



Iditarod Trail Committee
2100 South Knik Goose Bay Road • Wasilla, Alaska 99654
907.376.5155 • www.iditarod.com

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Thomas Waerner first to Unalakleet, wins Ryan Air Gold Coast Award

Anchorage, Alaska – Veteran Iditarod XLVIII competitor Thomas Waerner (bib #40), of Torpa, Norway, was the first musher to reach the Unalakleet checkpoint at 10:08 a.m. today with 12 dogs in harness, winning the Ryan Air Gold Coast Award.

Ryan Air employee Allen Ivanoff presented Waerner with the Ryan Air Gold Coast Award. The award consists of \$2,000 in gold nuggets from the Bering Straits region and Ryan Air merchandise.

Ryan Air is a returning Lead Dog sponsor of the 2020 Iditarod. The company was founded in Unalakleet and its core business is serving the people who live along the Bering Sea coast and throughout western Alaska. Mushing has long been a way of life for the Ryan family. The company's founder drove mail by dog team between Unalakleet and Kaltag in the early 1900s and other Ryan family members also mushed dogs in the territorial guard with Muktuk Marston.

The Ryan Air Gold Coast Award will be re-presented to Waerner at a later date during the Iditarod awards banquet.

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Media contact:

Bri Kelly, Thompson & Co. Public Relations
Email: media@iditarod.com
Phone: 907-376-5155 ext. 106