

PRESS RELEASE

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Yukon Outfitters Association Brings the Outfitters Ball Home to Kluane

The Yukon Outfitters Association (YOA) proudly celebrated the return of the annual Outfitters Ball to its inaugural region this weekend, hosting the 2025 event in Haines Junction, the heart of Kluane Country. One of the very first Outfitters Ball was held in Canyon City in 1963, making this year's celebration both historic and deeply meaningful for many in attendance.

The St. Elias Community Centre was transformed for the evening, and over 200 guests enjoyed an exceptional wild game buffet, including grizzly, goat, bison, sheep, caribou, and moose meat, catered by Denbéd-Am Catering. The lineup of live music moved from elegant, festive selections on the grand piano to a lively country band that kept the dance floor busy all night.

Stepping into two roles, Minister of Environment and MLA for Kluane **Wade Istchenko** served as Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer, guiding the evening with humour, warmth, and a strong sense of community.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the **YOA Heritage Award** to long-time Guide **Rod Collin**, recognizing his decades of contribution to Yukon's outfitting tradition and stewardship of the land.

"Kluane has always been a place where community, culture, and the land come together," said Minister Wade Istchenko. "Hosting the Outfitters Ball here again feels like a homecoming; not just for the Association, but for everyone who has built and sustained Yukon's outfitting heritage. I'm proud to celebrate alongside the people who work so hard to care for our wildlife, support our rural economies, and keep these traditions alive."

YOA President Chris McKinnon expressed gratitude to the community for their support and hospitality:

"The Yukon Outfitters Association was honoured to bring the 2025 Outfitters Ball back to Kluane. Celebrating Rod Collin with this year's YOA Heritage Award made the evening especially meaningful. It was nostalgic, heartfelt, and a wonderful reminder of our shared history in this region. We are equally proud that the event's proceeds will remain in Haines Junction, supporting the community that has long supported us."

The YOA extends its thanks to all sponsors, volunteers, performers, community partners, and attendees who helped make this year's Outfitters Ball a memorable success.

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