



Image of business of the year award

Submitted by [Michelle Marshel](#) on September 09, 2019

Copper River Seafoods Receives National Business of the Year Award

September 11, 2019

For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON - The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) presented Copper River Seafoods with the prestigious National Business of the Year award at their 83rd Annual National Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. The NASWA National Business of the Year Award is conferred upon businesses that consistently strive to positively impact their workforce, industry, and community. Recipients of this award are also recognized for their support of the workforce development system.

"By building a sustainable workforce, Copper River Seafoods has demonstrated their commitment to improving Alaska's economy and strengthening the seafood industry," said Dr. Tamika L. Ledbetter, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Copper River Seafoods (CRS) began in 1996 as the brainchild of Scott Blake and two other-Alaskan salmon fishermen and is recognized today as the premier producer of Alaskan seafood and as a standard for the highest quality seafood available. Over half of their entire workforce are Alaskans. Since 2013 CRS has moved from foreign-hired workers to a 99% American workforce. This has been important to CRS as they have been determined to provide employment opportunities for Alaska's priority populations, such as disadvantaged youth, returning citizens, low-income adults, older workers, veterans, and others.

Their investment in Alaskan workers has economically stabilized many communities by building a skilled workforce in rural areas and providing good-paying jobs. CRS has partnered with various organizations to build their local workforce, including partnering with the Alaska Department of Labor on their reentry program and Alaska Job Centers for hiring efforts

"The positive impact Copper River Seafoods has had on rural communities and the entire state cannot be overstated," said Scott B. Sanders, Executive Director of NASWA. "Their efforts to build and maintain a skilled workforce while investing in Alaskans is exceptional. We applaud their work and their partnership with the Alaska Department of Labor."

Business of the Year Award

Pictured above: Left to Right - Patsy Wescott, Director of the Division of Employment and Training, Alaska Department of Labor (AK DOL), Cliff Napier, Assistant Director, AK DOL; Dr. Tamika Ledbetter, Commissioner, AK DOL; Scott Blake, Founder, President and CEO of CRS; Ed Gohr, Co-owner, Copper River Seafoods (CRS); Terry Abarro, HR Recruitment & Workforce Development Manager, AK DOL; Jim Kostka, CRS Director of Marketing; Nelson San Juan, Deputy Commissioner, AK DOL; Gerald Pierce, Communications Director, AK DOL; Jon Pierpont, NASWA 2019 Board President and Executive Director, Utah Department of Workforce Services.