



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rushmore
National Memorial

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Mount Rushmore National Memorial News Release

Celebration Planned for Independence Day at Mount Rushmore

(Keystone, SD) – Visitors to Mount Rushmore National Memorial on July 3, 2009 can expect to experience a wide variety of educational programs, patriotic tributes, and musical entertainment in celebration of Independence Day. The memorial has planned a full day of events as many visitors arrive early in the morning to secure a parking spot and to find a place to watch the fireworks. The festivities, including music and entertainment, begin at 1:00 pm on Friday, July 3 and culminate with the highly anticipated fireworks display at 9:20 pm.

Among the highlights of the celebration include Retro Bill, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) buddy, the Brass in Blue Air Force band from Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, the Mitguards from Colorado Springs, CO, and Jasmine Pickner, a local Lakota hoop dancer performing the “People’s Hoop Dance.” Three Navajo Code Talkers will be honored during the evening ceremonies for their heroic work during World War II.

“The Navajo Code Talkers and the rest of our patriotic celebration bring a clear focus to our unique American heritage and those that have and are continuing to protect this place,” said Mount Rushmore Superintendent Gerard Baker. “National independence and personal freedoms are ideals that Americans continue to celebrate and protect and ideals that continue to remain out of reach for many in the world. We are looking forward to celebrating the diversity of American heritage and the deep roots of American independence during this year’s event.”

The evening fireworks display will begin at 9:20 pm. If inclement weather is in the area at the time of the scheduled launch, the fireworks may be delayed. The memorial has until 10:20 pm to launch the fireworks or they will be cancelled. There will be no alternative date for the fireworks this year.

Enhanced security measures will be in place at Mount Rushmore National Memorial on July 3. Visitors should plan to arrive early, expect delays, and be patient when approaching, entering, or leaving the memorial. In previous years, the parking garage filled by noon, and by early evening, the nearest parking was in Keystone, necessitating a 3-mile hike with an 800-foot elevation gain up to the memorial. South Dakota Highway Patrol, along with National Park Service staff, will be closing Highway 244 at 8:00 pm to all incoming traffic. Highway 244 will remain closed through the fireworks display and will reopen at the end of the event.

Events planned for Saturday, July 4 include entertainment beginning at 7:30 pm and concludes with the National Park Service’s evening program and sculpture illumination at 9:00 pm.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Additional information on the Independence Day Celebration is available on the park web site at www.nps.gov/moru or by calling (605) 574-2523 and pressing option 5.



Photo Caption: Retro Bill, the D.A.R.E. Safety Buddy, will return for his third year at Mount Rushmore for the Independence Day Celebration.

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