

Business In Chiniak

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Mary Donaldson/KMXT

Business along the Chiniak Highway seems grim. With gas prices on the rise, the Kodiak Island Winery forced out of business and the Roads End Restaurant closed down for second summer in a row, what attractions are left to draw people to the end of the road? Mary Donaldson has this report.

The Kodiak

Island Winery used to be in business about 40 miles from the city of Kodiak in Chiniak, but recently had to shut its doors due to a zoning issue with the borough. The Road's End Restaurant, a few miles down the road, also shut its doors over a year ago after the owners passed away. With two of the few businesses on the Chiniak Highway closed, what is business like for the ones still open, especially with the rise in gas prices?

The Kalsin Bay Inn, about 19 miles from town, has been run and operated by the Sargent Family for 35 years. For the past three years, Wayne Sargent has been running the Inn. He says business was good his first year, but that the last two years he has seen a dramatic drop in customers. He says he has thought of creative ways to attract business so far out the road:

(Sargent 1 :16s "the discount cards.")

He says he has had return customers every year from out of state, mostly large groups of fishermen. However, the new luggage limits on Alaska Airlines is now affecting their decisions to make the trip to Alaska.

(Sargent 2 :48 "with your clothes and your fishing gear.")

Mile 41 of the Chiniak Highway is the Clay Creek Pottery store, owned by Susan Baker. She has had her doors open for four years, and that her busy months are in the summers and fall, when

the roads are nicer to drive on. She says whether business volume is high or low, she will keep operating her business because it is what she loves. She says she will even be upgrading her small shop to a larger building on her property.

(Baker 1 :17s “…of what I have now.”)

There will be more business development along the Chiniak Highway. The property at the intersection with Pasagshak Road was bought recently by Fred and Mary Barber. They have plans to develop the property for a small bar and restaurant with guest cabins. Fred says that he plans on opening what they will call the Old’s River Inn on the land.

(Barber 1 :21s “…the bar and restaurant.”)

The Road’s End Restaurant that closed nearly two-years-ago was purchased by Norm and Janice Botz, who were friends with its previous owners. The Botz’s hope to have the restaurant open by July, and plan to build a lodge nearby in the future.

I’m Mary Donaldson.

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