



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rushmore  
National Memorial

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 10, 2010

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## Mount Rushmore National Memorial Press Release

### 2011 Independence Day Celebration planning

(Keystone, S.D.) Planning will soon be underway for the 2011 Independence Day Celebration at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Based on the successful outcomes from the 2010 celebration, the same model will be used for planning the 2011 event. Over 20,000 people visited the Memorial on July 3 in 2010, exceeding the 2009 numbers by nearly 3,000. The event model allowed National Park Service (NPS) officials the opportunity to welcome all visitors, and event planners were pleased that visitors were not turned away from the Memorial over the patriotic holiday, as was common in previous years.

The unacceptable risk of wildfire prompted the suspension of the fireworks for the 2010 celebration. While efforts are on-going to mechanically reduce the fuel load in the park and encourage a healthy forest, the condition of the forest in the surrounding area continues to deteriorate and will remain a concern even after the Memorial's thinning project is completed. "We need to look at the big picture and understand that the fire danger will continue to be high in 2011, therefore the 2011 Independence Day Celebration will not include a fireworks component," said Mount Rushmore Acting Superintendent Duane Bubac.

It is expected that the 2011 celebration will again offer a full schedule of events for July 3 and 4. The NPS will continue to collaborate with its partners to develop a program that emphasizes patriotism, cultural celebrations of American heritage, and features the true meaning of Independence Day, while at the same time protecting the park's resources and encouraging visitor safety. "Safety is of paramount concern and utilizing the 2010 model, which did not include fireworks, is the responsible course of action. With this decision behind us, we can now begin planning for another successful celebration in 2011," said Bubac.

Additional information about the celebration will be available as planning progresses in the months to come.

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