



Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race®

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PRESS RELEASE

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2011 Iditarod Awards Banquet

Sunday, March 20, 2011 – Nome, Alaska – A huge crowd filed in to the Nome Alaska Recreation Center to take in tales from the trail from the 47 elite that found their way to Front Street in Nome.

The 2011 Iditarod saw a Native Alaskan musher follow his dream and shatter the fastest time from Willow to Nome by more than 4 hours. Kotzebue's John Baker is the first native Alaskan to win the Iditarod since 1976.

Aliy Zirkle from Two Rivers Alaska realized her dream receiving the highly coveted Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award.

All 47 mushers received the adulation of the hundreds of race fans that came to enjoy a wonderful meal of Prime Rib, Norton Sound King crab and Halibut courtesy of Iditarod Lead Dog Partner Millennium Alaska Hotel and the Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation.

Below is a list of the special awards that were presented at tonight's IDITAROD XXXIX Awards Banquet.

IDITAROD XXXIX SPECIAL AWARDS

PenAir Spirit of Alaska Award

- Presented by PenAir since 2000 to the first musher into McGrath

- Musher receives an original “Spirit Mask,” especially created for this event by Bristol Bay artist, Orville Lind, and a \$500 credit on PenAir towards travel or freight shipments
- Presented at the McGrath checkpoint and again at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: Martin Buser**

GCI Dorothy G. Page Halfway Award

- Presented by GCI since 1994 in honor of the late Dorothy G Page, the “Mother of the Iditarod”
- Presented at the halfway checkpoint, Iditarod in odd numbered years and Cripple in even numbered years
- First musher to the checkpoint receives a trophy and \$3,000 in gold nuggets
- Presentation made at the checkpoint and again at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: Trent Herbst**

Millennium Hotel Anchorage Alaskan First to the Yukon Award

- Presented by the Millennium Hotel Anchorage since 1987
- Presented at the Anvik checkpoint in odd numbered years and at the Ruby checkpoint in even numbered years
- Musher receives a seven course dinner cooked on a Coleman stove by staff from the hotel and \$3,500 in one dollar bills as the “after dinner mint”
- Musher gets to enjoy this same seven course dinner for 2 at the Millennium Hotel anytime the musher chooses
- Presented at the checkpoint and again at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: Hugh Neff**

Wells Fargo Bank Alaska Gold Coast Award

- Presented by Wells Fargo since 1993 to the first musher to the “Gold Coast” community of Unalakleet
- Musher receives a beautiful trophy and \$2,500 worth of gold nuggets
- Presentation made at checkpoint and again at the Nome Awards Banquet.
- **Winner: John Baker**

Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome Award

- Presented by the Nome Kennel Club since 1973
- Winner must be in top 20
- Musher receives \$500
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: Lance Mackey**

Horizon Lines Most Improved Musher Award

- Honors the musher who has bettered his/her most recent finish by the most number of places
- Winner receives an engraved trophy plus \$2,000
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: Trent Herbst**

Jerry Austin Rookie of the Year Award

- Presented since 1980 to the top place rookie (defined as a musher who has never before started the Race) by Clara Austin (wife of Jerry Austin) and Family of St. Michael

- Musher receives check for \$2,000 and trophy
- Award recently renamed the Jerry Austin Rookie of the Year Award to honor the life and legacy of the late Jerry Austin, Iditarod Veteran
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: *Nicolas Petit***

Fred Meyer Sportsmanship Award

- Presented by Fred Meyer since 2002
- Recipient chosen by fellow mushers
- Musher receives an engraved trophy and a \$500 Fred Meyer gift certificate
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: *Allen Moore***

ExxonMobil Mushers Choice Award

- Presented to the musher chosen by his or her peers who was the most inspirational on the trail
- Musher receives an Iditarod Limited Edition Gold Coin, valued at \$3,300. The 1.25 oz 24 carat pure gold coin is surrounded by a 39 mm gold chain rope and set on a black walnut mount
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: *Rick Swenson***

Northern Air Cargo Herbie Nayokpuk Memorial Award

- Presented to the musher chosen by staff and officials as the person who most closely mimics “Herbie, The Shismaref Cannon Ball” in his/her attitude on the trail
- Recipient receives free freight allotment on Northern Air Cargo and a walrus ivory scrimshawed trophy, plus \$1,049 in “pocket change” inside of a NAC jacket
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: *Paul Johnson***

Northern Air Cargo 4 Wheeler Award

- A new 4 Wheeler will be given to a musher who has finished the race, and whose key, which is chosen randomly by the mushers, starts the 4 wheeler as they approach the stage
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: *Pete Kaiser***

Golden Clipboard Award

- Presented by race officials since 2000 to the most outstanding checkpoint
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: *Unalakleet***

Golden Stethoscope Award

- Presented by the Iditarod Official Finishers Club (IOFC) to the veterinarian whom they feel was the most helpful on the trail
- Recipient receives a plaque and the award is presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: *Samantha Yeltatzie***

Iditarod Trail Committee Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award

- Presented since 1982 to a top 20 team
- Based on specific criteria to determine who has best demonstrated outstanding dog care throughout the Race while remaining competitive

- Recipient receives a beautiful glass etched trophy and a free entry fee for Iditarod XL
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: Aliy Zirkle**

City of Nome Lolly Medley Golden Harness Award Winner

- Originally presented by the late Lolly Medley, Wasilla harness maker and one of two women to run the second Iditarod in 1974
- Embroidered gold harness
- Goes to an outstanding led dog, chosen by the mushers
- Presented at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: Velvet and Snickers, John Baker's Lead Dogs**

Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Official Truck

- Presented to the Iditarod winner since 1991
- 2011 Dodge Ram 4/x/4 quad cab pick up truck
- Presentation made at finish line and again at the Nome Awards Banquet
- **Winner: John Baker**

Wells Fargo Winner's Purse

- Awarded at the finish line and again at the Nome Awards Banquet
- \$50,400.00
- **Winner: John Baker**

Wells Fargo Red Lantern

- Presented by Wells Fargo Bank since 1993 to the last musher to finish Race
- Musher receives a trophy made from a red lantern
- Presentation made on Front Street as musher comes to finish line and again at the Red Lantern banquet in Nome
- **Winner: Ellen Halverson**



