


KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
Community & Fiscal Projects

MEMORANDIUM

TO: Charlie Pierce, Mayor
FROM: Brenda Ahlberg, Community & Fiscal Projects Manager 
DATE: January 20, 2021
SUBJECT: FY21-2Q Economic Development Grant Reports

Attached are the grant reports for the following entities:

KPEDD – Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District

KPTMC – Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council

SBDC – Small Business Development Center



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

144 North Binkley Street • Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7599
PHONE: (907) 714-2153 • FAX: (907) 714-2377
EMAIL: bahlberg@kpb.us

FROM: KPEDD
KPB ACCOUNT: 100.94900.KPEDD.43009

Contract Amount: \$100,000
Ending: June 30, 2021

Financial / Progress Report

Submit Report To: Brenda Ahlberg Community & Fiscal Projects Manager Kenai Peninsula Borough 144 N. Binkley St., Soldotna, AK 99669	Project Name: Non-Areawide KPB Economic Development Date: 12/22/2020 Report No.: 2 of 4 Quarter From: 10/01/20 To: 12/31/20
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FINANCIAL REPORT: FINAL REPORT DUE ON OR BEFORE 07/09/21

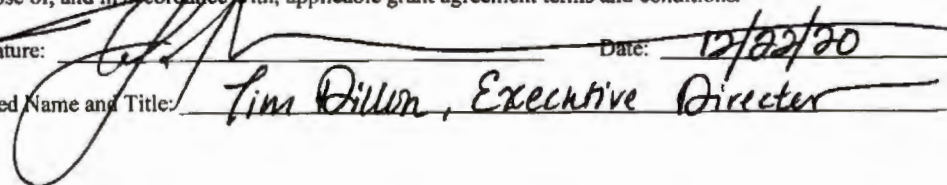
Cost Category	Authorized Budget	Expenditures from Last Report	Expenditures This Period	Total Expenditures to Date	Balance of Funds
Personnel	100,000	25,000.00	25,000.00	50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
		-		-	\$ -
TOTALS	\$ 100,000.00	25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Payment Request					\$ 25,000.00

PROGRESS REPORT: Describe activities that have occurred during this reporting period. Describe any challenges you may have experienced, any foreseen problems, and/or any special requests. Attach additional pages.

KPEDD accomplished the following deliverables during the second quarter of fiscal year 2021:

- Kicked off the 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Hosted the first Board Retreat on October 1st & 2nd to develop the CEDS and review KPEDD strategies
- Video layout structure began on developing a manufacturer resource informational video
- Final Census partnership closeout discussion with US Census Director, Dr. Dillingham
- Assisted the Denali Borough to establish an Economic Development Organization for their region
- Advised the six incorporated cities in municipal relief funding disbursement options
- Continued seeking funding options for the Alaska Fish Nutrition project
- Worked with the Borough Attorney to discuss resiliency concepts for the region
- Assisted more than 90 businesses through the Alaska Cares Act application appeal process
- As of 12/10/20 KPEDD has assisted 1,041 businesses to receive \$49,692,653.94 in AK CARES state grants

Grantee Certification: I certify that the above information is true and correct, and that expenditures have been made for the purpose of, and in accordance with, applicable grant agreement terms and conditions.

Signature:  Date: 12/22/20

Printed Name and Title: Tim Dillon, Executive Director



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

144 North Binkley Street • Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7599

PHONE: (907) 714-2153 • FAX: (907) 714-2377

EMAIL: bahlberg@kpb.us

FROM: KPTMC

KPB ACCOUNT: 100.94900.KPTMC.43021

Contract Amount: \$60,000

Ending: June 30, 2021

Financial / Progress Report

Submit Report To:

Brenda Ahlberg

Community & Fiscal Projects Manager

Kenai Peninsula Borough

144 N. Binkley St., Soldotna, AK 99669

Project Name: Tourism Marketing/Peninsula Promotion

Date: January 12, 2021

Report No.: 2

Quarter From: October 1, 2020

To: December 31, 2020

FINANCIAL REPORT: FINAL REPORT DUE ON OR BEFORE JULY 09, 2021

Cost Category	Authorized Budget	Expenditures from Last Report	Expenditures This Period	Total Expenditures to Date	Balance of Funds
Personnel	\$ 2,700.00	\$ -	\$ 970.08	\$ 970.08	\$ 1,729.92
Adv/Marketing	\$ 57,300.00	\$ -	\$ 11,302.40	\$ 11,302.40	\$ 45,997.60
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS	\$ 57,300.00	\$ -	\$ 12,272.48	\$ 12,272.48	\$ 47,727.52

Payment Request	\$ 12,272.48
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PROGRESS REPORT: Describe activities that have occurred during this reporting period. Describe any challenges you may have experienced, any foreseen problems, and/or any special requests. Attach additional pages.

Progress Report Attached

Grantee Certification: I certify that the above information is true and correct, and that expenditures have been made for the purpose of, and in accordance with, applicable grant agreement terms and conditions.

Signature: Debbie Speakman

Date: January 12, 2021

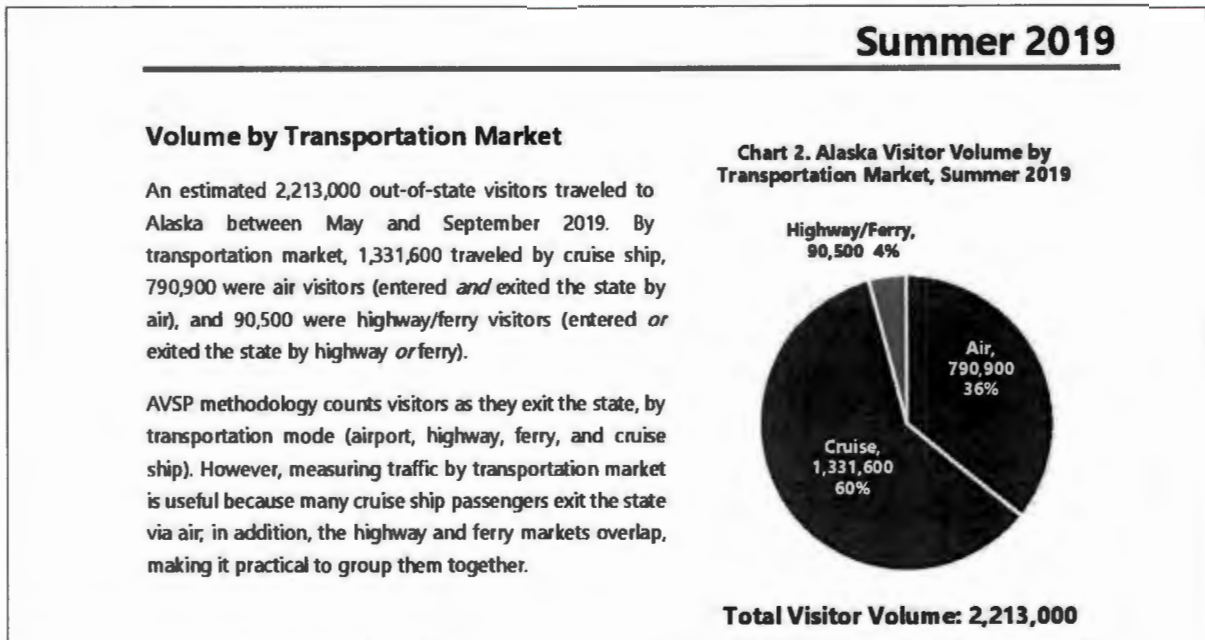
Printed Name and Title: Debbie Speakman, Executive Director



Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council (KPTMC) KPB FY21 2nd Quarter Progress Report

Industry Hurdles

Before COVID- 19, Alaska was set up for a record breaking 6% growth in 2020, with a forecasted 2.26 million visitors. While over half of Alaska’s visitors in 2019 came by cruise ship, 790,900 travelers arrived by air (entered and exited the State by air) and 90,500 were highway/ferry visitors. (Alaska Visitor Volume, winter 2018-19 and summer 2019, McDowell Group). These independent travelers who arrive by air and highway/ferry make up the majority of Kenai Peninsula visitors, and the ones KPTMC targets.



2019 was the fifth consecutive summer of growth, and the largest single-year growth in the last decade. Seward saw 237,900 cruise ship passengers (97 port of calls) while Homer saw 14,800 (13 port of calls). The Peninsula did not fare as well as projected due to the Swan Lake Fire which impacted travel for locals and independent travelers alike. The Kenai Peninsula hospitality industry counted on a strong 2020 to recover from 2019’s losses.

Between the 2019 fire and COVID-19, Peninsula tourism businesses have faced nearly 18 months of lost revenue. Visitors that would have come from the lower 48 faced Alaska Airlines dropping a number of regular flights, Canada limiting all non-essential border crossings, and the State’s travel mandates that changed weekly. The Peninsula saw Ravn Air shut down and go into bankruptcy limiting regional flights.

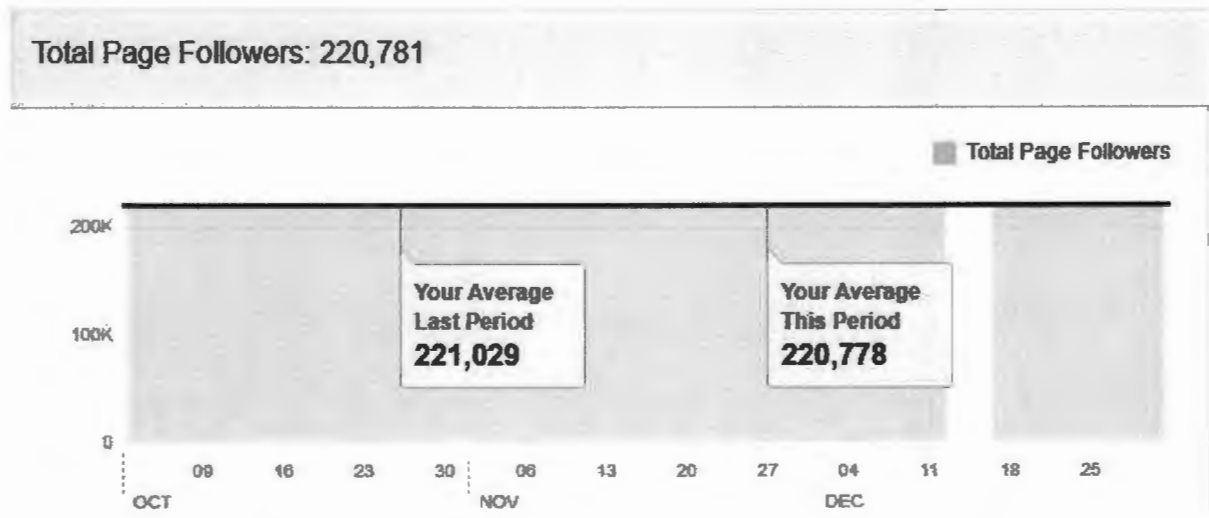
The Port in Seward lost cruise travel when the Port of Seattle suspended all cruise travel and Canada closed all ports.

Bright spots for the Kenai Peninsula were Alaskans who got to spend a spring and summer in a world-class tourism destination – without the tourists. KPTMC, working with KPBA's Administration came out early inviting Alaskans to the Peninsula, which was "Open for Business". Other destinations in Alaska followed suit. Alaskans benefitted from "Local Rates" and having last minute road system access.

Current 2021 Hurdles

KPTMC is a membership run organization, many of our members are still questioning if they will be able to survive two summers of lost revenue. Membership dues, marketing program buy-ins and our partnership with the Borough is how KPTMC run marketing campaigns. The best return on investment has been through social media marketing and, up until this summer, we saw tremendous reach from those campaigns. Starting early in 2020 all media sources were 100% taken up with elections and COVID-19. Social media has been increasingly caustic and many of our followers pulled away from it. Website traffic and social media engagement tanked all travel related pages across the industry. Starting mid-November KPTMC saw engagement on our social media increase as election coverage lessened and a vaccine was on the horizon. Engagement has continued to grow as have requests for information and Discovery Guides.

For the 2nd quarter, boosted posts and ads run on Facebook and Instagram have performed well, although not at last year's volume. The Kenai, Alaska's Playground has 220,778 Facebook followers and 14.9 thousand Instagram followers. Only Travel Alaska and Explore Fairbanks have a larger audience with 464,374 and 306,415, followers respectfully. Strong late 1st and 2nd quarter analytics showed travelers desire to get out as well as the effectiveness of the campaigns.



The Kenai, Alaska's Playground
 Published by Later @ December 21 at 4:10 PM · @

Wishing everyone a very happy winter solstice from #TheKenai.
 PC: @alaskanphotography_507 (Instagram user)

Performance
 \$49.67 spent over 4 days.

Post Engagements	Reach	5,136
860	Cost Per Post Engagement	\$0.06

Activity

- Post Engagement: 860
- Post Reactions: 728
- Post Shares: 72
- Post Comments: 17

The Kenai, Alaska's Playground
 December 5, 2020 at 11:01 AM · @

Anyone else experiencing #wanderlust lately? Come #WanderTheKenai
 >>> <https://kenaipeninsula.org/>

👍❤️👍 908 16 Comments 114 Shares

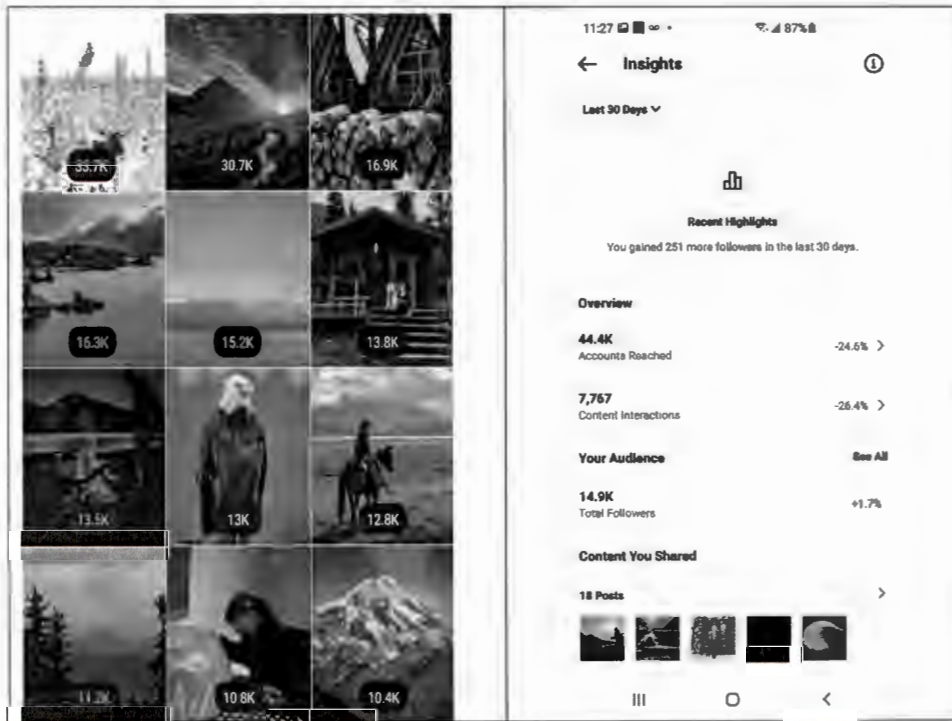
Performance
 \$100.00 spent over 5 days.

Post Engagements	Reach	10,744
1,186	Cost Per Post Engagement	\$0.08

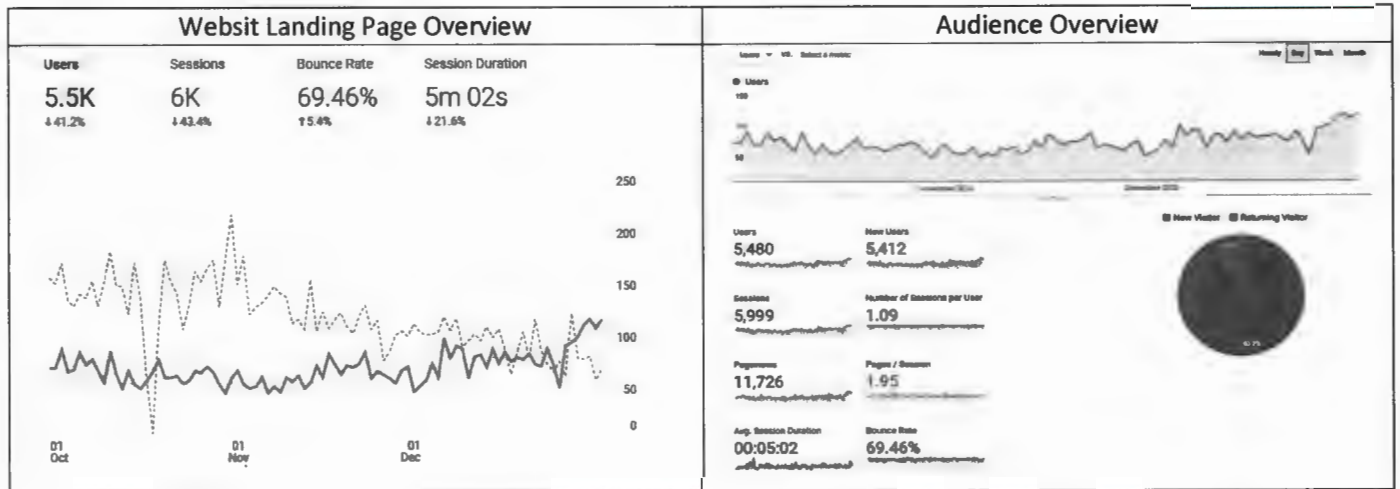
Activity

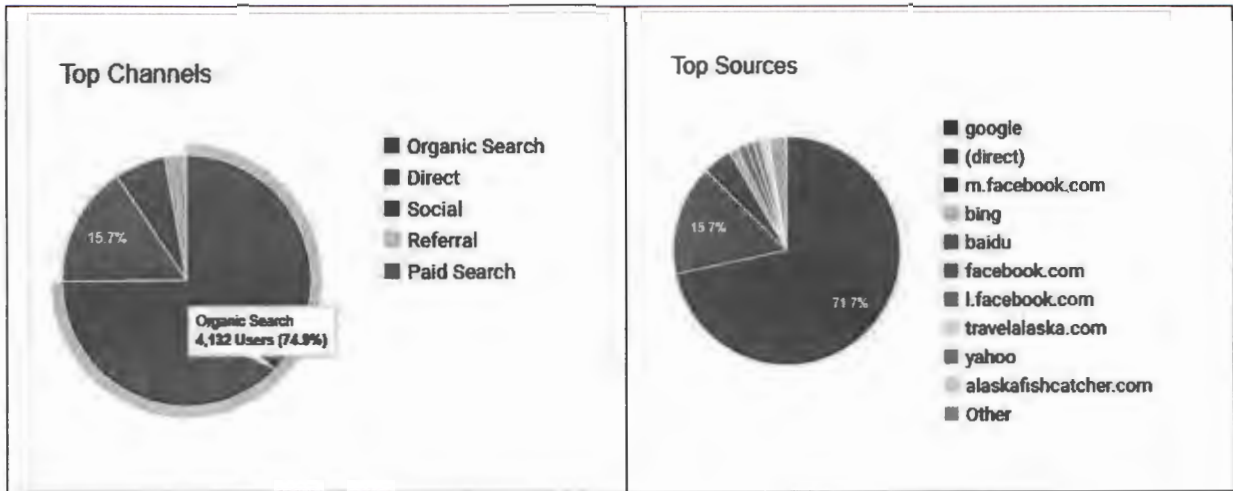
- Post Engagement: 1186
- Post Reactions: 1041
- Post Shares: 70
- Link Clicks: 21
- Post Comments: 14

Instagram Incites



www.KenaiPeninsula.org_analytics





Looking forward: Early Spring & Summer 2021:

Changing travel trends are favorable for Kenai Peninsula’s tourism and hospitality industry. Alaskans fell back in love with, or discovered the Peninsula for the first time in 2020, and plan to return. There has been a shift in traveler’s behavior and the below are trending characteristics that our future campaigns will focus on.

- Rural Travel (“The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2021” Travel & Leisure, December 18, 2020, <https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/best-places-to-travel-in-2021>)

1. Alaska’s Coast



Cruise lines and local officials express muted optimism about 2021, which may be the best year to see Alaska given that cruise ships are unlikely to sail full and coastal towns won’t have their typical crowds. Skip the civilization part: Vast national parks such as Glacier Bay, Misty Fjords and Kenai Fjords are best reached by boat.

- Road Trips (“2021 Travel Forecast: The ‘Vaxication’ and other Trends”, Travel Pulse, December 16, 2020 <https://www.travelpulse.com/news/features/2021-travel-forecast-the-vaxication-and-other-trends.html>) (“10 Travel Trends for 2021” CN Traveler, December 6, 2020, <https://www.cntraveller.com/gallery/10-travel-trends-for-2021>)



Road trips will continue to be popular in 2021. They were the most popular type of travel this year and that will continue into the next year as many travelers escape in a socially distance way.

There has been a 166% year-on-year increase in RV rentals. With travel restrictions forcing people to take domestic holidays, traveling by road is the obvious choice in the viral age, as being in your own vehicle provides the most security.

- Meaningful travel (“The top travel trends we’re predicting for 2021”, Amy Bonifas, Six-Two, <https://www.contiki.com/six-two/top-travel-trends-2021/>)



There is a hunger for more meaningful travel experiences – experiences that truly get to grips with other cultures, support local communities during hard times and bring all these places that have been denied for us to life.

Travel experts have coined the term ‘philantourism’, which is the act of choosing a holiday in order to support the destination. “Knowledge has become the new currency and being a force for good when traveling has become the new souvenir” say experts at Booking.com

- Flexibility (“Six Major 2021 Travel Trends Show Transforming Effects of COVID-19”, Lea Lane, Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lealane/2020/11/19/six-major-2021-travel-trends-show-transforming-effects-of-covid-19/?sh=48bdfecd1d3b>)



More Last-Minute Trips: When it comes to flexibility, more travelers are booking spontaneous last-minute trips. The average number of days between booking to check-in is now 50 days, down 37.5% from average lead time pre-pandemic.

With fewer tourists from out-of-States Alaskans have had more luxury to book last minute. Being on the road system and accessible has made the Peninsula a destination that they can return to several times a year.

- Eco-tourism (“The Hottest Travel Trends for 2021”, Rachel Miller, Travel Pirates, https://www.travelpirates.com/other/hottest-travel-trends-for-2021_13397)



The best ways to stay green in 2021 is through ecotourism. It’s traveling sustainably to natural areas that focus on conserving the environment and local inhabitants.

For those of you who are looking to get away from the crowds and become one with nature, there is no better time to explore the natural world outside your front door.

Eco-Tourism includes culinary travel, exploring hard to reach and out of the way destinations and wellness travel.


Alaskans came through for the Kenai Peninsula during the pandemic and reaching our neighbors will continue to provide greater return on investment.

- Mid-December through early-January post cards were mailed to households in Anchorage and the Mat-Su valley thanking them for supporting the Kenai Peninsula and inviting them back.
- Content on KenaiPeninsula.org is continually updated promoting “Alaskan Specials”, upcoming events and out of the way adventures.
- Creating promotions with Anchorage Daily News promoting winter and spring visits to the Peninsula.
- Creating promotions with iHeart Radio to amplify our winter and spring visits.

Messaging that the Peninsula is “open for business” has been important and we have continued to see visitors in the off season while Anchorage is locked down again.


Reaching Beyond Alaska

For the third quarter of FY21, KPTMC is taking advantage of the traditional “Wave Season” when travelers research and book their Alaskan cruises to promote the Kenai Peninsula’s wide open spaces. Profile and banner ad are up on TravelAlaska.com which has consistently been the top referral to KenaiPeninsula.org. Visit Anchorage will be launching their new website in March where we will also have a display ad. Both Travel Alaska and Visit Anchorage are how we economically reach visitors from out of State.



THE KENAI, ALASKA'S PLAYGROUND

MANAGE



Alaska's Kenai Peninsula extends 150 miles (240 km) southwest from the Chugach Mountains south of Anchorage. It is separated from the mainland on the west by the Cook Inlet and on the east by Prince William Sound. Most of the Kenai Peninsula is part of the Kenai Peninsula Borough. Most Kenai Peninsula visitors arrive in Anchorage and journey south via either the Seward Highway or the Alaska Railroad. As you arrive onto the Kenai Peninsula, you pass the turn off to the small town of Hope. Further along you will see the junction of the Seward Highway, which heads to the communities of Moose Pass and coastal Seward, Alaska and the Sterling Highway, which heads east. Come visit The Kenai, Alaska's Playground!

Referral analytics from TravelAlaska.com for December 2020

December 2020	4,211	13
English	2,168	13
German	374	0
Japanese	413	0
Chinese	282	0
Spanish	608	0
App	25	0
Korean	366	0

Strengths of Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council



- Strong brand recognition
- Managed website that represents all Kenai Peninsula Communities
- Partnership with incorporated community visitor centers
- Social media channels with large fan base and consistent engagement
- Full time staff who manage assets and
 - Participate in Statewide promotion initiatives
 - Provide support and partnerships with industry businesses on the Peninsula
 - Act as liaisons and insure the Peninsula is represented by Statewide organizations
 - Interact with travel media and publications
 - Engage with potential visitors through email, phone calls and creating and distributing Kenai Peninsula's Discovery Guide and Passport to the Kenai

Board comprised of industry leaders

Eastern Region

Dale Bagley
Redoubt Realty

Central Region

Mike Flores
Ninilchik Charters, Seward
Fishing Club, Alyeska Farms

Southern Region

Vacant

Incorporated Community Representatives

Jason Bickling
Seward Chamber of
Commerce

Shanon Davis
Soldotna Chamber of
Commerce

Brittany Brown
Kenai Chamber of
Commerce

Brad Anderson
Homer Chamber of
Commerce

Borough Wide Representatives

Carol Fraser
Aspen Hotels

Travis Taylor
Premier Tours

Lane Chesley
Kenai Peninsula Borough
Assembly



**Alaska Small Business
Development Center**

UAA BUSINESS ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Kenai Peninsula

**Alaska Small Business Development Center
1901 Bragaw St., Ste. 199
Anchorage, AK 99508
(907) 786-7201**

FY 2021

Second Quarter Report

October 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020

Note from the Center Director: Cliff Cochran, Kenai Peninsula Center

The Kenai Peninsula Center for the Alaska SBDC completed its second quarter of FY 2021, this time providing assistance to businesses in need of COVID-19 relief and others looking forward to a revived economy. We are not out of this yet, but are working closely with entrepreneurs anticipating better days in the coming year. While COVID-19 support was again the top topic for the quarter, other areas of advising, such as startup assistance, have increased since last quarter, which is encouraging.

During the second quarter, the SBDC continued to provide strong support for business owners across the Kenai Peninsula, as we navigate the economic fallout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We had a decrease in advising hours this quarter, compared to previous second quarters, due to COVID-19 relief programs ending and businesses left waiting for the next round of stimulus. With the new stimulus bill signed into law on December 27, the SBDC has noted a sharp increase in advising hours. We anticipate the third quarter to be nearly the same as last year's record third quarter. The value of excellent advice has been something business owners across the peninsula have come to appreciate about the SBDC. Our popularity has grown significantly since March, and with a new business advisor in Homer, we're looking forward to a busy spring.

In addition to business advising, the Alaska SBDC has maintained an online [COVID-19 Resource Center](#), where business owners can find the latest updates for CARES Act programs and more. During the second quarter, the Alaska SBDC continued hosting the series of free webinars with the latest updates on COVID-19 relief programs for small businesses in Alaska. We were joined by the SBA, The Foraker Group, the State of Alaska, and others to answer questions asked by participants live. Special guests have included the SBA Office of Disaster Assistance, the Alaska Unemployment Office, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, the IRS, as well as many more. We will continue to offer these webinars for the foreseeable future.

In addition to COVID-19 material, the Alaska SBDC offered dozens of webinars on a wide array of subjects and harnessed both in-house expertise and professional adjuncts. During the quarter, the SBDC Workshop Program focused more intentionally on developing and deploying on-demand workshops, offering over 50 this quarter. These on-demand topics include, but are not limited to LLCs in Alaska, Engaging Social Media, Developing a Marketing Strategy, How to Get a Business License, and many more.

We are actively working with clients in every part of the Kenai Peninsula, from the busiest part of the Sterling Highway in Soldotna, to the remote reaches of Hope and Seldovia. We will continue to work tirelessly to support local business owners through business advising, webinars, and no-cost resources.

At a Glance: Kenai Peninsula FY21 Q2 (Oct 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2020)

Number of Clients Advised

Current Quarter: 94

FY 2021: 164

Jobs Created by Clients

Current Quarter: 89

FY 2021: 97

Business Starts

Current Quarter: 6

FY 2021: 13

Capital Infusion

Current Quarter: \$1,054,225

SBA Loans: \$150,000

Non-SBA Loans: \$0

Non-Debt Financing: \$904,225

FY 2021: \$5,644,788

Alaska SBDC Kenai Peninsula Center Activity – Historical Comparison

	FY 2020 Q1 7/1/19 - 9/30/19	FY 2020 Q2 10/1/19 - 12/31/19	FY 2020 Q3 1/1/20 - 3/31/20	FY 2020 Q4 4/1/20 - 6/30/20	FY 2021 Q1 7/1/20 - 9/30/20	FY 2021 Q2 10/1/20 - 12/31/20
New business created	5	10	8	4	7	6
Jobs created	17	35	22	17	8	89
Loans (in dollars)	\$125,000	\$420,000	\$665,800	\$4,517,588	\$4,193,063	\$150,000
Total capital (loans + equity)	\$125,500	\$835,000	\$665,800	\$4,631,308	\$4,590,563	\$1,054,225
New clients	20	19	35	20	13	14
Total clients	69	69	96	125	116	94
Total advising hours	300.92	344.33	278.74	288.37	169.23	180.48

COVID-19 Impact: Kenai Peninsula (March 9, 2020 - December 31, 2020)

Capital Infusion:

Current Quarter: \$847,175

Total: \$9,746,046

Businesses Advised:

Current Quarter: 58 clients

Total: 169 clients

Jobs Supported:

Current Quarter: 399 jobs

Total: 950 jobs

Advising Hours:

Current Quarter: 59.83 hours

Total: 445.10 hours

Top 5 Locations Advised:

Soldotna: 59 clients

Homer: 36 clients

Kenai: 30 clients

Seward: 23 clients

Cooper Landing: 6 clients

Top 5 Industries Advised:

Accommodation and Food Service: 42 clients

Healthcare and Social Assistance: 21 clients

Retail: 16 clients

Arts and Entertainment: 15 clients

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting: 12 clients

Summary

This special section details COVID-19 support provided by the Alaska SBDC to businesses on the Kenai Peninsula, including figures from the current quarter and since the pandemic began in March 2020. During the second quarter of FY 2021, the Kenai Peninsula Center Director and Homer Business Advisor provided strong support to business owners and local officials. The SBDC has served as a primary point of contact for local business owners looking for information to help with tough economic decisions. In addition to business advising, the Alaska SBDC has continued to maintain an online [COVID-19 Resource Center](#), which includes weekly webinars featuring the latest news for small businesses in Alaska. The Alaska SBDC prides itself on leading the COVID-19 recovery effort on the Kenai Peninsula and throughout Alaska, and we will continue to work closely with business owners to ensure they receive the best service in their time of need.

Clients & Advising at a Glance: Kenai Peninsula FY21 Q2 (Oct 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2020)

94 Clients by Current Lifecycle

Pre-venture: 16 clients
Startups: 20 clients
In-business: 57 clients
Permanently Closed: 1 client

94 Clients by Industry

Accommodation and Food Service: 24 clients
Healthcare and Social Assistance: 13 clients
Retail: 13 clients
Professional, Scientific and Technical: 12 clients
Arts and Entertainment: 8 clients
Construction: 5 clients
Service: 5 clients
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting: 4 clients
Manufacturer/Producer: 3 clients
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing: 2 clients
Transportation/Warehousing: 1 client
Mining: 1 client
Tourism: 1 client
Waste Management: 1 client
Wholesale: 1 client

Top Areas of Advising

COVID-19 Support: 57 hours
Startup Assistance: 34 hours
Financing: 31 hours
Buy/Sell a Business: 24 hours
Managing a Business: 22 hours
Business Plan: 6 hours

Summary:

Of the 94 entrepreneurs who received advising assistance during the second quarter of FY 2021, 16 were in the pre-venture phase, 20 were startups, and 57 were already in business. During the second quarter, we confirmed one business closure, but that was in response to our annual Small Business Survey and was not COVID-related. Historically, the SBDC meets with nearly equal numbers of pre-venture/startups and firms already in business, but the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a record number of established business meetings. Accommodation and food service businesses were some of the hardest hit by the pandemic, so they topped the list for a third straight quarter. As the economy has started to recover from the pandemic, we're noticing a shift in requested assistance. Startup assistance was the second most advised area during the quarter, just below COVID-19 support. Due to outstanding interest rates on commercial loans, as low as 2.42% fixed in December 2020, financing was next on the list for advising time.

Jobs at a Glance: Kenai Peninsula FY21 Q2 (Oct 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2020)

New Jobs Overview

89 new jobs

22 clients

New Jobs by Industry

Healthcare and Social Assistance: 5 clients (23 jobs)

Accommodation and Food Service: 1 client (1 job)

Retail: 2 clients (2 jobs)

Transportation and Warehousing: 1 client (3 jobs)

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting: 1 client (1 job)

Arts and Entertainment: 2 clients (41 jobs)

Professional, Scientific and Technical: 3 clients (6 jobs)

Real Estate, Rental and Leasing: 1 client (1 job)

Service: 5 clients (10 jobs)

Waste Management and Remediation Services: 1 client (1 job)

Jobs Supported

455 jobs

77 clients

Summary:

During the second quarter of FY 2021, 22 clients reported the creation of 89 new jobs on the Kenai Peninsula. This does not represent the current state of the economy, but due to responses submitted in our fourth Annual Small Business Survey, which was released during the quarter. We maintain the highest standards when confirming milestones, so jobs created within the past year are just being reported this quarter. The largest number of new jobs were reported from healthcare and social assistance. The Kenai Peninsula Center again maintained a significant number of jobs supported, due to the high volume of businesses seeking relief from the COVID-19 disaster. During the pandemic, the SBDC has supported all sizes of small businesses, from owner-operator establishments to firms with over 150 employees. Many of the jobs supported by the SBDC were preserved through timely guidance on the first Paycheck Protection Program, and we are ready to support local businesses for the next round, as well.

New Clients at a Glance: Kenai Peninsula FY21 Q2 (Oct 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2020)

14 New Clients by Initial Stage

Pre-ventures: 8 clients

Startups: 3 clients

In-business: 3 clients

14 New Clients by Industry

Accommodation and Food Service: 5 clients

Professional, Scientific and Technical: 3 clients

Construction: 2 clients

Mining: 1 client

Retail: 1 client
Service: 1 client
Tourism: 1 client

14 New Clients by Community

Homer: 5 clients
Soldotna: 5 clients
Kenai: 3 clients
Seward: 1 client

Summary:

The Alaska SBDC Kenai Peninsula Center on-boarded 14 new clients during the second quarter of FY 2021. This quarter was the first, since the start of the pandemic, where there were more new prevention clients than existing business clients. Accommodation and Food Service, being hardest hit by COVID-19, were the top industry with new clients during the quarter. Our new business advisor in Homer, Robert Green, has taken an active role advising in the South Peninsula, so Homer has experienced an increase. So far, Robert has done very well, with 100% positive feedback on client satisfaction surveys.

New Businesses at a Glance: Kenai Peninsula FY21 Q2 (Oct 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2020)

Qualifying New-Business Starts: 6

Summary:

An enterprise is considered "in-business" when all required licensing/permitting is acquired, has payroll, acquired debt or equity capital, incurred business expenses, and/or created sales. During the second quarter of FY 2021, six clients reported the creation of business starts, including two from the professional sector, and one from accommodation, retail, transportation, and remediation services sectors. These businesses were started in Kenai, Soldotna, and Seward and confirmed their businesses had started during the quarter. Owners for these businesses have worked closely with the SBDC during the startup process and have successfully launched, despite the harsh economic climate caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Workshops

Summary:

Alaska SBDC workshops were attended by 19 Kenai Peninsula residents. These classes, offered exclusively online during the COVID-19 pandemic, covered a wide array of subjects and harnessed both in-house expertise and professional adjuncts. The SBDC has continued to offer briefings each week, utilizing representatives from the SBA, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, and other small business resources and organizations. Each briefing was recorded and made available on the SBDC COVID-19 Resource Center. In FY21, the SBDC Workshop Program focused more intentionally on developing and deploying on-demand workshops, offering over 50 this quarter. These on-demand topics include, but are not limited to, COVID-19 specific resources and help. The most popular topics were LLCs in Alaska, Engaging Social Media, Developing a Marketing Strategy, How to Get a Business License, and the COVID-19 Informational recordings.

Coming Up Rosy at Land's End

Who would have guessed that one silver lining of the COVID cloud would benefit the Gray-crowned rosy-finches of Homer, Alaska? Last March, an avid bird lover, George, had to cancel his annual Shorebird Festival reservation at Land's End Resort due to the coronavirus. "Land's End at that time was experiencing a serious backlog in cancellation requests," wrote Christina Adams, Director of Sales & Marketing, in a newsletter. "And so our owner, Jon, called George to ask for more time to process his refund. George said, 'Don't worry about it. Just build me a bird feeder. You should target the Gray-crowned rosy-finches, who need a little winter boost.'" Land's End got the birdfeeder installed, and after 35 years of operating there, owner Jon Faulkner is experiencing Gray-crowned rosy-finches out on the Spit in new ways. The birds remind resort staff that kindness and beauty can spread and multiply even amid economic and public health upheaval.



Faulkner personally made over 500 phone calls like that one to George last April when road closures and the pandemic triggered "catastrophic cancellations." He reassured guests and asked for patience while refunds processed—and presented the option to lock in their rates for future use in any season. "He wanted to handle that personally so customers knew that he—the owner —was taking the time to call them and assure them that we weren't going anywhere. They'd get back any money they had spent here that they wanted back. And we'd be here when they wanted to come," said Adams.

Faulkner believes that all businesses must take care of their employees and evolve their operations to stay successful. After a period of state-mandated closures, his team agreed to voluntarily keep reduced seating in place. Land's End crafted safety protocols and invested in new technologies to support remote hotel check-ins and check-outs and online food ordering.

Despite all those cancellations, they ended up having a busy summer, thanks to locals traveling in-state. "Alaskans definitely showed up this summer. More than I think we could have ever anticipated," said Adams. Folks also took ready advantage of The Chart Room's to-go and socially distanced offerings, pleased to enjoy Chef Miller's creations that feature local produce and meat.

"I hope people know that this is a safe place for them to come and enjoy a little bit of a getaway where we've put measures in place," said Adams. "We're not going anywhere. We've evolved into what people need and want out of a COVID-safe place."

While the gorgeous backdrop of Kachemak Bay, hearty fare at The Chart Room, and the adapted comforts of the resort await visitors all year round, those who time it right might even get to add those rosy-finches to their list of bright enticements calling from the end of the road.

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