



NEWS RELEASE

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Alyeska Resort Introduces Avalanche Canine Program to Support Snow Safety and Patrol Efforts On-Mountain

February 4, 2010 (Girdwood, Alaska) – In an effort to continually improve its nationally recognized Snow Safety and Ski Patrol, Alyeska Resort has introduced two new canine members to the team. The newly developed Alyeska Patrol Avalanche Canine program is a first at the Resort and reflects the Patrol's on-going commitment to skier and snowboarder safety and rescue. The program utilizes highly trained air scenting rescue dog and handler teams. Since their arrival, the dog and handler teams have been training daily at Alyeska Resort.

The goal of the program is to broaden the available avalanche safety tools that Snow Safety and Patrol have on-hand at the Resort. The teams will also offer assistance to other organizations in backcountry rescue operations when necessary, as well as offer avalanche awareness education to the public. When it comes to avalanche rescue, time is of the essence. Rescue dogs provide a fast and efficient way of searching a large area that would take teams of rescuers a much longer time to search with probes. Certified avalanche rescue dogs can detect human scent under layers of snow; ultimately increasing a buried skier or rider's chance of survival. A trained rescue dog can indicate the location of a buried person or article by aggressive digging and barking. They also have the ability to tell a handler that an area is clear of human scent so decisions can be made to call off search efforts once it is determined that no one was involved in a slide.

The canine breed selected for the dog program is the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, a small retriever with a distinctive red coat and fox-like markings. Ski Patrol Supervisor and dog handler Brain McGorry explains, "The Tolly's intelligence, trainability, and compact size make them an ideal candidate for search dogs. The dogs routinely load ski lifts, travel on snow machines, and are carried on the shoulders of their handlers." Carrying the dogs keeps them away from sharp ski edges, crowds, and also enables patrol to transport them into far outer areas with deep snow and steep terrain. Smaller breeds typically have less health problems and a longer life span, and therefore a longer career as a search dog.

The two dogs at Alyeska Resort are named Zooka and Fundy. Their handlers, McGorry and fellow patroller, Shane Patrick, are excited about the potential of the program. "I would like to



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see multiple certified teams and a team-in-training as a long-term goal,” says Patrick. The capital investment required to train and certify avalanche rescue dogs adds up quickly. As part of the Winterfest celebrations, there are two new events both dedicated to fundraising for the Alyeska Patrol Avalanche Canine program.

The first event is a live auction and raffle at the Sitzmark Bar & Grill on Friday, February 5, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. The event is free and the public will have a chance to bid on eleven members of Patrol for an early morning lift access and lunch at Seven Glaciers with their winning Patroller. On Sunday, February 7, 2010, the Resort is hosting a Beacon & Eggs Breakfast Hunt from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Participants will get breakfast and presentation by Alyeska Resort’s snow safety experts, followed by hands-on practice in the EZ Searcher Beacon Park with professional guides. The \$15 entry fee includes breakfast and a chance to win a new Mammut® Pulse Barryvox Avalanche Beacon. Tickets can be purchased at any Alyeska Resort Ticket Office up to the day of the event. Proceeds from both events will directly benefit the Alyeska Patrol Avalanche Canine program.

About Alyeska Resort (www.alyeskaresort.com)

Alyeska Resort is Alaska's premier year-round destination featuring The Hotel Alyeska, an award-winning 304 room full-service property. Located just 40 miles from Anchorage, Alyeska Resort is your base camp for summer and winter excursions. Alyeska Resort stands out during ski season with 650” of average snowfall annually and the longest-continuous double black diamond ski run in North America. Learn more about the resort at www.alyeskaresort.com or 800.880.3880.