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PRESS RELEASE

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Roaming Root Cellar in Fairbanks wins 2021 Golden Carrot Award

(Palmer, AK) – The Roaming Root Cellar has won the “Golden Carrot” award for 2021 in recognition of its Alaska Grown display creativity, support of Alaska Grown small businesses, and success during the fifth annual “Alaska Grown \$5 Challenge” campaign.

The Fairbanks specialty food store is the first Alaska small business, and the first store located in the Northern region of the state, to win the award, said David W. Schade, director of the Division of Agriculture, which developed the program to increase the amount and visibility of Alaska Grown products available in retail food stores.

“We are excited to see a small business in the interior of Alaska, such as The Roaming Root Cellar, win the \$5 Challenge,” Schade said. “This company exemplifies the Alaska spirit, supporting our producers and serving consumers in the heart of Alaska.”

Erica Moeller, owner of The Roaming Root Cellar, opened for business on Feb. 29, 2020, operating from a 23-foot, 1976 Bluebird bus, with a mission to connect local customers with local products. But the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic forced her to close down the bus, and produce and deliver products from her home for delivery customers until May 2020, when she reopened to in-person business.

Not only was Moeller able to continue supporting Alaska Grown producers while surviving the pandemic, she also expanded into a stationary storefront business site which doubled in size on the one-year anniversary of the store opening, Schade said.

Everything the Roaming Root Cellar sells is made or grown in Alaska, and its website (www.roamingrootak.com) includes a “Meet Our Farmers and Artisans” feature offering more information about the Alaska Grown producers that supply its products.

“When you combine high-quality, produce with innovative and resilient business practices, you get a standout Interior business like Erica Moeller’s Roaming Root Cellar,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy. “I am proud to see this Golden Heart City businesswoman get the recognition she deserves for helping expand Alaska’s agriculture business and build our state’s food security.”

Schade will present the Golden Carrot award to The Roaming Root Cellar during an award ceremony held at the store at 372 Old Chena Pump Rd. on Thursday, Dec. 9 at noon. The public is welcome to attend the award ceremony in person, and the ceremony will also be broadcast during the weekly Alaska Grown Facebook Live broadcast, at <https://www.facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown>.

The Alaska Grown \$5 Challenge encourages Alaskans to spend \$5 each week on Alaska Grown products, including vegetables, dairy, meat, grains, and value-added products. The competition is held from June to November during the peak of the Alaska growing season where a larger variety of products are available. The division developed the program to increase the amount and visibility of Alaska Grown products available in retail food stores.

Previous "Golden Carrot" winners are the Palmer Fred Meyer store (2020 and 2019), the Wasilla Walmart store (2018), and the Palmer Carrs-Safeway store (2017).

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