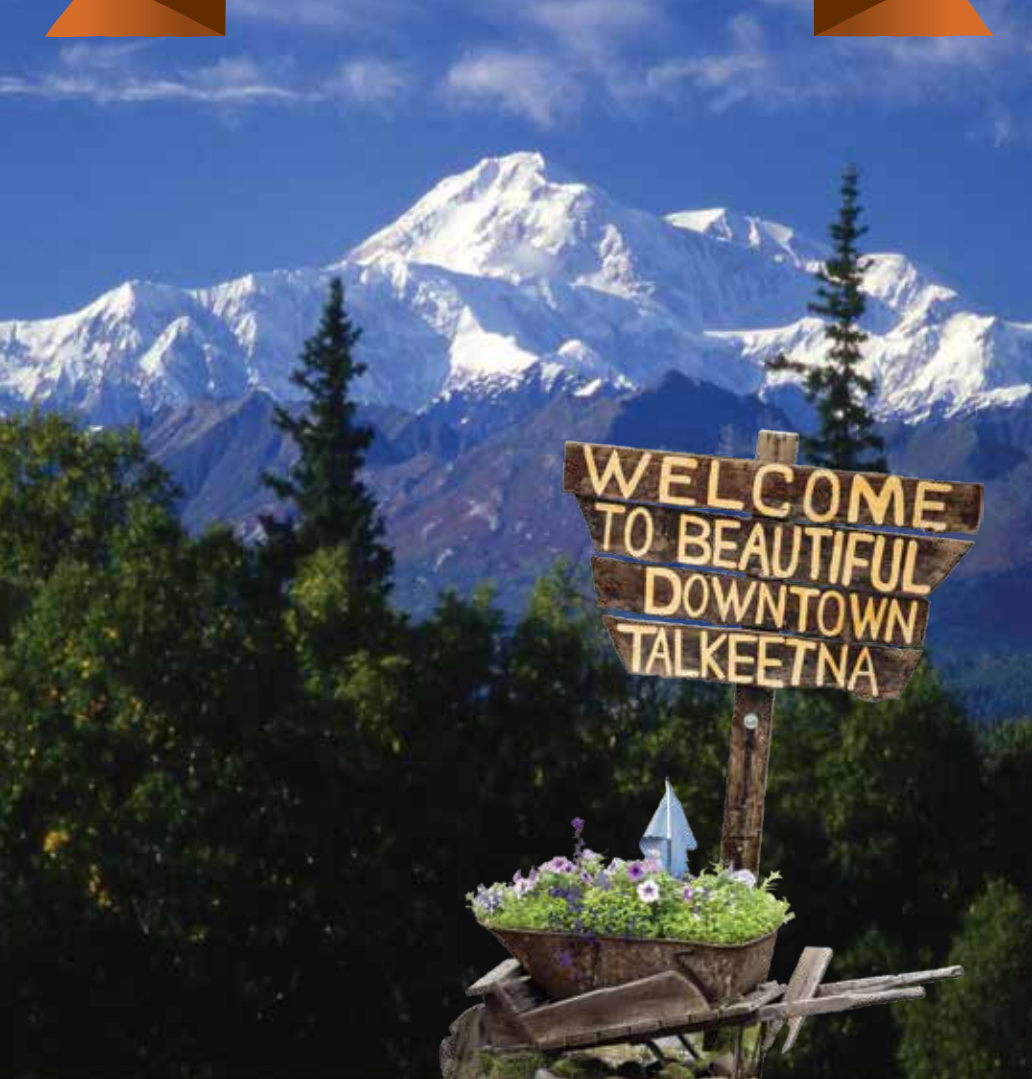


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# TALKEETNA

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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 still maintains its small town Alaskan quirks today. 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 mush your very own 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, 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 accommodation needs are, Talkeetna has you covered. You can lay your head at local lodges, cabin rentals, airbnb, vrbo, and campground options plus there's an RV park near downtown.

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 different and beautiful 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 Denali, North America's tallest peak, and has spectacular views of the Alaska Range. Located along the rail and highway system, Talkeetna is the perfect base camp for your Alaska adventure.

Whether you like grand adventures or just relaxing with a great view, Talkeetna has something for every visitor.

## LEARN THE HISTORY

Learn about Talkeetna's rich history at the Talkeetna Historical Society Museum. You can also download their app and take a self-guided historical walking tour of the town.

The Walter Harper Talkeetna Ranger Station has climbing artifacts and is a great place to learn about mountaineering. They have a free 15-minute video that plays throughout the day and is well worth a stop. The video also is available at the Talkeetna Historical Society Museum.

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## HIT THE WATER

Take a jetboat trip up the Talkeetna and Susitna rivers. You'll stop at an Athabaskan settlement reproduction, a trapper's cabin and learn about the environment while enjoying great views.

Rafting trips are an ideal way to enjoy some time on the water. Canoeing and kayaking is also popular. Watch for wildlife!



The rivers around Talkeetna are excellent fisheries for salmon and trout. Go with a guide for your best bet at landing an Alaska salmon.

Rent a stand up paddleboard and explore a local lake – the fishing is just as good on the stillwater.

## SOAR ABOVE IT ALL

Talkeetna is one of Alaska's aviation hot spots. In the spring, air taxi companies shuttle climbers to basecamp on Denali. Throughout the year, they also offer flightseeing trips, and glacier landings in the Alaska Range. You'll be amazed by the towering peaks on a trip!

Zip across the boreal forest with stunning views on a zip line excursion.

## GET BACK TO NATURE

Take a guided hike on a local trail close to town or explore nearby Denali State Park and its many trails.

Pet and feed a reindeer at the local reindeer grove, hop on an ATV tour that takes you off the beaten path into the backcountry.

## SHOP AND EAT

Talkeetna has several gift shops that feature local artists and their products, from artwork to birch bowls and fiber arts.

From food trucks to an award-winning brewery, Talkeetna is a great destination for foodies!

The Talkeetna area produces the most birch syrup in the world. Try it on your pancakes, or take a tour of their facility. Don't forget to buy some birch caramels for the ride home.

## COME BACK IN THE WINTER

Talkeetna has some of the best winter trails in Alaska, with Nordic skiing, snow biking and snowshoeing opportunities second to none.

The aurora borealis dance across our northern sky – cold, clear nights are best.

Events like the Oosik Ski Race, Wilderness Woman contest, Talkeetna Ice Festival and the Raising Spirits Festival heat up our winter days and nights.

# 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.

## TOURISM IN TALLEETNA

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.

## TALLEETNA TODAY

The 2020 census reported Talkeetna's population as 1,055. Talkeetna is still unincorporated, meaning there is no form of government. We have no mayor or city manager. The Mat Su Borough oversees the schools, snow removal and road maintenance. Most of the 'old timers' of the 20s and 30s passed away in the early 1970s. There are only fragments of the early railroad and mining days.

An area roughly two by three blocks, in downtown Talkeetna, is listed as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2001, Talkeetna's original airstrip known today as the Village Strip, was also added to the Nation Register of Historic Places. The Village Strip is still used today by locals and Alaskan pilots and is managed by the Talkeetna Airmen's Association.

Every year, Talkeetna welcomes domestic and international tourists plus mountain climbers. It is also becoming a bedroom community for Anchorage residents accessing their cabins in the woods. And others are moving north to find a new style of living far from the fast paced "big city" of Anchorage. Talkeetna is a robust, vibrant and welcoming community.

— *Courtesy Talkeetna Historical Society*



# Fly an hour, or walk a week

**TALKEETNA HAS A RICH HISTORY** in aviation. In 1938, the downtown Talkeetna grass/ dirt airstrip was created offering early pilots such as Haakon Christianson, the “flying Dutchman,” the opportunity to fly in and out of Talkeetna. The next year, construction began on the larger Talkeetna airport, just a few hundred yards to the east of what locals called the Village Strip. The new airport saw its use grow during World War II.

With World War II ending in 1945 and the U.S. government having funded airfields all across Alaska, flying began to play a bigger role in the lives of those in Talkeetna. In 1947 Glen Hudson arrived with a two-place Aeronca Chief airplane and quickly discovered that locals and visitors were willing to pay for transport to superior fishing and hunting spots that could only be reached by air. He started Hudson Air Service.

In 1948, Don Sheldon returned to Talkeetna from wartime duties and started an air taxi with a Piper PA-14 and named it Talkeetna Air Service. They both operated off the Village Strip and gained partners in their operations, Robert “Stub” Morrison with Sheldon and Cliff with his brother Glen.

Demand for charter flights with Sheldon and Hudson continued to build across the region as hunters, trappers, homesteaders and miners realized it was more efficient to fly an hour than walk a week to access their remote lands.

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, birthed glacier and high-country landings.

In 1951, Dr. Brad Washburn discovered a route up Denali that required a plane landing on a glacier to gain access. It changed mountaineering forever, establishing the West Buttress route by way of landing on the Kahiltna Glacier. Washburn and Sheldon began a partnership that became a lifelong friendship in establishing new landings on Denali to access new climbing routes. By the mid-1970s, hundreds of mountain climbers were coming to Talkeetna each year to climb Denali the same way Washburn did in 1951 and many other routes all only accessible by air. The air taxi-climbing relationship was forever solidified. Although both Sheldon and Hudson’s original air taxis no longer exist, nearly 1,200 climbers from all over the world come to Talkeetna annually and charter a flight to Denali to attempt to reach the summit with one of three local air taxis.

Thanks to the pioneering spirit of Talkeetna’s early aviators, one of the most popular tourist activities is to take a “flightseeing” flight around Denali and land on one of the stunning glaciers. This adventure loved by so many furthers the storied aviation history of Talkeetna, a community where the concept of “flightseeing” emerged.

The original Village Strip is still used today by Alaska’s private pilots and local Talkeetna residents. On a beautiful day you may see a plane land or take off from the Village Strip



## 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 with Don Sheldon as his chosen pilot, established the best approaches and climbing routes on Denali and neighboring peaks. This powerful combination of skis, and experience firmly established practices, tactics, and methods for modern day flightseeing, glacier landings, and mountaineering still in use today.



just as Don and Cliff did in the early days.

For more information on the history of flying, the pilots and climbing, make time to explore the Talkeetna Museum or pop into the Sheldon Community Arts Hangar, the home of Don Sheldon's Talkeetna Air Service. Both the Museum and The Hangar are adjacent to the historic Village Strip.

## DENALI: THE HIGH ONE

The Walter Harper Talkeetna Ranger Station is the support center for Denali National Park and Preserve's mountaineering operations. It started as a trailer, moved to a log cabin and, in the early 2000s, moved into a new state of the art building with indoor plumbing. Each year, nearly 1,200 climbers come to Talkeetna and register to climb Denali. The average expedition is 17 to 21 days. Typically, less than half of the registered climbers actually succeed in reaching the summit. Reasons for turning around include extreme winds and cold temperatures, equipment failure, fatigue and altitude related illness. As of 2023, over 127 people have lost their lives on Denali. More than half of those remain exactly where they died. It is too dangerous to reach and recover their bodies.

## DENALI OR MCKINLEY?

The Koyukon people for centuries referred to the peak as Denali, meaning the high one. In 1896, a visiting gold prospector referred to it as Mount McKinley in political support for the then-presidential candidate William McKinley,

who became president that next year. Against the wishes of some, it was formally recognized when President Woodrow Wilson signed the Mount McKinley National Park Act on February 26, 1917. In 1975, the State of Alaska Board of Geographic Names changed the official name back to Denali. Multiple attempts at the federal level to change the name nationwide were always blocked by the Ohio delegation. On August 30, 2015, Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell, under authority of federal law, issued an order officially changing the name to Denali.

*Visit the WH Talkeetna Ranger Station located downtown to learn more about mountaineering and Denali.*

PHOTO CREDIT TALLEKEETNA AIR TAXI





### TALKEETNA ICE FESTIVAL

**First weekend in February**  
10lb blocks of ice are carved into works of art and entered into the competition at the Village Park. It's a weekend of family friendly events: Talkeetna Jeopardy, Art Walk, Dog Keg Pull, Skiing, Block Party, Concert, Shrimp boil.

### RAISING SPIRITS FESTIVAL

**Last weekend in February**  
Alaska's only spirits festival, showcasing distilleries from around the state.

### OOSIK CLASSIC

**Second weekend in March**  
A fun and funky 25km/50km cross-country classic ski race held on Talkeetna's beautifully groomed ski trails.

### TRIO FATBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACE

**Third weekend in March**  
A fat tire bike race all around the trails of Talkeetna.

### BEER TRIPPIN'

**April**  
Denali Brewing's annual home brew gathering and competition.

### TALKEETNA ARTS FESTIVAL

**Memorial Day Weekend**  
It's a weekend celebration of art! Live music, poetry, local art vendors, a community flower mural, face painting, beer garden and more. Entry to the festival is free.

### LIVE AT FIVE

**All summer long**  
Talkeetna Village Park hosts bands from around the U.S. and Alaska for a free summer concert series every Friday night from 5-7 p.m.

### INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE

**July 4th**  
Parade begins at noon and travels down Main Street and back again.

### BREW FEST

**September**  
Alaskan breweries come to Talkeetna to show off their latest brews.

### WINTERFEST WEEKEND

**First Weekend of December**  
This holiday kick off weekend features the Parade of Lights, Tree Lighting, a visit from Santa, Wilderness Woman Contest and the ever popular Bachelor Auction and Ball.

# TALKEETNA FACTS

POPULATION	Year round: 1,055; 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!*



PHOTO COURTESY TALKEETNA GEAR SHOP

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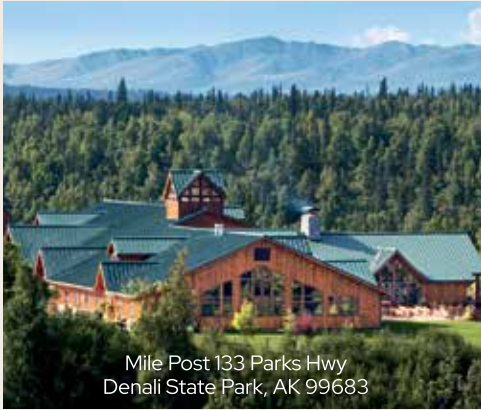


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# TALKEETNA

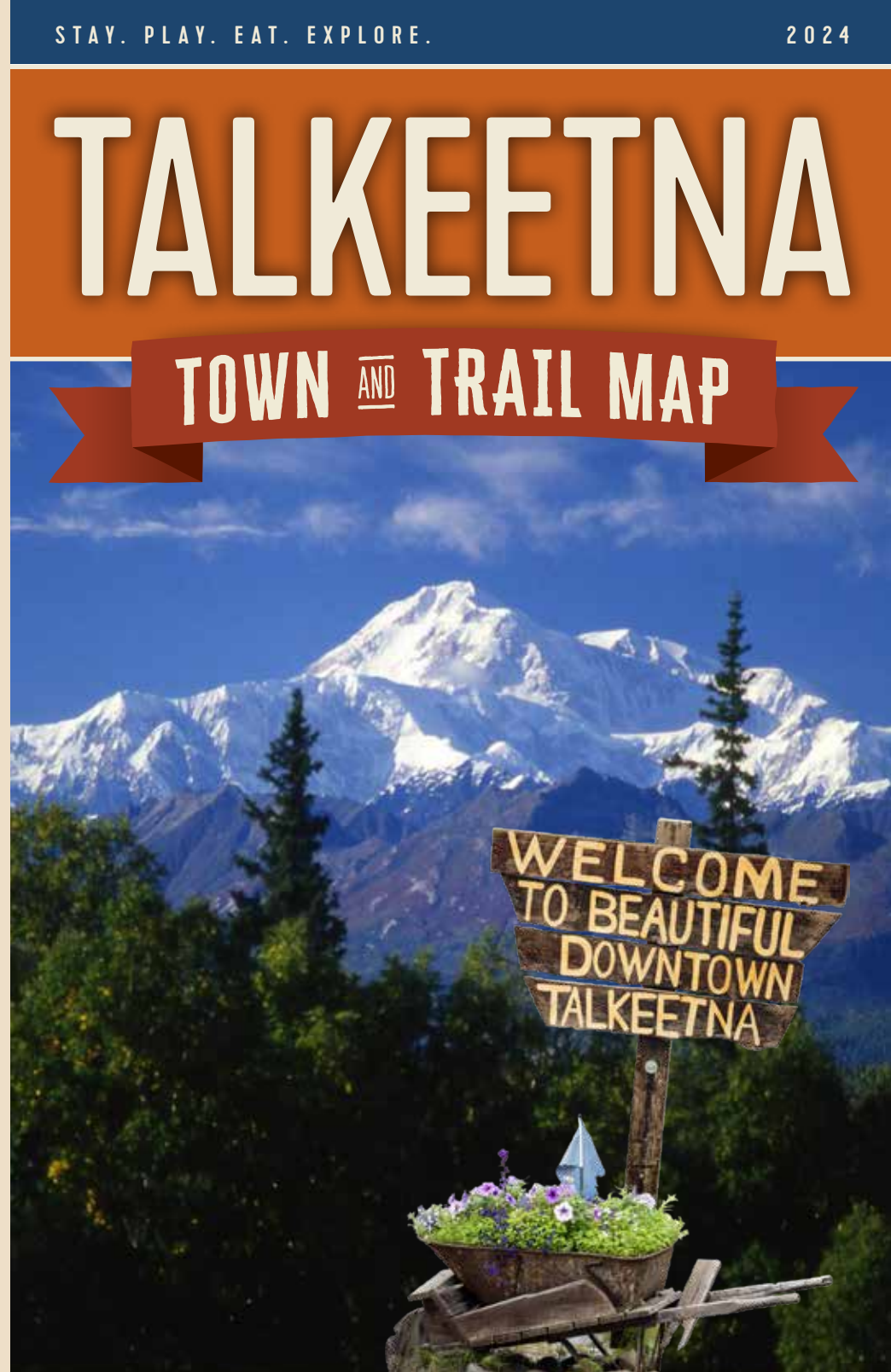
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Map not to uniform scale.

# CHAMBER MEMBERS

Businesses followed by ♦ are located outside the Talkeetna vicinity.  
 Businesses followed by an S are located on the Spur Road map on reverse.

## ACTIVITIES

- AK Sled Dog Tours ..... 1s
- Alaska Bush Floatplane Service ..... 2s
- Alaska Edge Wilderness Tours ..... 3s
- Alaska Nature Guides  
(variable locations)
- Alaska Tour & Travel ♦
- AlaskaTrain.com ♦
- Alaska Wilderness ATV Tours ..... 4
- Alpine Accents International ♦
- Dave Fish Alaska ..... 5s
- Denali Arts Council ..... 6
- Denali Zipline Tours ..... 7
- Grove, The Reindeer Farm ..... 8s
- Hardcore Huskies (variable locations)
- K2 Aviation ..... 9
- Mahay's Jet Boat Adventures ..... 10
- N2 Alaska ..... 11s
- Phantom Tri-River Charters ..... 12
- Salmon Berry Tours ♦
- Sheldon Air Service ..... 13
- Studio Z Yoga ..... 14s
- Susitna Sled Dog Adventures ♦
- Talkeetna Air Taxi ..... 15
- Talkeetna Gear Shop ..... 16
- Talkeetna Historical Society ..... 17
- Walter Harper
- Talkeetna NPS Ranger Station ..... 18
- Talkeetna River Guides ..... 19

## LODGING

- Adventure Cottage ..... 1s
- Alaska Dream Cabins ..... 2
- Belle's Cabin ..... 3
- Birchview Cabin ..... 4s
- Caribou Lodge Alaska ♦
- Chinook Wind Cabins ..... 5
- Denali Fireside Cabins & Suites ..... 6
- Denali Overlook Inn ..... 7s
- Easy Street Cabins ..... 8
- Eye of Denali Inn & Suite ..... 9s
- Grace & Bill's Freedom Hills ..... 10s

- Latitude 62 Restaurant & Lounge ..... 11
- Meandering Moose Lodging ..... 12s
- Mount McKinley
- Princess Wilderness Lodge ♦
- Northern Guest House ..... 14
- Rocky and Beaver's Cabins ..... 15
- Susitna River Lodge ..... 16
- Swiss Alaska Inn ..... 17
- Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge ..... 18s
- Talkeetna Cabins ..... 19
- Talkeetna Camper Park ..... 20
- Talkeetna Hideaway ..... 21
- Talkeetna Inn ..... 22
- Talkeetna Landing ..... 23
- Talkeetna Roadhouse ..... 24
- Traleika Denali View Cabins ..... 25s

## RESTAURANTS & PUBS

- The Burger Barn ..... A
- Denali Brewpub ..... B
- Denali Brewing Company ..... Cs
- Denali Subway ..... Ds
- Fairview Inn ..... E
- Flying Squirrel Bakery & Café ..... Fs
- Foraker Restaurant ..... Gs
- Homestead Kitchen ..... H
- Latitude 62 Restaurant & Lounge ..... I
- Mountain High Pizza Pie ..... J
- Swiss Alaska Inn ..... K
- Talkeetna Inn Lounge ..... L
- Talkeetna Roadhouse ..... M
- Talkeetna Spinach Bread ..... N
- VFW Post 3836 ..... O

## SHOPPING

- Alaska Hippies
- Photobus and Boutique ..... 1
- Aurora Dora ..... 2
- Dancing Leaf Gallery ..... 3
- Denali Dry Goods ..... 4
- Frontier Gifts ..... 5
- High Expedition Co. .... 6

- K2 Mooses Tooth ..... 7
- Kahiltna Birchworks Syrup & Gifts ..... 8s
- Magic of Christmas ..... 9
- Moore's Hardware ..... 10s
- Once In A Blue Moose ..... 11
- Patchwork Moose ..... 12
- Silverbear Sundries &  
Denali Hemp Company ..... 13
- Talkeetna Gear Shop ..... 14
- Talkeetna Gifts & Collectables ..... 15
- Village Arts & Crafts ..... 16

## SERVICES

- Alaska Adventure Media ♦
- Arctic Penguin ♦
- Cajun Flame ♦
- Crowley Petroleum ..... 1s
- Denali Dream Home  
(variable locations)
- Denali Education Center ..... 2
- Jessica Stevens Community Found. 3
- Joy of Alaska Real Estate  
(variable locations)
- KTNA Community Radio ..... 4
- Mat-Su Convention  
& Visitors Bureau ♦
- Mat-Su Valley  
Federal Credit Union ..... 5s
- MEA ♦
- Matanuska Telephone Association ♦
- McKinley View Real Estate ..... 6s
- Princess Tour Desk Services ..... 7
- Three Rivers Bookkeeping ..... 8s
- Upper Susitna Food Pantry ..... 9s
- Upper Susitna  
Senior & Community Center ..... 10s