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Welcome to Talkeetna

THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY of Talkeetna sits near the base of Denali, North America's highest peak. The community has been here for a century, and has maintained its small-town Alaskan quirkiness into the 21st Century. The town is widely considered to be the inspiration for the television show "Northern Exposure," and there is certainly no shortage of characters to be found.

If you are hoping to catch a glimpse of "The Great One," viewing options by jet boat, plane, and car are all available. In addition to Denali, Talkeetna offers a host of activities for summer and winter visitors.

In the warmer months, all five species of Alaskan salmon swim the local rivers, as well as trout and Dolly Varden. Feel like striking it rich? Try your hand at gold panning and carry on a century-old Talkeetna tradition.

If you are seeking a more adventurous stay, consider soaring through the boreal forest on America's northernmost zipline tour, taking a ride on an ATV or behind a team of Alaskan huskies.

Talkeetna also offers a number of shopping options to find the perfect souvenir from your Alaskan vacation, including a number of shops stocked with items produced by local artisans.

After shopping, feel free to stop by Live

at Five, a free weekly concert every Friday at 5 p.m. in the Village Park. Afterwards, Downtown Talkeetna offers a variety of dining options on and around Main Street.

No matter what your lodging needs are, Talkeetna has you covered, with campgrounds, RV parking near downtown, bed and breakfasts, and cabins for rent.

If you decide to visit Talkeetna outside of the summer season, there is still plenty to see and do. On clear winter nights, the Northern Lights put on breathtaking shows amidst a landscape blanketed in snow. Even if you've been here in the summer, winter is a very different experience.

The village also hosts a number of special winter-only events, including the Oosik Classic Ski Race and the world-famous Talkeetna Bachelor Auction. In addition, many of the summer attractions and restaurants remain open in the quieter winter season. If you prefer to make your own adventure, there are numerous ski, snowshoe, and snowmobile trails in the area that showcase the natural beauty of our river valley.

No matter when you decide to come to Talkeetna, a unique Alaskan experience awaits you.

—*Courtesy Phillip Manning, KTNA.org*

Talkeetna: where the road ends and life begins

THE HISTORIC VILLAGE of Talkeetna is nestled at the base of North America's tallest peak, Denali (formerly Mt. McKinley). Our central location makes Talkeetna the perfect place to "set up basecamp" and enjoy a wide variety of adventures during our endless summer days.

Take advantage of the panoramic views of Denali, the Alaska Range and the Susitna River valley, which can be enjoyed and photographed from several locations. Talkeetna offers 14 miles of paved bike trails and miles of hiking, snowshoeing and skiing trails. Stop by one of the local businesses and pick up a copy of the Town and Trail map.

History buffs can enjoy a variety of activities and adventures from museums to self-guided historical walking tours. Continue in the tradition of the miners who settled Talkeetna by panning for gold in one of the gold-bearing creeks.

Take a jet boat ride up the river to see a reproduction of a Dena'ina Native encamp-

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ment or jump on an ATV and explore remote homesteads once inhabited by some of Alaska's hardest frontier men and women. Hop aboard the "Hurricane Turn Train," the last flag-stop train in America, and leave civilization behind.

Water lovers will find a variety of ways to experience an Alaskan adventure on one of the many glacier-fed waterways. Choose from jet boat tours, rafting trips or canoeing and kayaking excursions. Up for a little fishing?

Want to see Denali up close and personal? Take flight with one of our local flight-seeing companies. Fly over base camp and see climbers preparing to ascend the mountain. Land on a glacier and be amazed by the eminence peaks that surround you.

DON'T MISS OUT on one of Alaska's best kept secrets...wintertime in Talkeetna! Alaska's long winter months create wonderful opportunities to enjoy the snow-covered landscape, starry nights, cozy sweaters, a warm fire and good conversation.

Talkeetna offers a variety of activities that visitors of all ages can enjoy. The Talkeetna Bachelor Auction, "Oosik Classic," The Motorized Parade of Lights, The Trio-Mike Sterling Fat Tire Bike Race, The Taste of Talkeetna.

The Talkeetna area is a wonderful place to discover the magic of the night sky. Stargazing and aurora viewing are enhanced by the fact Talkeetna is a small town without all the big city lights.

When you come to Talkeetna, you're in for a special treat and memorable lifetime experiences. Discover what our unique little village has to offer!

GUIDED HIKES

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Talkeetna Lakes Hike offered at 6 pm daily, call for reservations. Or if you are looking for more adventure join us 1 hour north for our hikes in Denali State Park



Rivers, rails, and roads

THE BEGINNING

Talkeetna (tall-KEEt-nah) sits on the confluence of three glacially fed rivers: the Chulitna, Susitna and Talkeetna. For the semi-nomadic Dena'ina Native population in the area, it was an important location for fishing and hunting. The name Talkeetna comes from the Dena'ina word K'Dalkitnu, meaning "river of plenty."

A GOLD MINING TOWN

As early as 1896, a gold rush in the Susitna River drainage brought prospectors to the territory. The discovery of gold in 1905 in the Yentna-Cache Creek district, west of what is now Talkeetna, brought prospectors to the area. Sternwheeler river boats could travel up the Susitna River from tidewater and dock at Talkeetna, solidifying its development as a mining supply town.

THE RAILROAD BOOM

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed the law enabling the U.S. government to build a railroad from Seward to interior Alaska at Fairbanks. The Alaska Engineering Commission named Talkeetna as the district headquarters for railroad construction. The Anchorage Daily Times reported almost 400 people employed in the Talkeetna railroad camp by the end of 1916. The town had a sawmill, two roadhouses, a hotel, general store, warehouses, cafes and specialty shops.

During the railroad construction years, Talkeetna's population peaked near 1,000 people.

The railroad developed a townsite map and people used it to develop the village. A post office opened in December 1916. By 1918

people were petitioning the federal government for a land sale. In October 1919, 80 lots were sold, with many people buying more than one lot at an average price of \$14.25 per lot. Entrepreneur Horace Nagley bought 15 of the 80 lots that went up for sale.

TALKEETNA: THE COMMUNITY

Only a few dozen people stayed after the railroad was completed in 1923. One who stayed was Belle Lee McDonald who had arrived in 1917. She started a horse freighting and supply business along with her husband Ed Lee. She kept the business after Ed died in 1928 and also started a roadhouse to serve both miners and travelers. Dave Lawrence and Ed Lee's brother, Frank, also played an important part in the freighting business that supplied miners and their gold claims to the west. Ben Nauman's large inn, the Fairview Hotel, became a popular stop on the railroad. H.W. Nagley's store, successful from the day it opened in 1916, moved from the riverfront to its present location in 1945.

Others who stayed made a life of gold mining in the summer and trapping in winter. The railroad was the main access to Talkeetna and the main reason it continued as a supply point for gold miners.

Although there was no real schoolhouse until 1936, records show that the first paid teacher



in Talkeetna was in 1917. There are accounts of school being held in Frank Lee's home in the mid '30s. The first year the schoolhouse opened, there were 11 students. Today, the schoolhouse is preserved as the local museum of history, mountaineering, railroad and art.

ECLIPSED

Tourists first arrived en masse in 1963, when astronomers declared the village the best place in the U.S. to see the total solar eclipse. Nearly 2,000 people rode the train from Talkeetna to McKinley Park, and the eclipse may have also been the first time such a large group saw Denali in unison.

TOURISM IN TALKEETNA

An event that would change the town drastically was the construction of the Talkeetna Spur Road, connecting Talkeetna to the newly built George Parks Highway in 1964. This made the area accessible to general road travel, changing the way most people reached Talkeetna.

In the late '60s and early '70s, the state-run Open to Entry land sale program opened hundreds of acres to private ownership. People

could select land, obtain a lease from the state and then buy it for fair market value. It brought a large influx of people into the Talkeetna area. These people were not always popular with the long-time Talkeetnans. Local resident and old-timer Ed Craver says, "Talkeetna was just a bunch of 75-year-old men in the early '70s."

More people meant more businesses. Highway upgrades and ease of travel would make tourism to Alaska more attractive than it was in earlier years. Cruises and land tours became popular starting in the 1990s. Since the first tour bus arrived in town, Talkeetna has become a destination for visitors from around the world who want to see Denali, to climb or fly around it, to raft a river, see a moose, and perhaps glimpse into the past of an Alaskan mining village.

TALKEETNA TODAY

The 2010 census reported Talkeetna's population as 876 people. In 2016, we celebrated our centennial, with recognition of the thousands of Natives who came before us.

An area roughly two by three blocks is listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2001, Talkeetna's original airstrip, one of the few of its kind remaining in the U.S., was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

— *Courtesy Talkeetna Historical Society*



Plan your perfect winter day

1) A CRAZY DAY

After a hearty breakfast at a local restaurant, take a short walk to the **National Park Service** and watch a presentation about Denali.

Enjoy a cup of homemade soup and craft-made sandwiches at the **Flying Squirrel Bakery & Cafe**.

Next, head over to **K2 Aviation** or **Talkeetna Air Taxi** for an amazing flightseeing tour of Denali and the Alaska Range.

Have a relaxing dinner at **Denali Brewpub** and try one of their award-winning craft beers.

2) WINTER WONDERLAND

Don't miss the chance to indulge in a home-cooked breakfast at the historic **Talkeetna Roadhouse**.

For your first adventure, put on your cold-weather gear for a sled dog tour with a local musher. Next, strap on some cross-country skis or snowshoes and explore around local lakes on groomed trails. Grab a pole and fish for your sup-



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per. A winter experience you won't soon forget.

Finish your day by taking a stroll around **Talkeetna's Downtown Historic District** and search for the perfect Alaskan gift at one of the village gift shops and galleries.

Finally treat your self to dinner at the **West Rib Pub & Grill** and try some unique Alaskan dishes such as reindeer meatloaf and homemade mac and cheese.

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Plan your perfect summer day

1) FAST AND FURIOUS

Before you start your day, stop by **Subway® Restaurant** at mile 99 on the Parks Hwy. at Talkeetna Spur “Y” and get your breakfast, lunch or dinner to keep you energized.

For your first adventure, strap on your helmet and head out into the Alaskan wilderness on a **Zipline Tour**.

Your next adventure is a flightseeing tour of Denali with **Talkeetna Air Taxi, K2 Aviation or N2 Alaska**.

End your day at one of our pubs where you can kick up your heels to local live music and cool off with a tasty drink.

2) RAILS AND TRAILS

Start your morning with the **Talkeetna Historic Walking Tour**. Hop aboard one of the last flagstop trains in North America, the **Hurricane Turn Train**, experience the beauty of remote Alaskan backcountry by rail.

Enjoy a leisurely walk down to the river. Bring your camera, great photo opportunities await you.

3) BOATS, BIKES AND BREW

Head over to **Mahay's Jetboat Adventures** for the thrill of the ultimate Alaskan river experience, the

Devil's Canyon Tour. Once back from your river adventure, make your way out to **Kahiltna Birchworks** and sample Alaska's finest Birch Syrup products.

A half-mile up the road is **Denali Brewing Company**. Stop in to the tasting room and try one of their award-winning craft beers.

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Fly an hour, or walk a week

WITH WORLD WAR II ENDING in 1945 and the U.S. Government having funded airfields and other access infrastructure across Alaska, pioneer flying began to play a more conspicuous role in the lives of those in Talkeetna and out in the surrounding hills and mountains. In 1947, Glen Hudson arrived with a two-place Aeronca Chief airplane and discovered that locals and visitors to the village were willing to pay for transport to superior fishing and hunting spots. In 1948, Don Sheldon returned to Talkeetna from wartime duties, and subsequent work, with a Piper PA-14. While the war effort had previously drained labor intensive sectors, economic activity and demand for flying recovered with the return of a workforce. There was also a realization that the choice to fly an hour or walk a week was really one of efficiency that resulted in greater profitability during the short Alaskan summers. Demand for charter flights continued to build across the region and even catalyzed additional economic activity.

IT WAS ALSO IN 1948 that Don Sheldon partnered with Robert “Stub” Morrison to form Talkeetna Air Service. Simultaneously, Glen Hudson’s younger brother, Cliff, arrived in the area and the beginnings of Hudson Air Service took root. Thus was born the original two fiercely competitive air services for the fishermen, hunters, trappers, prospectors, miners, and freight to be moved in and out of Talkeetna.

Depending upon the season and destination, flying was accomplished through various types of aircraft on wheels, floats, and the

continued experimentation with fixed skis. Fixed skis were necessary in order to land aircraft on snow and in areas where snow cover is year-round.

IN THE EARLY 1950’S, pilots saw significant wintertime business emerge in the form of predator control of large packs of wolves that roamed the area. Both air services engaged in pursuing a bounty of \$50 per wolf. While it was common to discharge long rifles out the side door of aircraft, Sheldon, a former tail gunner during the war, rigged semiautomatic shotguns to the wings of his Piper aircraft. Photographs, wolf pelts and the actual guns Sheldon utilized are available for viewing at the Talkeetna Museum.

It was also during this period that aviation became substantially more sophisticated with the advent of retractable landing skis. Similar to those in use today, the ability to take off from the Talkeetna village airstrip on wheels, and then land on skis where late snows lingered or glaciers beckoned, extended the traditional ski-based season and birthed glacier and high country landing during the summer and fall months.

AS THE 1960’S PROGRESSED, mountaineering expeditions arrived in Talkeetna with greater frequency to pursue the powerful presence, and achieve the title of the first of their nationality to summit the tallest mountain in North America, 20,310-foot Denali. Until 1966, about 300 mountaineers had tested themselves on the “Great One” and other peaks in the



A MAP TO SUCCESS

In the mid 1950s, additional revenue opportunities multiplied with the appearance of Dr. Brad Washburn of the Boston Museum of Science. His mandate to map Denali and the surrounding Alaska Range not only brought substantial revenue to the air services, it definitively established the best approaches and climbing routes on Denali and neighboring peaks. This powerful combination of skis, capital, and experience firmly established practices, tactics, and methods for modern day flightseeing, glacier landings, and mountaineering still in use today.

Alaska Range, including Foraker, Huntington, and Hunter. The late 1960's saw a dramatic rise in the number of climbing groups making their way to Talkeetna from literally all over the world. By the end of the 1970's, over 500 mountaineers attempted climbs each year, and, since 2010, between 1,100 and 1,250 make the journey each year.

ON THE STRENGTH of incremental demand for mountaineering, the 1970's saw three new air services established in Talkeetna. Kenny and Doris Holland began operations, Talkeetna Air Taxi was formed, and Kitty Banner and

Kimball Forest formed K2 Aviation. In 1975, after the passing of Don Sheldon from cancer, the air certificate for Talkeetna Air Service was briefly transferred to a third party after which the air certificate became obsolete and ceased to exist. This period also saw the firm establishment of touring via airplane for the purpose of flightseeing without necessarily landing.

A number of other air services have formed over the following decades with notable entrants including Doug Geeting Aviation, Talkeetna Aero Services, and most recently, Sheldon Air Service. Sheldon Air Service purchased the historic Hudson Air Service in 2009.

Despite unpredictable weather and unforgiving terrain that are frequently the cause of misfortune to the uninitiated, the pilots of Talkeetna are extremely proficient at their trade and lead adventurous lives. Remarkably, whether new or seasoned, each flight service employs pilots with decades of flying experience and knowledge. This rich tradition furthers the storied history of Talkeetna, a community where the concept of "flightseeing" emerged.

—*Courtesy Kate and Robert Sheldon
with contributions from Roberta Sheldon's
"The Heritage of Talkeetna"*

TALKEETNA FACTS

POPULATION	Year round: 800-900; peaks near 5,000 during the summer months.
ESTABLISHED	1916, Alaska Railroad chose the area to be a district headquarters.
COORDINATES	62°18'41"N 150°5'13"W
ELEVATION	348 ft.

SALMON



Approximate fish calendar for the Talkeetna area

FISH SPECIES	PEAK RUNS
King (Chinook) Salmon	June 20 – July 13
Dog (Chum) Salmon	July 7 – August 7
Red (Sockeye) Salmon and Pink (Humpy) Salmon	July 20 – August 20
Silver (Coho) Salmon	August 1 – September 5

BEAR SAFETY

When traveling in bear country...

- Keep food, garbage and other attractants out of reach of the bears.
- Coolers are not bear proof. Please secure food in your vehicle or in bear-proof containers.
- Make noise so you don't surprise a bear.
- Stay alert and look for signs of bears.
- Never crowd bears or other wildlife. Respect their space.



- Stay calm if you have a bear encounter. Make noise and wave your arms.
- DON'T RUN!
- Visit the National Park Service to learn more about bears.

Thank you to the Bear Necessities Coalition for helping to keep the bears wild and people safe!

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Denali: The High One

THE WALTER HARPER Talkeetna Ranger Station is the support center for Denali National Park and Preserve's mountaineering operations. Each spring, mountain climbers from all over the world come to Talkeetna Ranger Station for an orientation with a NPS mountaineering ranger to obtain their climbing permit before testing their skills in the Alaska Range, including expeditions on Foraker (17,400 ft.) and Denali, North America's highest peak at 20,310 feet. Rangers also provide route information and other resources to climbers headed to the many other technical peaks of the Alaska Range.

Adventurers have been drawn to these mountains since the early 1900s. The Walter Harper Talkeetna Ranger Station was renamed in July 2014 to honor the Native Athabaskan mountaineer who was first to set foot on the true summit of Denali in June 1913. Nowadays, each year between late April and early July, over 1,000 climbers attempt to reach the top of Denali.

An ascent of Denali is no "walk in the park." The average expedition length is 17 to 21 days, and in a typical year, only one-half of the climbers reach the summit. Reasons for turning around are many, including extreme

winds, cold temperatures, equipment failure, fatigue, injuries and altitude-related illness. In the past 100 years, almost 42,000 climbers have attempted Denali, and as of 2015, 123 climbers have lost their lives in the effort.

IS IT DENALI OR MCKINLEY? The Native Athabaskans have for centuries referred to the peak as Denali, meaning "the high one." In 1896, a gold prospector named it Mt. McKinley in political support for then-presidential candidate William McKinley, who became president the following year. The United States formally recognized that name after President Wilson signed the Mount McKinley National Park Act of February 26, 1917. In 1975, the State of Alaska's Board of Geographic Names changed the official state name back to Denali. On a federal level, however, multiple attempts to change the name were routinely blocked by the congressional delegation from McKinley's home state of Ohio. On August 30, 2015, in advance of President Barack Obama's visit to Alaska, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, under authority of federal law, issued a Secretarial Order officially changing the name to Denali.



MARCH 17TH
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MAY 19TH - 21ST
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MAY-SEPTEMBER
LIVE AT FIVE

From Memorial Day to
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 from 5-7 p.m.

JULY 4TH
**13TH ANNUAL MOOSE
 & FRIENDS ON PARADE
 & AUCTION**

Parade begins at noon.
 Featuring "Fun and Quirky"
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 follow.

SEPTEMBER 15TH
**7TH ANNUAL TALKEETNA
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Beer lovers come and gather
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 craft bears.

DECEMBER 6TH
**PARADE OF LIGHTS—
 WINTERFEST**

The Motorized Parade of
 Lights begins at 7 p.m. on
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DECEMBER 7TH
**39TH TALKEETNA
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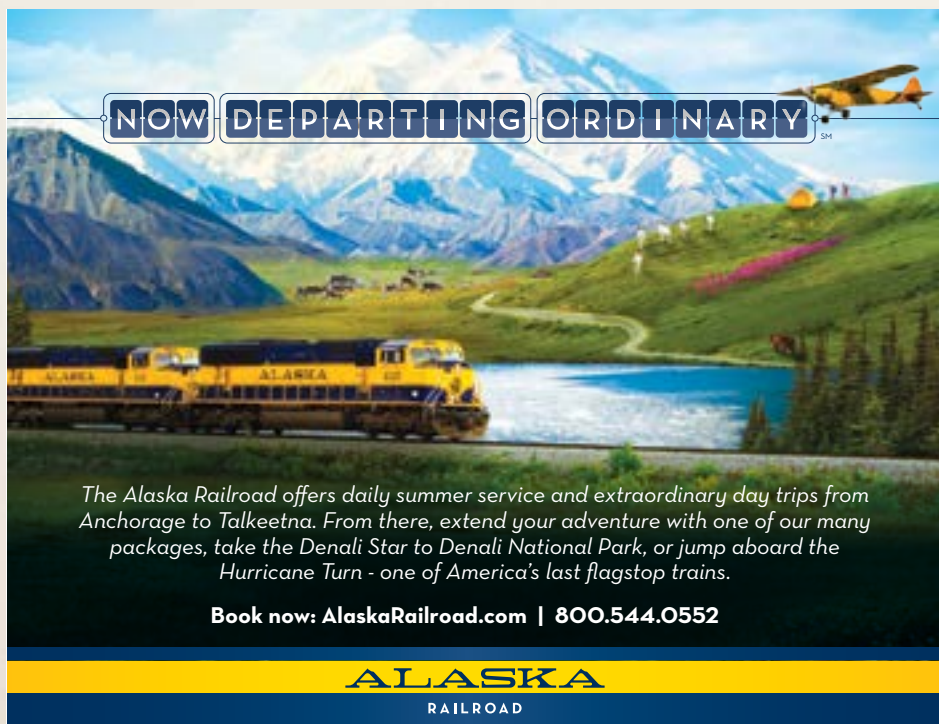
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