



2019 Aleutian Marketplace Competition

Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association and the Aleut Corporation

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Café in Akutan Wins the Aleutian Marketplace Fellowship Competition

Regional competition awards \$18,000 to stimulate small business growth.

Juneau, Alaska – Three winners have been identified in the Aleutian Marketplace Fellowship Competition, a small business development contest sponsored by the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA), the Aleut Corporation (TAC), GCI, Wells Fargo and TelAlaska.

The grand prize winners are sisters Haliehana Stepetin and Robin Stepetin of Akutan, Alaska with the family-owned and operated Peanut and the Bean Café. Their café will be unique to Akutan, an Unanga village and home to a large seafood production facility. The cafe will sell coffee, baked goods, art and merchandise to fishermen, processing workers and local residents. The first-place winnings included \$7,000 in seed money, sponsored attendance to three fully-funded innovation business startup events in Alaska, and the potential to earn \$3,000 more with attendance at each conference.

Second place was awarded to Travis Swangel of Unalaska. His \$5,000 in winnings will help start-up his Island Bike Rentals business, which will offer a variety of bikes, including electronic bikes, for the expanding tourism market in Unalaska.

Third place went to Carlos Tayag of Unalaska, who was awarded \$3,000. He plans to open Sea Glass Bakery, the only bakery in Unalaska offering freshly made small batch goods by a local artisan.

The Aleutian Marketplace Fellowship Competition was developed to support small business development in the Aleutian-Pribilof region through established training and mentorship opportunities at statewide events that cater to innovators and entrepreneurs. Residents from the region have been attending workshops and participating in activities since October 2018 to stimulate actionable and entrepreneur-focused business planning to help start and grow small businesses in the region.

The three competition finalists attended the Innovation Summit, hosted by the Juneau Economic Development Council in Juneau on Feb. 20-21, where they submitted a short business pitch video explaining their business concept. The videos were reviewed and scored by a pool of independent judges with rural small business expertise.

“APICDA is focused on leveraging our resources to maximize benefits to our CDQ member communities. This competition is a good example of the collaboration between businesses dedicated to working together to foster economic growth and grassroots commerce,” said APICDA CEO Luke Fanning.

Thomas Mack, President/CEO of the Aleut Corporation added, “We’re proud to have invested almost \$80,000 among 16 different residents in this program, encouraging and helping develop innovative business ideas for the last six years.”



2019 Aleutian Marketplace Fellowship Competition winners, Carlos Tayag, Sea Glass Bakery; Haliehana Stepetin, Peanut & The Bean Café; Luke Fanning, APICDA CEO; and Travis Swangel, Island Bike Rentals in Juneau, Alaska, Feb. 19, 2019.

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APICDA is a non-profit dedicated to strengthening local fisheries-based economies through increasing direct fisheries participation in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, building support infrastructure and offering programs to assist the advancement of priority initiatives in its six member communities in the Aleutian-Pribilof region of Alaska. APICDA is one of six western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) organizations whose purpose is to provide eligible western Alaska villages with the opportunity to participate and invest in fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, alleviate poverty and provide economic and social benefits for residents of western Alaska.

The Aleut Corporation is one of the 13 regional Alaska Native Corporations formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Based in Anchorage, Alaska, the corporation represents 3,900 shareholders living in the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands region, the Pacific Northwest and the rest of the United States. Operating as a for-profit corporation, the Aleut family of companies offers product and service capabilities including government contracting, environmental remediation, base operations support, mechanical contracting, oil field services, real estate management and water testing to a wide range of customers and government agencies throughout the United States.