

Iditarod Trail Committee  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Iditarod Welcomes the United States Army as a Race Partner**

**WASILLA, Alaska** – The Iditarod announced today that the United States Army will be joining as a partner in the 52nd running of The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race®. While the Iditarod has been inspiring Alaskans since 1973, the history of The United States Army has served Alaska since the state first became U.S. soil in 1867.

“The participants and their sled dog teams face the challenges of the Iditarod race with resilience, determination, and teamwork, which are traits very much reflective of the characteristics found in the U.S. Army Soldier,” says Col. Karen Rutka, who currently serves as the Marketing and Engagement Brigade Commander for U.S. Army Recruiting. “The partnership between the Army and the Iditarod not only celebrates our shared spirit but also reaffirms our commitment to the people of the great state of Alaska.”

Born and raised in Fairbanks, Rutka has fond memories of watching the Iditarod race and is excited to return to Alaska to witness the race start in person.

“The Iditarod looks to the Army for lessons on how to manage our complicated supply chain and prepare for all contingencies. Moreover, many of our volunteers and mushers have served, and in particular, the Iditarod’s founder Joe Redington Sr., served in the Army and fought in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, we are very proud of this partnership,” says Rob Urbach, CEO of the Iditarod.

We are proud to have this new partnership formed with such a long-standing staple in the Matanuska Valley. The Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod, which will take place at 10:00 am on Saturday, March 2 in downtown Anchorage and the official Restart will take place at 2:00 pm on Sunday, March 3 at the Willow Community Center in Willow, where the United States Army will be present to greet race-goers and provide more information about their programs. Iditarod fans are encouraged to come and support the sponsors, the history, culture and the teams on their journey to Nome.

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### **About the United States Army:**

The Army is composed of two distinct and equally important components: the active component and the reserve components. The reserve components are the United States Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. Regardless of component, the Army conducts both operational and institutional missions. The operational Army consists of numbered armies, corps, divisions, brigades, and battalions that conduct full spectrum operations around the world. The institutional Army supports the operational Army. Institutional organizations provide the infrastructure necessary to raise, train, equip, deploy, and ensure the readiness of all Army forces. Learn more at: [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil)

### **About the Iditarod**

The Iditarod Trail Committee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve the rich tradition of the Alaska sled dog and the Iditarod Trail. The organization is charged with coordinating the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, an annual long-distance sled dog race stretching from Anchorage to Nome for an approximate 1,000-mile journey through Alaska over the roughest, most breathtaking terrain in the world. For more information, visit [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com).

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