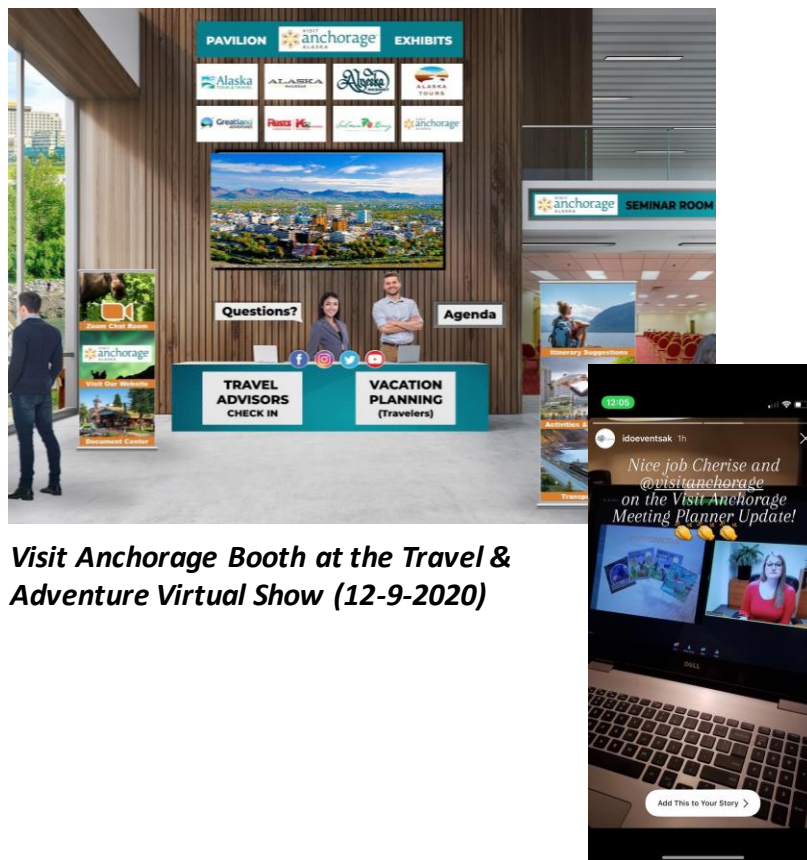
Clean & Ready Workshop:

- Introduced Healthy Anchorage Pledge program and cleaning protocols
- Shared best practices for mitigating the spread of illness and how to communicate information to guests
- Anchorage Healthy Pledge is an ongoing program with continued push to the business community and marketing to consumers



ACTIVATE: TRADE SHOWS, SALES CALLS & TRAINING

Virtual trade shows, sales calls, and events



Visit Anchorage Booth at the Travel & Adventure Virtual Show (12-9-2020)

- Conducted virtual training to ensure travel advisors, various travel groups, and audiences are educated on Anchorage
- Created sales materials highlighting new health/safety protocols and distributed to groups including ASTA, GTM, PCMA, Smart Meetings, NTA, USTOA, and SpinCon
- Efforts were made to rebook meetings cancelled in 2020; to date 8 meetings have been rebooked correlating to an estimated direct attendee spending of \$9M
- Visit Anchorage collaborated with AFN on their 2020 virtual conference and secured hosting for the 2021 AFN conference in Anchorage
- Comments posted on social media “Nice job to Cherise and @visitanchorage on the Visit Anchorage Meeting Planner update!”



PERSONNEL: VISIT ANCHORAGE STAFF

Visit Anchorage reduced the size of staff to reflect the decrease in bed tax revenue



- Staff time responding to COVID-19 comprised of significant program changes, research analysis, working with community groups to understand and mitigate community impacts, changing organizational structure, transitioning to a work from home environment, updating mandate information, supporting businesses access to research and relief programs, ongoing budget analysis and changes, and helping visitors navigate changing state and local travel and testing requirements
- With the funding from CARES Act, some staff were brought back from furlough to ensure all projects would be completed
- For 2021, we anticipate maintaining staff at approximately 50% of 2019, up from initial cuts to just 27%
- Visit Anchorage provided significant staff resources to administer the Tourism Grant Program



PERSONNEL: CONTRACTED STAFF

Contracted staff assisted Visit Anchorage staff on a project basis



- PIP Printing
 - Production of Visitor Guide solicitation materials
 - Printing of Meeting Planner takeaway piece
- Turning Heads Design:
 - Design of logo, signs, and ads for Healthy Anchorage Pledge



THANK YOU