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## Taste cake, music, martial arts and more at North Pole event

By [Glenn BurnSilver](#)

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FAIRBANKS -- When the Taste of North Pole tradition began seven years ago, it was actually called UAF Day at North Pole and was designed as a University of Alaska outreach program. Things have certainly changed.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks continues its outreach program, but the North Pole Chamber of Commerce has boosted the activities, inviting 10 area restaurants serving food for charity. There will also be live music, face painting, martial arts demonstrations, the UAF Nanook's polar bear mascot and a bake sale.

"It was originally a chance to present university programs to the North Pole area students as something to consider for the summer or further education, and promote the North Pole area for businesses," said Betsy Bear, president of the North Pole Chamber of Commerce. "It's becoming more and more popular with more people every year."

The restaurants range from full family sit-down style to fast food joints. The complete list includes McDonalds, Pagoda, Thai Cuisine, Country Café, Wendy's, Sourdough Fuel Food Mart, Taco Bell, Safeway Deli, Elf's Den and Dalman's Family Restaurant. Proceeds from food sales will be split between the chamber and the North Pole Boys and Girls Club.

For the chamber, money will go toward roof repair of the Visitor Center log cabin.

Last year all proceeds went to the Boys and Girls Club, a total of \$2,750. That money helped keep the center open for the summer. Manager Heather Zrucky said the club, which promotes "Smart Programs" designed to guide youth away from drugs and alcohol, is not in danger of closing this summer, but the money raised will help with club maintenance and field trips.

"We always try to take field trips and other fun stuff," Zrucky said. "We like going to the movies a lot, so we'll probably be doing that."

Taste of North Pole will take place in the North Pole Plaza Mall. Food booths will be arranged

near the center. Costs are \$10 a plate, \$5 for those under 6 years old.

“We wish we could do it outside. That would be fun, but it’s in the mall because it has a large hallway system. It’s a nice big space,” Bear said.

The UAF departments will be set up along one end, Bear said, and will include, ROTC, Tanana Valley Campus, College of Liberal Arts, Summers Sessions, Admissions, the Art Department and University Fire Department. UAF Chancellor Brian Rogers and Vice Chancellor Jake Poole will be available from noon to 12:45 p.m.

There will also be a 30-minute martial arts demonstration from North Pole Martial Arts and the Lathrop Swing Dance Group, a group of approximately 20 to 30 high school dancers who will perform a series of dance routines. The UAF Flute Ensemble performs at noon.

One anticipated aspect of Taste of North Pole is dessert and the accompanying cake auction. The Boys and Girls Club will pass out slices of cake for donations, and a silent auction will be ongoing for a variety of cakes.

“We’ll have chocolate cake with chocolate icing and white cake with white icing. A couple will fruit icing, like raspberry filling,” Zrucky said. “We have a lady here who’s an awesome baker. I don’t know what she’s got up her sleeve but she said she’ll be busy baking and baking.”

The event begins at 11:30 a.m. and wraps up at 2 p.m.

“It’s pretty fast and furious,” Bears said.

## IF YOU GO

What: Taste of North Pole

When: 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday

Where: North Pole Plaza Mall

Tickets: \$10 a plate, \$5 6 and under

Contact features writer Glenn BurnSilver at 459-7510.