

Here's another option to consider as an alternative to waiving fees for cruise ships. Instead of the Borough giving up around \$10,000 in docking fees, how about making those funds available to a local group interested in kickstarting new tourism events?

Our biggest events which bring visitors who stay in town for days - the bike race, Beer fest, and the fair to name a few - were all started and supported by volunteers. Ten grand would go a long way to underwriting the return of Act Fest, a music and arts festival (Sitka's now extends for over a month), a destination marathon (Anchorage's host thousands of out of town visitors), or any other number of ideas.

A few thousand dollars may be a "drop in the bucket" to a cruise line, but it could be all we need to expand events that bring in the highest dollars to Haines and maybe events of interest to more members of our community. Tour operators are welcome to offer promotions in association with community events. And, an event could be an attraction for special cruise dockings. Also, congratulations to the Beer Fest which has top billing in this month's Alaska Airlines magazine. It doesn't get better than that for promoting Haines.

Sue Libenson

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