



AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

Introducing America's First Nations to the World

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Sitka, Alaska Ranks Nine on Smithsonian's Top 20 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2013

American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association Member Receives National Recognition for Tourism, Highlighting Its Culture and Whimsical Character

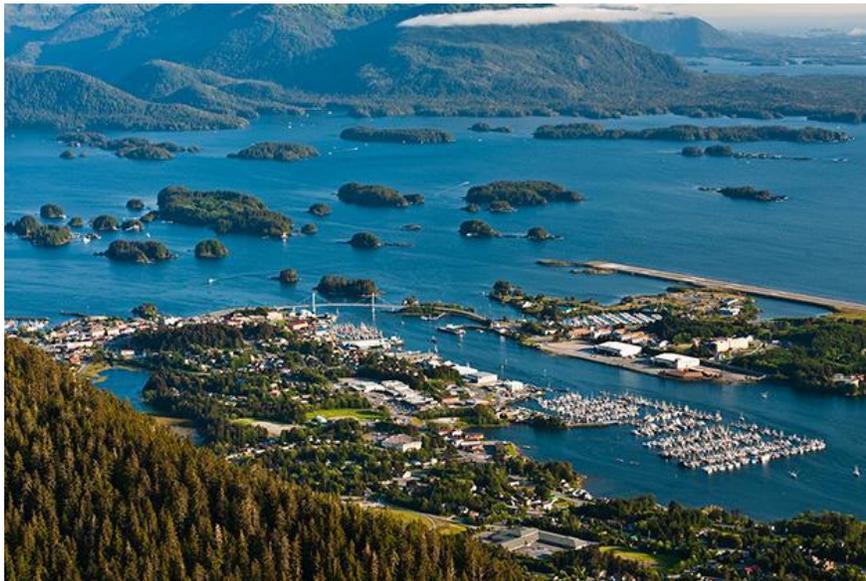
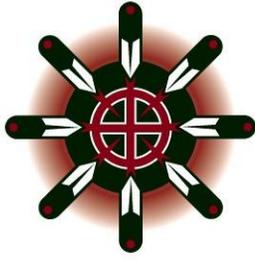


Photo credit: Mark Kelley

Albuquerque, New Mexico (March 28, 2013) – Sitka, Alaska, the home of American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association ([AIANTA](http://aianta.org)) member Sitka Tribe of Alaska, has landed at number nine on the [Top 20 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2013](#) list featured in *Smithsonian Magazine's* April 2013 issue.

“There are photo ops galore at the Sitka National Historical Park, site of the last major battle between Europeans and Native Americans on the Pacific Coast,” writes *Smithsonian* author Susan Spano. “No other town in the 49th state has Sitka’s



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charisma. To wander through its historic downtown is to appreciate how three cultures - Tlingit, Russian and American - were woven together," she adds.

What makes a small town big on culture? *Smithsonian* sought a statistical answer by asking the geographic information company ESRI to search its databases for small towns and cities. The search created to find "populations of less than 15,000 that have exceptional concentrations of museums, art galleries, orchestras, theaters, historic sites and other cultural blessings," the article states.

You can say AIANTA knows a thing or two about Sitka.

Sitka Tribe of Alaska Member and AIANTA Board Secretary Rachel Moreno represents AIANTA's Alaska region.

"It's very exciting for the world to see the culture and character our small town has to offer the travel and tourism industry," said Moreno. "We take great pride in our heritage and preserving Indian Country here. Thank you to *Smithsonian* for creating such a list that showcases America's hidden treasures."

New AIANTA Executive Director Camille L. Ferguson is also a member of the Sitka Tribe and previously served as the Tribe's Economic Development Director for 15 years where she oversaw a \$6.5 million economic development budget. Ferguson was president of the Sitka Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) for five of the seven years of her CVB Board appointment and as president she raised hotel bed tax revenue by 48 percent.

"AIANTA is incredibly proud of our member Sitka Tribe of Alaska and this accomplishment. Hard work and a desire to preserve Indian Country has put Sitka on the map," said Ferguson. "AIANTA gives tribes, businesses and organizations the educational tools to increase their economic development and introduce America's first nations to the world."

Sitka is one of the first tribes to develop its tourism and we look forward to helping other tribal entities enhance their tourism, Ferguson added.

To learn more about the Sitka Tribe of Alaska visit www.sitkatribes.org, or to learn more about Sitka visit www.sitka.org.

About AIANTA

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit association of Native American tribes and tribal businesses that was incorporated in 2002 to advance Indian Country tourism. The association is



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made up of member tribes from six regions: Alaska, Eastern, Midwest, Pacific, Plains and the Southwest. AIANTA's mission is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian and Alaska Native tourism that honors and preserves tribal traditions and values.

The purpose of AIANTA is to provide our constituents with the voice and tools needed to advance tourism while helping tribes, tribal organizations and tribal members create infrastructure and capacity through technical assistance, training and educational resources. AIANTA serves as the liaison between Indian Country, governmental and private entities for the development, growth, and sustenance of Indian Country tourism. By developing and implementing programs and providing economic development opportunities, AIANTA helps tribes build for their future while sustaining and strengthening their cultural legacy.

To learn more, please visit www.aianta.org. For current updates, like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter ([@OfficialAIANTA](#)).

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