

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Railroad presents highest honors to 25 employees

2021 Gold Spikes given to 15 in Anchorage bowl and 10 in Fairbanks

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The Alaska Railroad's (ARRC) year-end employee awards program for 2021 was one of the most diverse, in terms of employee jobs, work environment and location. This year's Gold Spike recipients come from across the company, representing Transportation, Marketing, Mechanical, Maintenance of Way, Human Resources, Real Estate and Finance divisions. They are located on the north end (10 in Fairbanks) and southcentral regions (15 in Anchorage and Whittier/Portage).

The 25 *Gold Spikes* — 10 as individual awards and 15 spread among two teams — were presented just before Christmas. These top awards are presented at year's end to employees who clearly stand out for above-and-beyond demonstration of company values — *Safety, Service Excellence, Integrity, Sustainability, Teamwork* and *Leadership* — through stellar performance.

A number of awards reflected superb performance in reaction to, and in spite of, ongoing pandemic stressors. These included high-performers in Reservations & Ticketing, Technology, Depot Services and Human Resources. Others recognized exceptional expertise and long-standing dedication within Procurement, Facilities, Track Maintenance, Mechanical and Transportation operations.

"Employees all along our route took time to nominate co-workers who deserve our highest honors," said President & CEO Bill O'Leary, who makes final award decisions. "We were particularly pleased to see nearly every major function represented among the nominees. Railroaders on the front lines are in the best position to know who is going the extra mile. Their efforts keep our recognition program going strong."

On the next page are listed the 2021 Alaska Railroad Gold Spike Award recipients:

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Silver and gold plated railroad spikes are part of ARRC's Spike Award program.

Teams

- **Fairbanks Depot Services Team:** a trio of hard-working depot service associates met and exceeded the challenges posed by a much larger than expected passenger ridership in 2021. They include: Lead Depot Services Associate Alesia Salmela, and Depot Service Associates I LeaAndrea Smith and Natalie Morgan.
- **Terminal Supervision Team:** Working in the Anchorage Railroad Terminal and the Fairbanks Railroad Terminal, these dozen employees are recognized for leading and contributing to the success of multiple rail transportation programs and initiatives aimed at improved efficiency, safety, customer service and employee quality of life. They include:
 - **FAIRBANKS:** Operations Director Andy Burgess; and Terminal Supervisors Mark Dustin, Katrina Lehse, Joe Mueller, Dale Rageth and Elizabeth Smith
 - **ANCHORAGE:** Terminal Operations Director Pat Volmer; Field & Train Planning Manager Dustin Kincaid; and Terminal Supervisors Ben Ahrens, Kody Anderson, Rheyman Castro and Wilkie Thompson

Individuals

- **Facilities Maintenance Mechanic Tony Buma**, Real Estate & Facilities (Fairbanks), has taken care of facilities maintenance needs on the north end (Hurricane to Fairbanks), essentially by himself for several months, during an extended co-worker absence.
- **Journeyman Mechanic Steve Conlan**, Mechanical (Anchorage), recognized for 30 years of experience critical to diagnosing and troubleshooting locomotive issues, especially traction motors; and a willingness to pass along this knowledge as an exceptional mentor.
- **Contract Administrative Specialist Candice Humphrey**, Supply Management (Anchorage), recognized for exceptional performance as a procurement technician, while also serving as the acting fleet manager for eight months until a new fleet manager was named
- **Carman Terry Hunter**, Mechanical (Anchorage), recognized for catching a very difficult-to-detect wheel defect on a flat car in the Anchorage Yard, ensuring it's removal from the train, thereby preventing a catastrophic and costly derailment.
- **Reservations Inventory Specialist III Erin Kehoe**, Passenger Marketing (Anchorage), recognized for admirably performing mission-critical tasks when her workload essentially doubled for a prolonged period as the pandemic forced passenger trains to reduce capacity to 75%.

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- **Systems & Analysis Supervisor Willow Peyton**, Information Technology (Anchorage), recognized for assisting the reservations team in ways well beyond her duties. This included helping to manage a barrage of phone calls, and devising an online sold-out calendar to help customers and railroad staff avoid frustrating searches.
- **Passenger Depot Services Manager John Simmons**, Guest Services (Anchorage), for exceptional oversight of depot service staff which allowed ARRC to meet the market demand; while protecting employees and customers through his constant, unwavering approach to work place safety.
- **Retirement & Learning Management System Coordinator Kristine Stone**, Human Resources (Anchorage), recognized as an exceptionally valuable and professional pandemic resource for the company. She's gone above and beyond to keep supervisors and managers informed and to answer all employee questions.
- **Track Repairer Pol Carrera Vilaplana**, Maintenance of Way (Portage / Southcentral), recognized for above-and-beyond flagging performance on the challenging MP 52 Rockfall Mitigation project. He demonstrated astounding teamwork, safety and consistent excellence.
- **Transportation Field Manager II AJ Washburn**, Transportation (Whittier), recognized for exceptional leadership and data-based efforts to improve Whittier terminal operations. This included careful auditing of paperwork for over 200 train loading events, resulting in \$40,000 in extra revenue.

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