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Alaska Chamber announces 2025 Premier Business Award recipients

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The Alaska Chamber will honor outstanding businesses and organizations for their accomplishments and contributions to the statewide economy at this year's Alaska Business Summit on Oct. 9, 2025, at the Alyeska Resort.

The 2025 Premier Business Award recipients are:

Bill Bivin Small Business of the Year: **Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal**

Rita Sholton Large Business of the Year: **STG Inc.**

Local Chamber of the Year: **Kenai Chamber of Commerce**

William A. Egan Outstanding Alaskan of the Year: **John Hendrix**

The Premier Business Awards nominations are reviewed and selected by the Alaska Chamber's Executive Committee, composed of industry leaders across the state.

Bill Bivin Small Business of the Year: Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal

The Bill Bivin Small Business of the Year Award, established in 1993, recognizes independently owned and operated Alaska businesses with fewer than 100 employees that demonstrate leadership and community involvement.

Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal (the Terminal) is the only cruise ship dock in Sitka and has transformed the visitor industry in Southeast Alaska. Founded by Chris McGraw, the Terminal took shape without guaranteed cruise line contracts, relying instead on vision and entrepreneurial risk-taking. Today, the Terminal welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, providing critical infrastructure that fuels Sitka's economy and supports local jobs.

Beyond dock operations, the Terminal provides space for small businesses, including bars, restaurants, retailers and tour operators. It has become an anchor for Sitka's tourism sector, spurring economic activity that generates sales, property, and head tax revenues for the city. The Terminal has also shown strong civic leadership, including organizing community-led efforts to protect local businesses from harmful ballot initiatives.

Rita Sholton Large Business of the Year: STG Inc.



Established in 2018, the Rita Sholton Large Business of the Year Award honors companies with more than 100 Alaska employees that exemplify leadership in their industry and consistent community involvement.

STG Inc. is a leader in rural infrastructure development, building projects in some of the most remote and weather-challenged regions of Alaska. Their work includes major contributions to telecommunications, fiber installation, and structural foundations, such as their foundational role in GCI's TERRA network connecting Western Alaska.

STG is known for its deep cultural awareness and commitment to local communities. They prioritize local hiring and mentoring, often transforming trainees into long-term team members. Beyond project sites, STG invests in communities by donating goods, supporting elders and engaging in local volunteer efforts. The company also supports statewide organizations, including the Scotty Gomez Foundation and Calista Education and Culture Fund. Internally, STG fosters employee well-being with competitive benefits and a culture rooted in collaboration and generosity.

Local Chamber of the Year: Kenai Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

The Local Chamber of the Year Award, established in 1994, recognizes local chambers for consistent community involvement and strong reputations for business support.

The Kenai Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center has elevated its role as a trusted, dynamic, and forward-thinking organization under the leadership of Executive Director Samantha Springer. In 2024, the Chamber was instrumental in revitalizing the Kenai Cultural Center, bringing back monthly rotating exhibits for the first time since 1993. It also launched the Kenai Chronicles Lecture Series, expanded scholarship programs and created the Kenai Peninsula Cultural Foundation, a new 501(c)(3) organization focused on historical preservation, education and community restoration. The Chamber regularly hosts community-wide events like the Fourth of July Parade, Christmas Comes to Kenai and a new Haunted Chamber attraction, creating opportunities for residents to connect and celebrate what makes Kenai unique.

The Chamber fosters regional collaboration, recently partnering with the Soldotna Chamber on shared programming and campaigns. Its initiatives promote economic sustainability, youth development and civic pride, positioning it as a vital force in the Central Peninsula.

William A. Egan Outstanding Alaskan of the Year: John Hendrix

Established in 1964, the William A. Egan Outstanding Alaskan of the Year award is presented to an individual who has made substantial and continual contributions of statewide significance in the private sector.

John Hendrix is celebrated for his entrepreneurial spirit and decades of contributions to Alaska's energy sector. A civil engineer with more than 40 years of international and



local experience, Hendrix chose to invest his expertise back into the state where he grew up.

Hendrix has held leadership roles at Apache Alaska, BP, Schlumberger and NANA, and served as oil and gas advisor to the governor's office. More recently, he founded HEX, LLC and acquired Furie Operating Alaska, which operates offshore platforms in Cook Inlet and supplies natural gas to communities in Southcentral Alaska. Beyond his professional achievements, Hendrix has devoted his time and resources to supporting education, youth sports and community organizations across the state.

About the Alaska Chamber

The Alaska Chamber is a non-profit founded in 1953 working to promote a positive business environment in Alaska. The Chamber is the voice of small and large business representing more than 700 businesses, manufacturers, and local chambers across Alaska. Our member companies employ more than 55,000 hard-working Alaskans. The Chamber advocates for a positive investment climate that provides certainty and stability for Alaska.

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