Overbooked Ferry Dampens Sunny Crab Fest for One Family

Monday, 06 June 2011

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Last Monday, after enjoying one of the best Crab Festivals in years, the holiday ended on a sour note for one family, when they and their car were bumped from the state ferry Kennicott and had to fly home. The head of the ferry system admits to overbooking the ship, but says everyone who was bumped could have sailed the next day on the Tustumena.

Jeremy Shiok said he was notified before he left Homer that the Kennicott was potentially overbooked on the return trip, but that since he made his reservations in December, his family of four was guaranteed to get on the ship when it was time to leave.

-- (Ferry 1 34 sec "Knowing that, we ... solve this issue.")

Shiok (shook) said while he was in Kodiak for Crab Fest, he received another call from the ferry office saying he would not be able to sail for the mainland on Monday after all:

-- (Ferry 2 11 sec "Didn't

really say why ... not to bother to show up.")

Shiok (shook) said he went down to Pier 2 in advance of the 4:30 a.m. departure time on Memorial Day to see if he could get his family on board anyway, but to no avail - it sailed, loaded with carnival rides, but without them.

-- (Ferry 3 17 sec "I don't know that we ... involuntarily bumped passengers.")

That's Captain Mike Neussl (NEW-sll), deputy commissioner for marine operations with the Department of Transportation.

-- (Ferry 4 41 sec "We actually made a mistake ... got adequate volunteers.")

After using 48,000 Alaska Airlines Miles to fly his family home to Anchorage on Tuesday morning, Shiok contacted the ferry system again. He said they reimbursed the cost of his family's cabin and passenger fare, but not the cost of his car's passage. It sailed unattended on Wednesday, and he flew down to Homer to pick it up on Thursday.

Shiok said unless the Marine Highway System reimburses him fully for the extra costs he incurred, he would not be inclined to take the ferry to Kodiak again.

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