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## **Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance and Alaska Airlines team up to promote area tourism**

**Visitors can enjoy free wine tasting, and waived baggage fees**

**WALLA WALLA, WA-** The Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance and Alaska Airlines today announced the launch of a new program for travelers using Walla Walla, Regional Airport that is expected to significantly increase tourism to one of the nation's premier wine regions. Called *Taste and Tote*, the offering provides Alaska Airlines' passengers exclusive tasting fee waivers at over 70 renowned Walla Walla wineries, as well as waived baggage handling fees on Alaska Airlines for the first case of wine they check to bring home.

The program starts December 1, 2011, which is just prior to the Valley's big Holiday Barrel Tasting Weekend celebration December 2-4.

"The *Taste and Tote* program will be a huge plus for generating both inbound air travel to Walla Walla and wine purchases by out-of-town visitors," said Duane Wollmuth, executive director of the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance. "In the past, air travelers were required to pay tasting fees at many wineries and also pay a \$20 baggage handling fee to transport a box of wine on outbound flights. For those of us working in the wine industry, we heard time and again from visitors that they either travelled by car to the Valley, or did not buy wine when they flew, simply because they were not willing to pay the additional fee to transport wine home."

The disproportionate share of vehicle travelers to Walla Walla was illustrated by findings in a recent survey conducted by Tourism Walla Walla which showed 76% of visitors travelled by private vehicle, while only 9% travelled by air.

“The program is a great win/win for everyone involved, especially consumers,” said Clint Ostler, Alaska Airlines manager of retail advertising and sponsorships, “Our travelers to Walla Walla wine country can now enjoy some of the best that the wine industry has to offer and take home their purchases with no added cost. “

Alaska Airlines serves Walla Walla Regional Airport twice daily nonstop from Seattle using Horizon Air-operated Q-400 aircraft. Connections can be made beyond Alaska’s Seattle hub to destinations in Alaska, the Lower 48, and Canada

The Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance is a non-profit wine industry membership organization whose primary mission is the marketing of the Walla Walla Valley’s American Viticultural Area (AVA). The Wine Alliance functions as the leading informational resource for consumers, media and trade interested in learning more about the Valley’s wine industry. More information about the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance and details of the *Taste and Tote* program can be found at [www.wallawallawine.com](http://www.wallawallawine.com).

Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air, subsidiaries of Alaska Air Group (NYSE: ALK), together serve 90 cities through an expansive network in Alaska, the Lower 48, Hawaii, Canada and Mexico. Alaska Airlines ranked “Highest in Customer Satisfaction Among Traditional Network Carriers” in the J.D. Power and Associates 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 North America Airline Satisfaction Studies<sup>SM</sup>. For reservations, visit [www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com). For more news and information, visit the Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air Newsroom at [www.alaskaair.com/newsroom](http://www.alaskaair.com/newsroom).

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