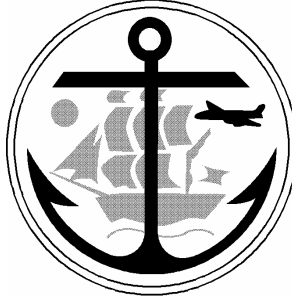


Municipality of
Anchorage



P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650
Telephone: (907) 343-4431
Fax: (907) 343-4499
Email : www.muni.org

Mark Begich, Mayor

PRESS RELEASE
March 15, 2007

Contact: Beth Nordlund, 343-4492

CITY LAUNCHES YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS (YEP!)

Up to 20 Anchorage youth ages 16-18 will be hired to work in city parks this summer in an innovative program in which they'll also receive education relevant to their work. The new *Youth Employment in Parks* (YEP) program was launched today by Mayor Mark Begich at the Spenard Recreation Center.

Under the program, each work week will have a theme. Mondays will be education days, Tuesdays-Thursdays will be spent working in parks, and Fridays will be outdoor recreation days. The program is a partnership with Anchorage Parks & Recreation and the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action program of the National Wildlife Federation.

“This is a win-win-win program. Significant projects get completed in parks. Youth get employed, perhaps in a first job situation. Youth receive education on issues of importance to Anchorage that are directly relevant to their work projects and high school credit,” said Mayor Begich. “And as we invest in these youth and give them a positive outlet for their time, we are taking proactive steps to curb youth violence.”

“Too often we hear about all of the negative things teens are doing. Anchorage needs more opportunities for young people to positively engage with our community, and *Youth Employment in Parks* is one of those opportunities,” said Polly Carr, Program Manager for Alaska Youth for Environmental Action.

“We are going to work with all of the community organizations we can to create useful and meaningful projects for the kids. We have already formed partnerships with many community organizations. *Alaska Trails* will give trail maintenance training and work with youth on a trail improvement project. Princess Cruises and Cruise West have committed to provide coach transport one day a week,” said Beth Nordlund, Development Director for the Anchorage Park Foundation. “The possibilities for partnering with non-profits, park user groups and businesses in Anchorage are endless.”

-MORE-

According to Anchorage Parks and Rec Commission Chair Victor Mollozzi: “Getting these youth out in our parks in a visible way will improve park safety and will give these youth ownership in our incredible system of parks and trails.”

Kalyn Brewer, 19 and an East High student and AYEA staff at National Wildlife Federation said: “Building leadership skills, gaining valuable experience and having a job has not always been that accessible for teens. Now it can be. While not all youth choose the right path every time, *Youth Employment In Parks* offers a good choice to those who need it most.”

Applications for the 20 youth crew positions are available online at www.ayea.org, and are due April 26. Orientation is scheduled for May 30-31, with jobs ending in mid August.

Three crew leaders will also be hired to supervise the youth crew members. Applications will be available at www.ayea.org. Jobs start in May.

###