

[Close this window](#)

[Print this page](#)

FAIRBANKS
Daily News - Miner

Taste of North Pole draws a crowd to shopping center

By [Mary Beth Smetzer](#)

Published Sunday, April 19, 2009



Photo by [Eric Engman](#)

FAIRBANKS — North Pole’s seventh annual prelude to spring, Taste of North Pole and UAF Day, didn’t fail to bring out a throng of the winter-weary — ready to try out new foods, try on new ideas and enjoy some live entertainment.

The almost-outdoors event was hosted in the airy space of the North Pole Shopping Center and celebrates the last gasps of winter.



Photo by [Eric Engman](#)

And no one was disappointed with the size of the large, heavy-duty paper plates handed out at the fundraiser’s admissions tables.

“People started showing up before the food got here today,” said Tricia Fogarty, treasurer of the North Pole Chamber of Commerce, which co-sponsors the event with the city.

Food definitely is a big part of the draw, but judging from the lively social interaction, diners also enjoyed the entertainment and the educational information provided by University of Alaska Fairbanks departments and programs.

Interim UAF Chancellor Brian Rogers and his wife, Sherry Modrow, were on hand for a good part of the 2 1/2 hour event greeting and visiting with attendees.

Taste of North Pole serves a large crowd that feasts on an international array of food from a dozen local restaurants and drive-thrus, all for a 10-spot (\$5 for kids) — a good deal given the specialties.

“All the food is incredible,” said Shannon Slack, who was enjoying lunch with her three children, Anthony, 7, Lillian, 4, and Paul, 2.

“I personally wanted to try the food of the Thai restaurant,” she said. “I’ve driven by it and

thought I should stop in.”

Slack recommended the French toast with homemade cream sauce, one of the offerings of the Country Cafe.

“This is a really good, kid-friendly event,” Slack said, giving it an extra nod since it is a fundraiser for the North Pole Boys and Girls Club and the effort to repair the North Pole Visitors Center log cabin.

The only Slack family member missing Saturday was Lt. Col. Brian Slack, who is deployed with the Army in Iraq.

North Pole resident Julie Johnson came Saturday to see if there were any new restaurants in the area she hadn’t tried yet. She didn’t find one, but she wasn’t disappointed with the many dishes available.

Saturday’s happening was part business and part pleasure for Roy Meyers.

“I love to eat,” said Meyers, who also had an eye out for culinary specialties. He plans to start an international food court and local produce market next month on the Old Richardson Highway.

UAF Events Manager Cheri Renson, who lives in North Pole, was behind a table, but she enjoyed interacting with Saturday’s crowd and telling them about higher education opportunities in their hometown.

The university offers four or five core classes and a computer course each semester at North Pole High School.

“It’s a good way to start on a degree or certification and not travel so far,” Renson said.

NPBS students can take advantage of the classes and get a head start on their college diploma.

Joe Hayes of the UAF Alumni Association was taking advantage of Saturday’s event to talk to UAF North Pole alumni.

“North Pole plays such a vital part at the university and the Fairbanks North Star Borough,” Hayes said. “It’s important that we enhance and engage our connections and let North Pole know that UAF cares and we’re here for North Pole.”