

# Tickets on sale for Nenana Ice Classic

When will the ice go out in the Tanana River at Nenana? It is worth a small fortune to know. What are the facts?

The ice in Nenana is thick this year. When the ice was checked in January and measured at 70 inches, it was thought that the ice driller had tapped into a sandbar. The measurement this week was 43 inches. This leaves no doubt. The ice is deep in the Tanana River. Nearly twice as deep as the 24 inches measured last year.

Does this mean the ice will go out late this year? Nenana Ice Classic manager Bob Coghill Jr. thinks not. "There are so many factors that effect breakup, still anyone's guess," Coghill said. An exceptionally mild winter in the interior may forcast an early spring. Last year it did not. The weather remained warm until ticket sales ended and then the thermometer plummeted. There has not been much snow this year and snow acts as an insulator protecting the ice from freezing as deep as it might. "The lack of snow seems to be making the ice terribly thick this year," Coghill said.

For those who think they have it figured out each \$2.00 ticket entitles

the buyer to guess the day, hour and minute the ice in the Tanana, just upstream from its tributary the Nenana River will go out.

This is the seventieth year of the Nenana Ice Classic which began in 1917 when engineers surveying for the construction of the Nenana Railroad bet on when the ice in the Tanana River would move out. The winnings then were \$800.00. Last years winners took home \$187,000.

In the seventy years that records have been kept the ice has gone out each spring, between April 20 and May 20. It usually goes out between late morning and late evening.

The tripod structure is connected to the riverbank, via a rope, to a tower specifically constructed for the Ice Classic Event. In the tower is a complex sytem of ropes, pulleys and hachets which combine to stop the clock as the tripod moves down the river.

When pressed Coghill stated the ice would go out on April 28 at 6:22 pm. He also noted his nearest guess in 1985 ws 7 days off May 11, 2:36 that winning time in 1985. His guess is based on the birthdays of various members of his family.