



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jessie Holmes wins Alaska Air Transit Spirit of Iditarod Award

Wasilla, Alaska – Veteran musher Jessie Holmes (bib # 7), of Brushkana, Alaska was the first musher to reach the McGrath checkpoint at 8:11 p.m. today with 16 dogs in harness, winning the Alaska Air Transit Spirit of Iditarod Award.

First presented in 2019 and given to the first musher to reach the McGrath checkpoint, this award is presented by Lead Dog partner, Alaska Air Transit. First introduced in 2019, this award honors the first musher to arrive at the McGrath Checkpoint. The McGrath community shares deep ties to the Iditarod, and the award reflects that connection, featuring beaver fur mushers mitts with Athabaskan beadwork on moose hide, handcrafted by Loretta Maillelle of McGrath, along with a beaver fur hat made by Rosalie Egrass of McGrath. The award was presented to Holmes by Jessica Beans-Vaeao, Charter Coordinator for Alaska Air Transit

“Our team is excited to present this Spirit of Iditarod award in McGrath again this year. The Beaded Moose Hide and Beaver Mitts were made by Loretta Maillelle of McGrath, and the hand sewn Beaver Hat was made by Rosalie Egrass of McGrath. Rosalie Egrass was able to fly home on our plane that took our crew and the award to McGrath, which made for a pretty special trip! We are proud to be providing service to McGrath, and feel that all local Air Carriers represent the spirit of Iditarod throughout Alaska on a daily basis. It is great to be a part of the air carriers that service the state with essential supplies and transportation, and to be a part of the Iditarod in a meaningful way,” said Josie Owen, owner of Alaska Air Transit.

This is Alaska Air Transit’s eighth year sponsoring the Iditarod and seventh year presenting the Spirit of Iditarod Award. Alaska Air Transit offers crucial flight support statewide via air charter and provides scheduled service to the Upper Kuskokwim communities of Nikolai, McGrath, Takotna and Tatalina as well as the Prince William Sound communities of Tatitlek and Chenega.

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



Media contact:

Shannon Noonan
Iditarod Trail Committee
shannon.noonan@iditarod.com

The Iditarod Trail Committee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the heritage of Alaska's sled dogs and the historic Iditarod Trail. Each year, the Committee organizes the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, a 1,000-mile competition from Anchorage to Nome that challenges mushers and their teams to navigate Alaska's extreme terrain and unpredictable conditions. Recognized internationally for its endurance and tradition, the Iditarod showcases the skill, resilience, and spirit of Alaska's sled dog culture. For more information, visit www.iditarod.com.