



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Snowmass is “hooked on Mardi Gras” at this decades-old celebration on February 28**

**Snowmass Village, CO.** Wintery Colorado might seem like an unusual location for a Mardi Gras celebration, but the resort town of Snowmass Village hosts one of the oldest Mardi Gras festivals in the Rocky Mountains. Since 1980, New Orleans natives have made a pilgrimage to Snowmass’ slopes for Fat Tuesday, bringing a hefty dose of purple, green and gold spirit with them. This year, in honor of New Orleans, Snowmass has planned one of its biggest bashes ever.

“This is our 24th year of official Mardi Gras festivities, and we plan to make it one of the best parties of the season for the whole family,” says Susan Hamley, Marketing Director for the Town of Snowmass Village. “From mask-making for kids to crawdad boils, king cakes and late-night revelry, Snowmass offers the ultimate Mardi Gras mountain destination.”

This dawn-until-wee-hours authentic fete draws over 3,000 visitors annually and includes traditional Mardi Gras elements such as a madcap costumed parade, king cake giveaway, bead throws, crawdad boils, Hurricane drink specials, and celebrations late into the night.

Festivities begin on Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup> with a free mask-making workshop for kids of all ages. Fat Tuesday starts at dawn with the Mother of All Ascensions, a costumed uphill snowshoe race that begins at 8,500 feet in altitude and traverses up an additional 1,741 feet for \$10,000 in prizes. Starting around the noon hour, local restaurants offer Cajun buffets, drink specials and a crawdad boil, while the king and queen (see below) are crowned at 3 pm to jump

start an afternoon of giveaways, bead throwing, King Cake, and the annual parade filled with floats, bagpipers, a marching band, dance troupe, stilt walkers, clowns, costumed revelers and more. All are encouraged to register for the parade, whether they're be-costumed or building a float, and \$800 will be awarded in prizes. Those entering floats receive a \$100 credit toward supplies, and interested parties can register by calling (970) 618-2225.

Snowmass also plans to honor the hometown of those who first introduced Mardi Gras to locals in 1980. The Red Cross will be on-hand to accept cash donations, and prizes such as a snowboard will be given away to benefit the Red Cross and Katrina victims. Everyone is encouraged to donate and show their support for New Orleans.

After the parade, the parties move indoors. Sponsor Jagermeister and the Jager Girls take over the Blue Door with live music, giveaways, Jagermeister drink specials, and partying late into the night. Additional Snowmass Mardi Gras hot spots include S'No Beach, Zane's Tavern, Mountain Dragon, and the Cirque.

Snowmass Village is located conveniently between four regional airports (Denver, Eagle, Grand Junction, and Aspen) and is only 9 miles from historic Aspen, Colorado. General information, Mardi Gras lodging specials, and a schedule of events can be found by visiting [www.snowmassvillage.com](http://www.snowmassvillage.com) or calling 1-800-SNOWMASS.

### **Snowmass Mardi Gras Story Angles:**

**Human Interest:** This year's Mardi Gras Queen is a generous and beloved long-time local with a remarkable story. Pat Logan was born blind and then given the gift of vision through a series of operations that allowed her to finally see such sights as her two children's faces and the snow that lured her to Snowmass Village in 1994. But doctors have done all they can, and after 20 years of sight, Logan's vision is fading fast. By summer she will return to darkness, and the town has honored both her loving presence and her plight by nominating her queen of one of the most vibrantly colorful holidays of the year.

**Ties to New Orleans:** The Snowmass Mardi Gras Festival traces its roots back to 1980 when New Orleans natives showed up in costume at the local après-ski spot and started throwing beads around and partying wildly. The bewildered locals joined in, and by 1983 it had become an official town celebration. Today, Snowmass still hosts a large contingent of New Orleans natives over Mardi Gras and honors their presence with a traditional celebration.

**Snowmass Relief Efforts:** Snowmass hasn't forgotten from whence Mardi Gras originated, and our heart goes out to those still affected by Hurricane Katrina. The Red Cross will be on-site throughout the day accepting cash donations for the Red Cross and victims of Katrina. Expect prize giveaways such as a snowboard and vintage bicycle to benefit victims as well.

**The Mother of All Ascensions:** There's no sleeping in on Mardi Gras, which starts off at the crack of dawn with this 14-year-old uphill race that brings breathless new meaning to the word Ascension. With as many as 200-300 costumed participants, the Mother of All Ascensions starts at 8,500 feet above sea level and pits competitors against an elevation gain of nearly 2,000 feet, with \$10,000 in prize giveaways awaiting at the top.

**An Authentic Mardi Gras Celebration:** Think the mountains are no place for a Mardi Gras party? Think again. Snowmass lacks only New Orleans's balmy temperature. The celebration includes everything from crawdads and Cajun food to king cakes, bead throwing, mask making, costumes, parades, and late night revelry. We invite you to come check out how Mardi Gras is celebrated in the mountains.



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