



## **FACT SHEET ON: THE AURORA ICE MUSEUM**



Fairbanks, Alaska is considered to be the capital of ice art in the world. It is the home of the International Ice Art Championships, and many of the top ice artists in the world call Fairbanks home. The Aurora Ice Museum was built as a way to boost tourism at Chena Hot Springs Resort, located 60 miles northeast of Fairbanks, Alaska, while simultaneously offering year-round employment for many of the ice artists in the area.

Chena Hot Springs erected the first version of the Aurora Ice Hotel (now renamed the Aurora Ice Museum) in January, 2004. The Ice Hotel was the first of its kind in the United States, and one of just a handful worldwide. The museum features a great hall and lounge area, chandeliers made of individually carved ice crystals, countless sculptures including a functional gigantic chess set, life sized jousting knights, an observation tower made of ice, and four galleries with varying themes. The architect of most of the art is 13 time World Ice Art Champion Steve Brice.

While long daylight hours and summer temperatures in the 90°F range melted the first Aurora Ice Hotel in July, 2004, the project was not abandoned. The second version was completed in January, 2005, with the ambitious goal of making it the only primarily ice structure in the world to stay up on a year round basis. Because of the high cost of electric power at the site (30¢ per kWhr) it was decided to use an absorption chiller design by Energy Concepts Co. and powered by the available geothermal resource to keep the Museum 'on ice' year-round. This chiller is a unique, 3 pressure design and the first of it's kind to be built in the world. In September 2005, Chena Hot Springs won an award for the absorption chiller from the Geothermal Resource Council for the best new direct use geothermal project in the United States.

The Ice Museum has been a resounding success, with 10,000 visitors touring the facility during the summer of 2005, and the structure withstanding record setting high temperatures well into the 90°F range.

