



Fairbanks, AK



Fairbanks, Alaska, is located on the banks of the Chena River and was named in honor of former Senator and Vice President Charles W. Fairbanks. The town was founded in 1902 when Felix Pedro's discovery of gold coincided with Captain E.T. Barnette's decision to build a trading post on the banks of the Chena River. The Northern Lights, also known as aurora borealis, can be seen most of the year in Fairbanks.

Pioneer Park is a large city park located in Fairbanks and is home to many museums. The Interior and Arctic Alaska Aeronautical Foundation operates a historical aviation museum that displays aircraft built between 1913 and 1948. Pioneer Museum contains artifacts of early Fairbanks and hosts "The Big Stampede Show," a narrated presentation about the Gold Rush. The renovated SS Nenana is the largest stern-wheeler riverboat built west of the Mississippi. The Tanana Valley Railroad Museum's 1899 Engine #1 is Alaska's oldest operating steam locomotive. The Kitty Hensley House, House of Wickersham, and Forty Below Fairbanks' Cabin #3 have been relocated to Pioneer Park and are furnished with authentic turn-of-the-century furniture. The Alaska Native Museum and the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics are designing a facility with indoor and outdoor demonstration areas, a museum, and other amenities.

Located in downtown Fairbanks, the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center presents exhibits about the people, land, and culture of interior Alaska. Fairbanks Ice Museum contains life-sized ice sculptures carved by local artists. The Fairbanks Community Museum provides exhibits about the history and culture of the Fairbanks area. Located in the same building is the Dog Musers Museum that explains the history of dog mushing in Alaska and exhibits dog sleds, clothing, and gear. The Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum displays 70 antique cars, vintage clothing, and other memorabilia.

Exhibits at the University of Alaska Museum of the North include a gallery dedicated to the 2,000-year spectrum of Alaskan art; the state's largest public display of gold; Blue Babe, a 36,000-year-old mummified steppe bison; and a sound and light installation driven by the real-time positions of the sun and moon, seismic activity, and the aurora.

Performing arts opportunities include the North Star Ballet, the Fairbanks Arts Association, Opera Fairbanks, the Fairbanks Light Opera Theatre, the Fairbanks Symphony, Fairbanks Shakespeare Theater, Fairbanks Concert Association, and the Fairbanks Drama Association and its children's theater. The Palace Theatre in Pioneer Park features "The Golden Heart Revue" nightly during the summer. Annual arts festivals include the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, Festival of Native Arts, Fairbanks Folk Fest, Midnight Sun Festival, and World Ice Art.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Most houses in the Cowsls Street Neighborhood were built in the early 1900s on small lots. Housing styles include a mix of Craftsman bungalow, Foursquare and ranch styles and a few log cabins, some of which have recently been restored.

Doyon Estates is one Fairbanks' newest residential developments and features large, primarily two-story homes on smaller lots. Many homes have Chena River frontage and some are custom-built.

Several neighborhoods are located in the hill area of Fairbanks because of temperature inversion that causes the hill areas to be 10° to 15° warmer in the winter than the lowland. Chena Ridge is a large development with many neighborhoods, Sherwood Forest is one of the newer neighborhoods and features an eclectic mix of housing that is situated on large wooded lots and has mountain views. Houses in the Goldstream neighborhood range from cabins to two-story styles and are situated on large lots.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Fairbanks North Star Borough operates 60 parks and facilities that include three aquatic facilities, an ice arena, a recreation center, a dog park, and a rifle range.

In addition to museums, Pioneer Park's other attractions include a train ride, carousel, square and round dance center, and miniature golf.

Lake Park, a section of the Chena Lake Recreation Area, contains three volleyball courts, a horseshoe pit, a playground, two designated swimming areas with sandy beaches, a boat rental, two fishing docks, and a lake boat launch. The River Park section that stretches along the Chena River has a volleyball court, a horseshoe pit, a self-guided nature trail, and a river boat launch. During the winter, the recreation area offers groomed classical cross-country ski trails and a multi-use trail for snow machining, skijoring, dog mushing, and other activities. Chena Lake also offers four ice-fishing houses. Birch Hill Recreation Area is a Nordic skiing complex with a ski center and groomed trails.

Located on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus, the Georgeson Botanical Gardens has a research station and public garden display.

The World Eskimo-Indian Olympics is held in July and features athletic games and dance competitions.

The Yukon Quest 1,000 Mile International Sled Dog Race begins in Fairbanks and finishes in Whitehorse, Yukon. Other sled dog races include Musers Challenge Series and Yukon Quest 300. Various skiing and snow machine races are held in Fairbanks, including the Tired Iron River Valley, Sonot Kkaazoot, and Iron Dog.

EDUCATION

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District educates approximately 14,300 students in 21 elementary schools, 11 secondary schools, and an alternative program with options for homeschooling and online education. Charter, magnet, and specialized schools are available. The district also serves two military installations.

University of Alaska Fairbanks has nine colleges and schools that offer higher educational opportunities, including certificates and associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Wayland Baptist University offers associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs in a distinctively Christian environment.

HEALTH CARE

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital has 152 licensed acute care beds. Bassett Army Community Hospital is a 32-bed hospital that serves the area's military population.

CITY STATS

2011

City Population	32,036
Metropolitan Statistical Area Population	99,192
Per Capita Personal Income, Fairbanks, AK, MSA	\$42,626