

GATEWAY TO DENALI

WHERE TO GO AND WHAT TO DO ON YOUR VISIT TO SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

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Moose Dropping Fest Returns to Talkeetna

By John R. Moses
ALASKA PIONEER PRESS

TALKEETNA – It has warm zucchini bread, live music, a survival skills competition, a parade and a decorated “moose” auction. Events planned for the 37th Annual Moose Dropping Festival July 11-12 will make the celebration another only-in-Talkeetna event.

This year’s festival theme celebrates the 50th anniversary of Alaska statehood and the official

shirts will also commemorate the last 37 years of Moose Dropping Festivals.

Festival organizer Bronn Salmon said things are shaping up well, but there are some new parking restrictions designed to keep the post office and other areas safe and functional during the popular event.

Tickets are already on sale for a highlight of the festival – the event that by random chance and the aerodynamic qualities of a certain moose turd will win some lucky people some money at 6 p.m. on July 11.

Not so lucky are volunteers from Talkeetna’s Veteran’s of Foreign War Post who run the raffle and have to go out and measure which of the painted and numbered moose droppings fell closest to the mark, then determine the winners of lesser cash prizes.

“We’re raising money for the community,” said local Realtor and VFW member John Connolly, who has in the past overseen the judging from the back of a pick-up truck. This year there will be more moose nuggets than ever for sale, he said. The top prize is \$1,500.

The annual festival is a fundraiser for the Talkeetna Historical Society Museum. It brings thousands of people to this tiny town for

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Bathtub Gin is Talkeetna’s own ragtime band. There’s music, food and games for the kids. Go to www.talkeetnahistoricalmuseum.org for updated schedules.

FILE PHOTO BY JOHN R. MOSES



The Kings

King Salmon season is upon us. and things are looking up in the Matanuska-Susitna region, despite the closure of the popular Deshka River. Go to Page B4 for our fishing update and www.adfg.state.ak.us for updated information.

Things to Do at the Festival:

BOTH DAYS, JULY 11 & 12:

8 am - 6 pm

NPS Talkeetna Ranger Station, B-Street

Photo Exhibits, Book Sales and Mt. McKinley Information

10 am - 6 p.m. Moose Poop Toss Game

Children’s Activities

Games & Creativity for children. Location Downtown to be announced.

10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Arts, Crafts & Food Vendors

In the Village Park, on Main Street, and on D-Street

10 am - 6 pm

Talkeetna Historical Society Museum

Visit Talkeetna’s first Schoolhouse, Alaska Books & Gifts, Railroad Buildings, Mountaineering Exhibit, Ole Dahl Cabin and other historical buildings on our Historic Walking Tour.

(All times and events subject to change.)

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Where to Shop?

You'll want to stock up on groceries, but do you really want to have a chain shopping experience here in the Last Frontier? There are two viable, all-Alaskan options that will give you the prices and selection you need while keeping you out of the crowded and not-at-all interesting cattle mills that are modern chain grocery stores.

Unlike the big guys, both of these have enough room in their paved lots for RV parking.

Near Talkeetna: CUBBY'S MARKETPLACE

Alaska owned, this may be one of the last true Mom & Pop supermarkets to open — from scratch with no chain ownership. You'll see the sign just before Mile 98.3 of the George Parks Highway, next to the Talkeetna Spur Road. Full grocery, meat, deli and produce selection as well as personal care items. Knik Kountry Liquor also has a store at this site, and there's an ATM. Call 733-5050.

Meadow Lakes: THREE BEARS

Almost out of town, but not quite. At Pittman Road near Mile 49 of the Parks Highway, high on a hill, is Three Bears. This is a mini-Costco kind of experience with a large produce and bulk meat department and a deli and liquor store. Owned by an Alaska family and managed with pride. Free coffee too.

Talkeetna Restaurants:

- **Talkeetna Roadhouse:** Classic fare, sandwiches and a bakery, too. Main St., Talkeetna 733-1351.
- **Twister Creek Restaurant/Denali Brewing Co.:** Fresh food by head chef Kaliska Russell, Talkeetna's newest chef. Call 733-ALES.
- **Latitude 62:** Food, bar and bunks, what more could you want? Saturday prime rib specials are killer. Talkeetna Spur Rd. & Veteran's Way.
- **Mountain High Pizza Pie:** Check out the Bush Pilot Calzone or gyro pizzas. Main and C Streets, 733-1234.
- **Wildflower Cafe:** Managed by a former White House chef, we can safely say it's all good. Limited outdoor seating. Awesome seafood chowder, fantastic steak & seafood. Main Street, Talkeetna. Drop in.
- **Cafe Michelle:** Fantastic, creative food prepared fresh daily. Talkeetna Spur Road, near B Street Downtown. Call 733-5300.
- **West Rib Pub & Grill:** Burgers, brews and more with lots of outdoor seating. Call 733-DELI.
- **Swiss Alaska Inn:** Great family place, run by a great family. 733-2424.

Exploring the Parks Highway

New Dining Spot In Talkeetna! Twister Creek Restaurant

Good food and fresh Alaska brews. That's what this brand new restaurant/microbrewery has to offer. Hearty breakfasts and a lunch and dinner menu include specialties just for the kids. There's a laundromat in the back — grab some suds and clean your duds at the same time! Call 733-ALES.



Amenities:

IN TALLEETNA

Restrooms: Sheldon Community Arts Center has public restrooms, as does the campground near the river at the end of Talkeetna's Main Street.

WIFI: Many restaurants and the Talkeetna Public Library have free WIFI networks. The West Rib/Nagleys and library have computers.

Propane and Laundry:

Coin-operated public laundry service is very limited now in Talkeetna. A new laundry called "Suds" operates at the Tanner's site, with six washers and nine dryers. The same business is the only place to buy propane in Talkeetna. It is located behind Twister Creek Restaurant and open 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. M-Sat and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays. Call 355-1904 for propane sales.

IN THE Y/TRAPPER CREEK

Propane and Laundry: Several local businesses sell propane along the George Parks Highway, from gas stations to Wal-Mike's. The Trapper Creek Inn, Mile 114.6 Parks Hwy., has a laundry/shower facility on its bottom floor. The large laundry near Mile 1 of the Talkeetna Spur Road closed last year.

Up the Highway:

Rest Stops: Great Views at : Denali South, Mile 136 Parks Hwy., Denali North, Mile 162.7; The Overlook, Mile 14 Talkeetna Spur Road.

Talkeetna Main Street

Fairview Inn, Talkeetna

Main Street, Talkeetna

June 21	9 p.m. Gordie Tentrees
June 24	9 p.m. Matt Johnson and Last Frontier Band
June 26	9 p.m. Nervous Rex
June 27	10 p.m. Full Tilt
June 28	6 p.m. Jazz Night with Rare Form
July 3	10 p.m. Da Udder Brudders
July 4	10 p.m. Denali Cooks
July 11	10 p.m. Jeff Kanzler plays the Moose Dropping Festival
July 25	10 p.m. Off Kilter
Aug. 7	10 p.m. Matt Johnson and the Last Frontier Band
Aug. 13	10 p.m. Matt Lewis Band
Aug 20	9 p.m. Hip Hop Thursdays sponsored by TB productions
Aug 22	10 p.m. Last Train
Aug 29	10 p.m. Rabbit Creek Ramblers
Jun 23	9: p.m. Open Mic with Host Resident Stu (rep)
Jun 18	9 p.m. Hip Hop Thursday sponsored by TB productions (rep)
July 5	6 p.m. Jazz Night with Rare Form (rep)
Aug. 27 2009	9 p.m. Hip Hop Thursdays sponsored by TB productions (rep)

Salmon Bake — Denali

Mile 238.5 George Parks Highway, Mc Kinley Village

June 21 - Locals Night... "TRIVIA w/TYLER." Bring your own team or meet new friends and test your knowledge and compete for great prizes. OR go downstairs and enjoy Denali's only KARAOKE NIGHT!

Sunday Night Dart League starts 10:30pm

June 22 - OPEN-MIC NIGHT UPSTAIRS DENALI POKER TOUR DOWNSTAIRS

June 23 - J-1 Clubbb Night. Come dance to our LIVE DJ and feel the International Flavor as people from around the world show Denali how to party! \$3 cvr

June 24 - LIVE- REBEL BLUES BAND "A great Blues Band with a funk addiction!" Don't miss this show. \$3

June 25 - LIVE- REBEL BLUES BAND "A great Blues Band with a funk addiction!" Don't miss this show. \$3

June 27 - LIVE- NERVIS REX Alaska's premier Ska Band! \$3

June 28 - Locals Night... "TRIVIA w/TYLER." Bring your own team or meet new friends and test your knowledge and compete for great prizes. OR go downstairs and enjoy Denali's only KARAOKE NIGHT!

Sunday Night Dart League starts 10:30pm

June 29 - OPEN-MIC NIGHT UPSTAIRS DENALI POKER TOUR DOWNSTAIRS

June 30 - J-1 Clubbb Night. Come dance to our LIVE DJ and feel the International Flavor as people from around the world show Denali how to party! \$3 cvr

THANKS FOR SUPPORTING LOCAL LIVE MUSIC

FOR BOOKING INFO PLEASE EMAIL US AT:

book-a-gig@theBAKERocks.com

MOOSE

From Page B1

food, fun and the lure of Moose Dropping Raffle prizes. The weekend event continues Sunday, July 12 with food, music and art and craft vendors exhibiting wares in the Village Park.

A caravan of cars and trucks will fill the Village Airstrip, the official parking area. A fleet of tow trucks will remove vehicles parked in fire lanes along S. D Street and other tow-away zones which will be clearly marked, said Salmon.

“This year there will be ‘No Parking’ signs posted along several streets and the main alley behind the West Rib Pub. Violators will be towed again this year at the owner’s expense,” Salmon said.

Signs will be posted several weeks in advance so if there are any questions please contact the coordinator at 761-3636 or mdf@talkeetnahistoricalociety.org.

“Also, this year anyone parking at the Post Office for more than 15 minutes, locals or otherwise, will be towed, per the postmaster,” Salmon said. “We will have traffic personnel chalking tires to insure no one gets towed in error.”

There will be no camping allowed on the public airstrip this year, and festival attendees must pay \$3 to park there, to cover the cost of state-mandated insurance and professional traffic flaggers.

“The (Talkeetna) Airman’s Association has graciously allowed us to utilize the public airstrip again this year. However, they have expressly forbidden the use of the strip for camping or fires this year. The airstrip will be closed July 11th and 12th to all air traffic and we will have troopers and security patrolling to insure that the strip remains clear of campers,” Salmon said.

Last year, camp fires on the strip were an issue.

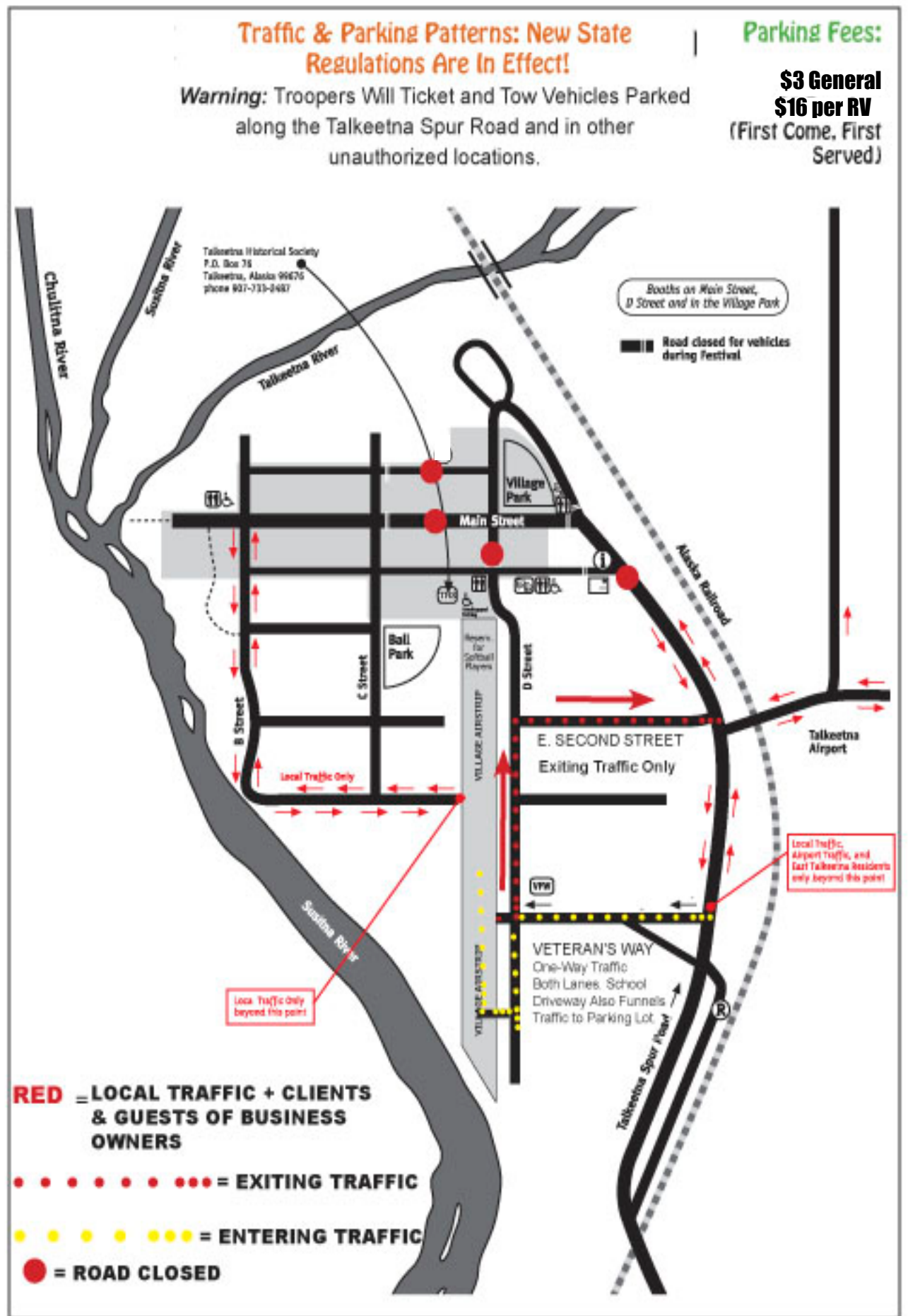
Talkeetna’s Main Street will again be closed to traffic this year during festival hours. Local passes will be available for pickup starting next weekend at the post office, public library, Moores’ Hardware and Cubby’s Marketplace. These passes will get local residents through the road block at Veterans Way and allow them to get to East Talkeetna and the downtown area if they live or work there. Those driving vehicles must place the pass on their dashboard in the window, so the road crews can see them.

Vendors will arrive in town on Friday, July 10, to set up in the Village Park. A 5K Fun Run/Walk takes place at 10:30 a.m. on July 11. The Moose Dropping Parade proceeds both up, and back down, Main Street starting at noon.

Youth events will take place in a special area for kids. There will be live music both days in the Village Park Pavillion and a Moose on Parade Art Auction on July 11 at the Sheldon Community Arts Hangar.

The hotly-contested Mountain Mother Contest takes place at 1 p.m. in the parking lot of the VFW Hall on Veteran’s Way.

A softball tournament drawing adult teams from throughout the region coincides – and co-exists — with the festival.



Schedule of Events

Saturday, July 11

8 - 11 a.m. — VFW HALL - All you can eat pancakes, breakfast sausage, biscuits & gravy. \$7 adults, \$3.50 12 & under

8:30 - 10 a.m. — 5K Fun Run/Walk Registration, Village Park

10:30 a.m. — 5K Fun Run/Walk, starts on Main Street

11 a.m. — Pre-Parade Check-in, at Talkeetna Christian Center

Noon — Festival Parade, Main Street (download the Parade entry form, www.talkeetnahistoricalociety.org)

2:10 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. — Parade & Race Awards Ceremony

6 p.m. — Moose Dropping at VFW

Sunday, July 12

8 - 11 a.m. — VFW Hall - All you can eat pancakes, breakfast sausage, biscuits & gravy. \$7 adults, \$3.50 12 & under

12:30 p.m. — Mountain Mother Contest Registration, at VFW

1 p.m. — Mountain Mother Contest, at VFW Hall

What to Do If You Get Hurt:

Services are available in the Houston, Willow and Talkeetna/Trapper Creek Areas. Many firefighter/paramedics are local volunteers.

Emergency Only: Call 911.

• **Sunshine Community Health Center:** The

local health clinic is located near Mile 10 of the Talkeetna Spur Road. 907-733-CARE.

• **Dr. James Yates** — A family medical practice in Talkeetna. Call for office hours. Located near the ranger station in Downtown Talkeetna. 907-733-2708.

King Salmon Making Their Way into Mat-Su

By John R. Moses

ALASKA PIONEER PRESS

The 2009 king salmon season is shaping up at last, despite disastrously low king salmon returns that caused a state closure of the popular Deshka River in June.

“Things are actually looking pretty good,” said Robert Meals of Tri-River Charters in Talkeetna, which is among the local operators that do drop-offs and charters.

As of June 20, Meals said, “The fish are about on target.” Meals said anglers are catching “predictable numbers of salmon each day.”

Fishing has picked up in the Mat-Su, where popular spots like Montana Creek and other waters in the Susitna River Unit 2 streams are only open

Saturdays through Mondays into mid-July. Check fishing regulations for open days.

Meals said early season fishing has been good at Montana Creek.

Montana Creek is a walk-in fishing area near Mile 90 on the Parks Highway. Fly fishermen enjoy the rapids near a railroad bridge while others crowd the mouth of the creek where it meets the Susitna River.

Water quality has also improved at Clear Creek, a popular Talkeetna River drop-off and charter fishing spot, where Meals said fishing should pick up.

Fishing is strong on the Russian River and in other Kenai-region fishing grounds, and Anchorage’s Ship Creek is also packed with anglers.



Montana Creek is a popular fishing venue along the Parks Highway system.

FILE PHOTO BY JOHN R. MOSES

Fourth-Annual Fireweed Festival Blooms Again July 25-26

TRAPPER CREEK – The noble fireweed decorates roadsides, appears in locally-made jellies and is the first vegetation to appear following a fire. Why shouldn’t it have its own festival?

The Fourth Annual Fireweed Festival will be held on Saturday, July 25 from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Sunday, July 26, from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Trapper Creek Community Center Park, Mile 115.2 of the George Parks Highway.

Some of the Musicians scheduled so far include Suzy Crosby, Debra Wessler, Ester Golton, The Simpletones, Bryan Graceland, Glen Mellott. More will be announced.

Other activities include Artisan Vendor Booths, a children’s art tent, an Art Show exhibit in the Community Center building, Horseshoes, Badminton, volleyball and fun for the whole Family.

A raffle features a lap throw quilt and a quilted

hall hanging on Sunday July 26. Raffle tickets are \$2.

Food vendors, musicians, artisans and volunteers are all needed. Anyone wishing to display their art work in an art show exhibit should also contact festival organizers.

For information call Michele Poole @733-5116 or Debbie Filter @ 733-7377

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