

Iditarod centennial celebration



The year 2008 marks the centennial of the Iditarod National Historic Trail. (Jason Kohler/KTUU-TV)

by Angela Blanchard
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SEWARD, Alaska -- It's a celebration 100 years in the making.

The year 2008 marks the centennial of the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

Fifteen years before the historic race from Anchorage to Nome, the original Iditarod trail was born in Seward, and Saturday the town, along with Gov. Palin, celebrated the mushers that blazed that trail.



A crowd gathered at Milepost Zero to celebrate the efforts of the Alaska Road Commission in 1908 to open a route from Seward to Nome. (Jason Kohler/KTUU-TV)

"It seems like everyone on the globe knows about our Iditarod and loves our Iditarod," Palin said. "But kicking this off today, more people will now start to recognize its roots. 'Where did this start? It started in Seward.'"

A crowd gathered at Milepost Zero to celebrate the efforts of the Alaska Road Commission in 1908 to open a route from Seward to Nome.

One year after the trail was complete in 1911 thousands of prospectors mushed or hiked to Iditarod gold fields.



Saturday the town, along with Gov. Palin, celebrated the mushers that blazed the original trail. (Jason Kohler/KTUU-TV)

That population boom led to Alaska becoming a territory.

Historians say the centennial is as much a celebration as an educational opportunity and a showcase of the trail today.

About 30 miles of the trail has been constructed and renovated by the Forest Service.

The trail to Nome is over 900 miles long.

Contact Angela Blanchard at ablanchard@ktuu.com