

Tourism works best when everyone works together

By Kirby Day

Many small steps by many dedicated Juneau people have - over time - had the cumulative effect of making tourism work in our community. The process has been lengthy and time-consuming and has involved not one, but many public processes and private efforts.

The Tourism Best Management Practices program was initiated by local residents 13 years ago who have a very large stake in the outcome of tourism issues. Approximately 20 percent of Juneau's work force is employed in some capacity in the visitor industry. In fact, the resumes of many Juneau residents under the age of 30 probably include work experience at one of our businesses.

Because tourism operators and employees are invested in Juneau in so many ways, as property owners, parents of schoolchildren and participants in numerous community activities, it is critical to have a good relationship with our neighbors.

Results from this season illustrate how well the program has worked. Total complaints left on the tourism message line are down by nearly 60% from 2000. Cruise ship noise calls fell from 20 in 2000 to 7 this past season. The number of messages about ship emissions went from 85 in 2000 to 4 this year. Flightseeing declined from 104 to 17. The only category with increased complaints was vehicles, which rose from 34 to 60. We continue to work on making improvements in this area by encouraging other local companies to become members.

In response to growing concerns about the impact of tourism on the community, local tourism operators took the initiative in 1997 to develop the Voluntary Compliance Program. Over time, Voluntary Compliance evolved into Tourism Best Management Practices. The core idea behind both programs is that when tourism operators become aware of their potential to negatively impact the lives of their neighbors, they will conduct their operations in a more sensitive manner.

But our Tourism Best Management Practices program is more than just an awareness program. By asking every employee to sign on to the guidelines, we cultivate a sense of personal responsibility and accountability among our work force. When everyone does his or her part, the impacts of tourism are minimized and the entire community benefits from the effort.

Tour operators and employees who sign on to the program agree to follow

specific guidelines designed to alleviate traffic congestion, reduce noise and generally make our Juneau summer enjoyable for visitors and residents alike. Because we track the comments called in to the tourism hotline, we revise the guidelines annually to try to be as responsive as possible to residents' concerns.

When the original voluntary compliance guidelines were adopted, some believed they went too far in regulating business; others thought they did not go far enough. Tourism Best Management does not, and cannot, address every issue. It is a cost-effective, proven strategy that deals with impacts operators can address directly as they occur throughout the season. One can visit our website and learn more about our program at tbmp.info.

Source: Juneau Empire

2009 Tourism Best Management Practices Participants

TOUR OPERATORS MAKING TOURISM WORK!

Above and Beyond Alaska Adventures Afloat Adventures in Alaska AJ Juneau Dock LLC. Alaska Canopy Adventures Alaska Coach Tours Alaska Fjordlines Alaska Fly-n-Fish Charters Alaska Galore Tours Alaska Travel Adventures Alaska Trophy Fishing Alaska Zipline Adventures AJ Mine/Gastineau Mill Enterprises Allen Marine Tours American West Steamboat Co. Auke Bay Charters Auke Bay Sportfishing Auk Ta Shaa Bear Creek Outfitters Carnival Cruise Lines Celebrity Cruises Coastal Helicopters Crew International Cruise West Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska Cycle Alaska Dolphin Tours Era Helicopters Fishhunter Charters Franklin Dock Enterprises Gastineau Guiding Company Glacier Gardens Rainforest Adventure Goldbelt Seadrome Marina Goldbelt Security Hapag-Lloyd Hauling Bros Holland America Line Holland America-Princess Alaska Islander Charters Japan Cruise Line Juneau Charter Boat Operators Assoc. Juneau Jeep Adventures Juneau Sportfishing Juneau Taxi and Tours Juneau Trolley Car Company Juneau Steamboat Company Last Chance Tours LD's Crew Shuttle Lindblad Expeditions Macaulay Salmon Hatchery Mount Roberts Tramway M&M Tours Norwegian Cruise Line NorthStar Trekking Orca Enterprises Princess Cruises Professional Mariners Group Ramel Crew Shuttle Regent Seven Seas Cruises Royal Caribbean International Silversea Cruises Southeast Sportfishing Taku Glacier Lodge TBMP/JCVB Crossing Guards TEMSCO Helicopters Ward Air Weather Permitting Alaska Wings of Alaska Wings Airways